

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

Caroline Pover, Inc.

March 2011, #11

MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

<http://www.japanschoolnews.com>

Major milestone for Katoh Gakuen



Grade 10 students at Katoh Gakuen celebrating 10 years as an MYP school. GAY-ANN BAGOTCHAY

Katoh Gakuen Gyoshu High School celebrated its 10th year as an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP) school in real style. Early last month, MYP students in the bilingual program displayed their work in an exhibition that was considered to be an enormous success.

The hardworking grade 10 students displayed their personal projects, which included remaking a *kimono* as a formal dress, writing an enthralling novel entitled *Galaxy Spirits*, raising funds for Peace for Animals around the World (PAW), and making a shimmering glass painting to donate to a hospital.

In science, students displayed their ingenuity by improving and inventing various products to make their school or home lives easier. These included adding LED to an umbrella so that you can read on dark and rainy days, improvising different types of hand glove to prevent your hands from getting dirty when writing, and making an onion cutter called "onion cut-tear" that prevents crying when

cutting onions.

Recycling was emphasized in the exhibit. Students used cardboard boxes to design and make life-sized chairs in technology class and to make science display boards. Art paintings, mandala tessellation projects, maths survey results and poems were on display too.

In English, students demonstrated their skills of persuasion through speeches and debates. Students debated topics such as "That the Japanese Government Should Allow More Immigrants into Japan" and "That Reading Books is Better than Watching Movies."

The MYP is all about inquiry, ingenuity, communication, and critical thinking, and their application across different subjects. What better way then, for Katoh Gakuen Gyoshu to celebrate its 10th year of MYP than with an exhibition of students' work that demonstrates these exact qualities? — GAY-ANN BAGOTCHAY AND DAVID ALGIE

J's International Day

J's annual International Day was held in February this year, and children and teachers came to school dressed up in various national costumes, and brought in toys, books, pictures, snacks, or clothes for a presentation about that country.

The children "visited" China and the Great Wall, built Egyptian pyramids, and discovered facts about the seven continents of the earth. India, Italy, Canada, Germany, Korea, and the United States were some of the other countries students flew through on their very own J's Airlines.

The kindergarten and preschool classes joined together for some fun activities that included dancing, and singing songs such as "Hello to All the Children of the World" and Disney's "It's a Small World."

When children are exposed to a variety of different cultures, traditions, foods, toys, and stories they naturally acquire a more understanding mindset. As an international school this is something J's aspires to impart to each child. J's encourages children to understand that people are all different, with different likes, styles, looks, dreams, and ideas about life. Yet they are all similar in many ways and can all get along and be friends.

Later in the month, the phrases "Sharing is caring," "I love you," and "Let's be friends" were heard a lot as Valentine's week approached, and the children read stories on and talked about showing love and kindness to others. They really enjoyed creating cards and gifts and especially exchanging Valentine-themed treats! — ANGELA ORTIZ



(left to right) William, Summer, and Tony embracing J's International Day. J'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Ten-year anniversary at Treehouse Montessori School in Yokohama

2011 marks the tenth anniversary of Treehouse Montessori School in Yokohama. When the school was first opened in March 2001, Head of School Jenny Vyvial felt that the local foreign community was in need of a cosy school that would cater to children between the ages of 18 months to six years old.

At the time, small international schools that offered quality education to children in that age group didn't exist, so the only option for parents was the big international schools. Treehouse

was founded with the aim of providing a perfect match for parents who were seeking to place their child within a warm and home-like atmosphere — a stimulating environment where children would be nurtured and encouraged to be their own individuals.

During its accomplished ten-year history, over 150 children have enrolled at Treehouse and facilities have steadily developed. Ms. Vyvial is enthusiastic about the future, saying that she hopes to contribute to the Yokohama-

based foreign community by offering quality Montessori education for the next 50 years, at least!

This 10-year anniversary is providing a special opportunity for the Treehouse community to reflect on the joy and laughter that has pervaded the school walls. There will be a big event this month, to which children and parents are invited to join in the fun and games, as everyone gathers together to celebrate ten memorable years.

Cherry blossom time for all at Joy to the World

Joy to the World is fortunate in its great location on Harimazaka Street, which is one of Bunkyo ward's most famous sightseeing spots for *hanami*.

Every year, Joy to the World children enjoy the beautiful scenery when coming to school and walking to the park. It has become traditional for all kindergarten classes to have picnic lunches outside under the cherry blossoms in front of the school. Besides spending enjoyable lunches there, this is also a great place for Easter egg hunting and other spring activities.

Every year, Bunkyo ward organizes the Harimazaka Street Festival (文京さくらまつり). This year the festival will be held on March 26 and 27. Please check the ward office website at <http://www.city.bunkyo.lg.jp/english> for more details.

In cooperation with the Harimazaka Street



Easter egg hunting at Joy to the World. KEIKO SUENAGA

Festival organizing committee, Joy to the World will open its doors from 10am to 2pm on the same weekend. Joy to the World welcomes all families to visit the school. The children can participate in various activities, play with balloons, and eat snacks while enjoying the beautiful *sakura* in front of the school. See <http://www.joytotheworld.info> for more information. — EUFT VANDEN BERG

Summerhill's Half Moon Class loves learning

In this modern age, while technological advances zoom past the older generations, it is vital to consider the fundamentals for education and progressive intelligence. Summerhill's Half Moon classroom is dedicated to inspiring thought and creativity, with the collective goal being for the children to start to think on their own and enjoy the process of discovering new information about the world around them.

The class's assistant teachers recently had a lot to say about their Half Moon students: "We show them love and give them the tools to succeed by teasing

their curiosity and providing new challenges for them every day" — Mikey; "I love it when they ask me 'why' because I like to throw their questions back at them and see what they come up with" — Sam; and "It's simple — if it's not fun, they're not learning" — Reina.

Summerhill's proven five-day, multi-activity routine emphasizes art, using a wide range of mediums including music, dramatic play, and social interaction to enhance children's creativity, foster independence, and boost self-esteem. The children have a lot of fun learning and the teachers have just as much fun teaching — it does not feel like going to school in the conventional sense.

"My focus is love and mathematics ... I use the children's natural love for music and feed their curious minds with original songs that teach maths and phonics," said Kristina, head of the Half Moon Class. "We realize that at this age the children are sponges, ready to know any and everything — we simply facilitate that need. In the end, my hope is that they walk away with great memories of their first time in a classroom and use that as their foundation for learning for life."

See <http://www.summerhill.jp> for more information or simply drop by!



Summerhill's Half Moon Class on a recent walk around Arisugawa Park. SUMMERHILL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Makuhari school bazaar

Makuhari International School's Book Fair last month was a great success, with wood block printers visiting the school to give demonstrations to the children, and a fancy dress parade that excited students and parents alike.

This month sees Makuhari's first school bazaar, with international food stalls, exciting performances, plenty of children's games, and a raffle with wonderful prizes. The bazaar will be held on March 5, from 10am–2pm, and everyone is welcome. Contact 043-296-0277.

Rainbow's spring camp

Last month, the Rainbow community had a great time at the Azabujuban *setsubun* festival and with their Valentine's celebrations. The children made cards and enjoyed a class tea party.

March 22–25, Rainbow is holding a spring camp, also open to students attending other schools. Activities include nature walks and studies, science exploration, arts and crafts, and dancing.

For more information call 03-5771-3668 or email info@montessori-rainbow.com. — MARIA VALDEZ

Abracadabra at Aichi

... Hocus Pocus! On January 29, two extremely tricky magicians, as well as many fine pianists, singers, dancers and violinists, visited Aichi International School (AIS).

These talents were Aichi's students, of course, performing for their friends and families at the school's annual Talent Show held in the AIS Concert Hall. This year, everyone was excited to watch 13 acts by some very talented students. Following the show, teachers, friends, and families had snacks and mingled before heading out to enjoy the fine Saturday weather.

In other news, AIS held its annual Speech Contest on February 18. Elementary students — as well as a few Orca representatives — delivered speeches, which they either memorized or read aloud in front of teachers, parents, and three judges. Students were critiqued in areas such as delivery, eye contact, posture, and pronunciation. If the students wrote their own speeches, they were also critiqued on content, organization, and closure. This year's topics ranged from creative pieces such as "My Dream House" to opinion pieces such as "My Favourite Thing." Although only five students went home with a gold award, everyone was a winner!

As AIS finishes up its 2010–11 school year, the school's leaders would like to say a big thank you to all staff, parents, and students. It was a busy year, but nonetheless a great one! — SHEILA PATTON

Aoba to open new e-Learning high school

Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) will open a new e-Learning high school in September 2011.

The A-JIS e-Learning High School — "a new way to learn" — will encompass grades 10 through 12 and work in conjunction with a number of e-learning institutions in the United States to provide a wide range of possible programs and courses for students. Through these programs, A-JIS will be able to tailor each student's high school experience to ensure that they are able to attend the university of their choice.

All students will participate in online and classroom components of the program that will lead to both an A-JIS high school diploma as well as a diploma from a high school in the United States.

One of the truly exciting components of the program will be that students will have the opportunity to take college courses through the A-JIS program. Students will be able to receive high school credit as well as college credit for concurrent courses that A-JIS will offer.

Students will also have the opportunity to complete AP and honours courses, enabling them to sit AP exams, and be eligible for university credit for concurrent courses and AP exams. For more information call 03-3335-6724. — NEAL DILK

LiVEJAM concert Mar. 11

International music school LiVEJAM will hold its next concert called "JAMOUT!" for its students on the evening of Friday, March 11, at Pink Noise in Futako Tamagawa.

This will be the third concert since LiVEJAM's inception last summer, and the fourth if one includes the pre-opening show, which demonstrates that LiVEJAM is certainly living up to its goal of being a "performance-based" music school.

"The benefits of being performance-oriented are immense," says founder Ken Takagi. "First of all, the periodical concerts become goals for the students. The performance being their target, the school and teachers help students prepare for them. As most students will be performing in a band setting, this means selecting songs, practising their role both on their own and in their lessons, coordinating rehearsals with other members, and working on their cohesion as an ensemble. Imagine all the skill sets being polished in the process, such as leadership, communication, teamwork, self-expression, etc."

For some students, the process may involve



Phigure09 at LiVEJAM's JAMOUT! vol.2 held at Pink Noise. KEN TAKAGI

composing an original song, where a wide range of creative and practical skills is put to use. All the effort and emotion put into the preparation crystallize in the performance on stage, where students not only reach their target, but also find themselves in the middle of an unforgettable experience.

"Many parents approach us saying they've struggled getting their children to practice in

the past, but with LiVEJAM's system where you are part of a group, you cannot escape the responsibility of practising! Nor do students seem to want to. The kids have so much fun playing with their friends in a band, that they adore every step of achieving their targets. It's as simple as that."

For information on LiVEJAM's upcoming JAMOUT!s, see <http://www.livejam.co.jp>.

Gymboree's "Musica" CD

Recorded by Gymboree Play & Music Japan's own music teachers, the "Colorful Musica" CD introduces children to world music using reggae, jazz, African, and Latin beats. Children's songs from the United States, Jamaica, Spain, Africa, and other countries, comprise this upbeat CD, which can be enjoyed by parents and children alike.

Interactive live events have been held at Baby Loves Disco, Ebisu Mitsukoshi, and Café R (Roppongi Hills) in front of sold-out crowds of parents and children.

The CD includes ten songs and is being sold for ¥1,890 at Gymboree Play & Music locations and online shop. Portions of the proceeds are being donated to the Tyler Foundation.

Please refer to <http://www.gymboree.jp> to find out more about the CD and Gymboree early development programs for children 0-5 years old. Free trials are offered daily at both locations in Tokyo. Customers enrolling during March can take advantage of a Spring Campaign, waiving the membership fee and with ¥5,000 discount for those joining with a friend. — NICOLE YAMADA



Gymboree teachers performing. NICOLE YAMADA

"Eight Smarts" at Nagoya International School

Nagoya International School (NIS) has been immersed in activities to implement the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) after fully integrating the IB Diploma Programme for the high school.

The implementation of the PYP is a fundamental shift in the school's view of the student and their learning, as it encourages a more collaborative and holistic approach to educating the whole child and their diverse abilities in the primary years.

Adults of the future will need to know how to learn from their experiences, how to reflect on their learning, and how to use that learning to have a role in affecting their local and global communities. This requires students to nurture not only a traditional sense of "intelligence," but also a wide variety of abilities and "other intelligences" — or "multiple intelligences" — that better reflect the diversity of human abilities.

The concept of "multiple intelligence" was first introduced by Howard Gardner, who divided the traditional notion of a singular intelligence into eight intelligences, or eight "smarts," as follows: Word Smart, Body Smart, Math Smart, Nature Smart, Art/Space Smart, People Smart, Music

Smart, and Self Smart.

The first "unit of inquiry" of the NIS year for the grade 2 students was based on Gardner's theory and the different learning styles we all have. Students decided which "Smart" they wanted to present, brainstormed ideas, wrote their scripts, practised, and then videotaped.

The video was shown during an assembly, and was a great success. The ending "bloopers" section was a big hit with the rest of the students.

Was the video perfect? Well, it was a bit rough around the edges, a bit messy. But this holistic approach to learning can look messy. More importantly, though, it was authentic — the students learned about multiple intelligences, and chose how to have their knowledge assessed, through the making of a video. No traditional multiple-choice-based quiz at the end of a unit could have the same impact as this did.

The adults at NIS hope to continue this dialogue on multiple "Smarts" to continue their own learning and to provide an important model for the leaders of tomorrow; but the grade 2 students are already doing a better job of modeling it! — ERIK OLSON-KIRUCHI

Valentine's celebrations for English Studio mums

On February 14 the students of ESIK celebrated Valentine's Day by inviting their mothers to a very special party.

The students had spent the previous week making cards in the shape of love hearts. Each card had a special little message that the students

thought up all by themselves. They concentrated very hard to make sure the cards looked just right. Teachers loved watching the students take such pride in their work, and the looks on mums' faces when they received their cards were priceless. — SHANE THOMPSON

New Year celebrations at ASIJ's Early Learning Center



Kinokawa and Shin-yu with ASIJ's Early Learning Center students. ASI

The American School in Japan's Roppongi campus Early Learning Center (ELC) had a fun January filled with Japanese cultural special events, thanks to the support of the ELC PTA and our Alumni Council.

They started the New Year with the Japanese

tradition of *omochi* (rice cake) pounding. The Azabu Juban Neighbourhood Association shares this tradition with the school by demonstrating *omochi* pounding for the students. The children all dressed in *happi* coats and *hachimaki*, to pound and eat *omochi*.

They also had a return visit by a *kamishibai* ("paper theatre") troupe from Yokohama. The *kamishibai* stories consist of 12 or 16 large, sturdy, beautifully illustrated cards. On the back is the English translation of the text, with the original Japanese beside it. The children learn traditional Japanese folk tales, and some of the kindergarten children will be writing and illustrating their own *kamishibai* tales to share with their parents.

Another highlight of the New Year was a visit by two *sumo* wrestlers at the invitation of the PTA. Kinokawa and Shin-yu looked mighty big to the ELC's little ones! The children found them

very impressive. It was so wonderful to have this traditional sport brought into the lives of the students. They were able to appreciate the ritual and the fighting strategies because of instruction they have been receiving and their own *sumo* practice on the playground and in the community room.

The New Year always ushers in an in-depth study of Japan. The ELC teachers are dedicated to helping the children experience and understand the culture in which they are so fortunate to live. There is evidence of this study all over the school, in the traditional Japanese games, the *sumo* matches on the playground, the *daruma* paintings on the walls, the children dressed in *kimono*, and the *tatami* mats and Japanese dishes and food in the playhouse areas. Not only do the children enjoy these amazing cultural experiences, but also, by interacting with many visitors from the community, they are learning to be good guests and good hosts! — JUDY BENEVENTI

PAL's traditional New Year transformation!

PAL International School understands that New Year's Day is very important to Japanese people. So it is traditional for the school to spend January learning about Japanese culture. In keeping with tradition, teachers transformed PAL's western-style Housekeeping Centre into a Japanese house.

They added a *tatami* mat, changed the dishes to rice bowls and chopsticks, swapped clothes for *kimono* and *zori*, and replaced the dinner table with a low table so everybody had to sit in Japanese style.

The children followed a few Japanese traditions such as removing one's shoes when entering a house, and learned some Japanese songs and greetings.

They played with Japanese toys and games such as spinning tops, kites, *daruma otoshi*, *kendama* ("ball-in-a-cup"-type toy), *kakizome* (calligraphy), and *hanetsuki* (badminton-like game).

PAL's boys and girls love it when their school is transformed like this! For more information see <http://www.pal-school.com>. — MAKIKO KOIDE

TAIP's March conference

Tokyo Association of International Preschools (TAIP) is happy to announce a few more details for the upcoming March 13 conference, and hopes this will encourage interested parties to join their members at Seisen International School for some serious but enjoyable learning activities.

Workshops cover topics such as learning styles, first-aid care for children, music and movement, phonological awareness, and printing.

On the Friday before there will be a parents' workshop with Elizabeth Gillies, on promoting positive behaviour with your child at home.

See <http://www.tokyopreschools.org> for more information. — CHRIS HOLLAND

Mobile zoo at New IS

On February 10, a mobile zoo visited New International School. The children were enthralled by the 52 visiting animals, which included ducks, guinea pigs, chickens, mice, and, of course, rabbits, being that it is the year of the rabbit (the preschool teachers had discovered that none of the children had ever touched a rabbit, which inspired the event).

The most popular animal across the whole age range was probably the mouse, as it could be held in one's hand and could crawl up one's sleeve. A few of the older children were squeamish, but not the younger ones!



Eun Jae and Lydia with the very popular white mice from the mobile zoo. NEW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Cambodian students welcomed by Tokyo Int'l School

A small welcoming committee from Tokyo International School headed off to Narita last month to meet students visiting from Cambodia.

Three student representatives from the host classes presented guests with new school jackets, which they really needed upon arrival on a snowy Tokyo morning after leaving warm Phnom Penh.

Also among the group were host family members who have generously opened their homes for half of the 10-week stay. Bunna, a grade 6 boy, will join Kristine's class and stay initially with Karen's family.

Mao, a girl, will join Paul's grade 7 homeroom group and stay firstly with Claudine's family. Sieng Hong, a grade 8 boy in Mahadev's class, will stay with Tracey's family. They will come to school on Monday and start classes straight away.

Everyone at TIS is excited about the new term and the opportunity to welcome and include their new students.

For more information on Tokyo International School, please go to <http://www.tokyois.com>. — DES HURST



Tokyo International School families welcoming Cambodian guests at Narita Airport. TOKYO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL