

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

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MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

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British School's annual spring fair

The British School in Tokyo (BST) will hold its annual spring fair at its Shibuya campus on Saturday, May 14 from 11am–3pm. There will be fun and entertainment for both adults and children throughout the day.

For children there will be face-painting and temporary tattoos, the chance to throw wet sponges at teachers at the SpongeBob stall, a chocolate fountain, a toy stall, and a tombola.

Adults will be interested in the parents "bottle" lucky dip — prizes range from a bottle of ketchup to a bottle of Mœt.

Reflecting the international flavour of the many countries BST students come from, there will be Scandinavian and French food stalls, an Aussie barbecue, a yakitori and yakisoba stall, and a cream tea stall with sausage rolls as well as scones.

The Junior Student Council will be staffing a Sunsmart stall selling BST baseball caps and sunscreen, and entertainment will be provided by school clubs, and will include flamenco, Irish dancing, and the school choir.

A raffle and silent auction will be held in order to raise funds to support earthquake and tsunami charities.

For more information about The British School in Tokyo, please call 03-5467-4321 or check the school's website at <http://www.bst.ac.jp>. — NANCY JENKINS



Students from the British School in Tokyo at last year's spring fair. BRITISH SCHOOL IN TOKYO

New International School opens up spring carnival

This year, New International School (pre-K age 3 to grade 9) in Minami-Ikebukuro is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Up to now its annual spring carnival has been primarily an in-house event, with visitors by invitation only. This year, it is being opened up a bit, with each family receiving ten invitation tickets instead of just five. Also, a special invitation is extended to readers of *Japan School News*, who should email contact@newis.ed.jp.

The carnival is child-entered, which means no alcohol, but is still a lot of fun for adults!

The homerooms sponsor games and activities.

For ¥2,000, children receive a passport that allows them to enter all games and win a prize after they play at least seven. In addition, there is a bingo, an item-based raffle for adults as well as children, a flea market, a food court, a nail salon, and a most-of-the-day "Show Time" where children, parents, and staff perform to the delight of all.

This year ALL of the funds raised will go to relief efforts on behalf of children victimized by the quake. The carnival will take place on Sunday, May 22, from 10am–3:30pm. A map is available at <http://newis.ed.jp>.

TAIP on supporting children in uncertain times

Tokyo Association of International Preschools (TAIP) is organizing a 90-minute workshop entitled "Supporting our Children in Uncertain Times" on Saturday, May 14.

Elizabeth Gillies is an educational psychologist working in Tokyo, and she will be speaking about March 11 and the effect it is having on children.

Ms Gillies will lead a session on helping teachers understand the impact of recent difficulties on families, and what to do about it.

The workshop will be held at Nishimachi International School from 10–11:30am. Reception starts at 9:30am. Email taipworkshop@gmail.com for more information.

Ohana's new Me & My Mom programme

Ohana International School in Tokyo has launched a new "Me and My Mom" programme at their Azabu-juban-based school.

Mothers and their babies aged up to 18 months old are welcome to share in some singing, stories, art, and dance, as the little ones learn through play on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:30–11:30am.

Ohana's usual morning programme has a full class of students, and 40 after-school students keep everyone busy as they study phonics, language lessons, art, design and technology. Also, there is another "Fun Summer at Ohana" planned for the month of June — sign up soon as places are limited.

Ohana International School in Tokyo caters to children aged 18 months to five years old. For more information see Ohana's brand new website and blog at <http://www.school-in-tokyo.com>.

LiVEJAM's third JAMOUT! reschedule for June 3



Members of "The Green Lights" in rehearsal. LiVEJAM

March 11th was originally planned for music school LiVEJAM's JAMOUT! vol. 3, but it was cancelled due to the impact of the earthquake on the trains and phones in the Tokyo region, and has now been rescheduled for June 3rd.

Besides regular appearances by ninth-grade band, "Paint The City," and 11th grade band, "Prologue," three new bands have been formed especially for LiVEJAM's third event.

"Pink Swift," comprising a vocalist from Seisen International, two students from YIS, and one student from a local Japanese school in Yokosuka,

will perform "You Belong with Me" by Taylor Swift.

Three students from St. Mary's, one from ISS, and one from a local Japanese school have formed "Friday45." They came up with the name because they always rehearse on Fridays at 6:45pm. They will perform songs by Green Day and Linkin Park.

And two students from St. Mary's and two from YIS, all of whom happen to be in 8th grade, have formed the third new band, "The Green Lights." They will play a few songs by Katy Perry and Kasabian.

On top of the band performances, there will be several solo presentations by students, with members of a teacher's band supporting one of the students!

A composition student from St. Mary's will set up his DJ booth at the back of the hall to perform his original dance music between band performances.

Change of name for Rainbow International

As of April 1st, Rainbow International Montessori School changed its name to Chateau des Bambini, which means "Children's Castle."

Although the school's name is changing, the school continues to provide the same extracurricular activities such as hula and ukulele classes, and music and yoga classes. During March, the children of Rainbow particularly enjoyed special yoga poses such as Tree, Plank, Rocket, Airplane, Bird, Balloon Game, and Peace March.

The school's Saturday and tutoring programs started in February this year, and the children have been enjoying many different activities both in and out of the classroom. Enrolment for children aged three to eight years is available throughout the year.

Chateau des Bambini is a Montessori school, set in a "home like" environment, which helps to promote a smooth transition from home life to school life. The education method is based on the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori, which instill a desire for life-long learning and develop respectful, responsible, and self-reliant individuals.

Chateau des Bambini staff strive to meet the social, intellectual, and emotional needs of each child by providing an individualized, child-directed, hands-on learning experience. They are committed to providing a prepared classroom environment designed to meet the needs of children aged 18 months to six years old, while fostering a desire to learn and an environment where learning becomes its own reward.

See <http://www.montessori-rainbow.com> for more information. — MARIA VALDEZ

Gymboree classes now at Shinjuku Isetan

After the success of their event at the department store last year, Gymboree Play & Music has been asked to offer their "Gymboree On the Go" classes to Shinjuku Isetan's I Kids Club members from May.

"Gymboree On the Go" is a collaboration of a unique Play & Learn and Music program that has been specially developed to be delivered outside the Gymboree Play & Music sites. This will be the first opportunity for the "Gymboree On the Go" program to be used in Japan and the Gymboree team are looking forward to being able to share this program with more families in Tokyo.

Gymboree now offers the following classes every Friday on the second floor of the Isetan Kaikan (I Kids Club School): Gymboree Little Babies (2-6 months old) 11:00-11:50am, Gymboree Infants (6-18 months old) 1:00-1:50pm and 2:00-2:50pm, and Gymboree Toddlers (18-30 months old) 3:00-3:50pm.

Classes are held in English with Japanese explanations. Families who are interested in learning more about these classes should contact the I Kids Club at 03-3225-2728. — NICOLE YAMADA



Gymboree Play & Music classes. NICOLE YAMADA

Included in the program is a special event called "Futako Girls Showcase" ("Futako" because the show is taking place in Futako Tamagawa). This is an open mic event for female middle and high school students who want to sing their favourite songs on stage under flashing lights and with big speakers. Six girls (from five different schools, including two local Japanese ones) have signed up for this part of the event.

Last but not least, the JAMOUT! will be opened and closed by the LiVEJAM teachers' band performing songs by artists such as Bruno Mars and Lady Antebellum.

With a lot of new students, new bands, and new programs, the show is sure to be a big success. Since the students really spent a lot of time and effort rehearsing for the event that was originally scheduled for March 11, they hope to put this effort to good use on June 3. The expressions on the faces of the students during the rehearsals are must-sees. LiVEJAM Director Ken Takagi says, "It's all about creating good energy, and believe me, it's contagious!"

Saint Maur's new Science Center

On February 14, Saint Maur celebrated the opening of its new purpose-built state-of-the-art Science Center. The two-storey building boasts four dedicated labs and preparation rooms for physics, biology, chemistry, general science, and robotics.

Mr Haruyuki Sasaki, from A & T Associates, who designed the school's award-winning Fine Arts Center in 1998, and the sports facility at Peverely Place in 2003, is also the architect of the new Science Center. His use of natural light, along with his understanding of school environments, has resulted in a building that is not only practical in design, but is also a work of art to be admired.

Having an additional fourth lab will provide preschool through elementary students with an opportunity to experience working in a dedicated science lab environment, which until now was restricted only to students in the secondary level.

Thanks to dedicated teachers and volunteer parents, the students have made notable progress in robotics, winning competitions against seasoned Japanese teams.

Saint Maur's collaboration with the Yokohama Science Frontier High School continues to provide both schools with unprecedented opportunities to participate in joint projects, and meet with and listen to lectures by renowned scientists, some of whom are Nobel Peace Prize winners.

School administrators are confident that the new Science Center will further enhance the Saint Maur Science programme at all levels, and trust that the students using the new labs will develop an interest in and love of science. — GILLES GAURY

Spring celebrations for Summerhill children



Summerhill students at their recent cherry blossom party. SUMMERHILL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The Full Moon class at Summerhill International School has been exploring and appreciating the warmth and wonders of the spring season.

During early April, the 3- to 4-year-old class enjoyed a picnic under the cherry blossoms at the neighbourhood park. They had so much fun sitting under the golden sun, the blue sky, and the pink flowers, that they hardly noticed a group of grey figures sneaking up on them ... they were pigeons!

Luckily, the pigeons weren't interested in sandwiches and onigiri, but watching the birds strut about the park got the children thinking about the different kinds of birds and their habitats in the world. Back at school, they read a book about robins; in some cultures, it is thought that the first one to spot a robin in spring will have good luck. The children learned that robins are unique because they lay pretty blue eggs.

A few days later, the class further explored their interest in nature by walking to the ponds in a nearby park to see if the ducklings had hatched. — KEI THOMPSON and AKIKO OHASHI

Katoh Gakuen's graduation trip for grade six

Put together three days, 62 students, 1,000 kilometres by bus and train, an incredible number of World Heritage Sites and National Treasures, combine it with the tastiest food and most welcoming accommodation you would be likely to find anywhere, and you have Katoh Gakuen's grade 6 graduation trip!

This year's trip to Kyoto and Nara was — although dampened by rain on the first day — a trip that the class will surely remember for years to come. Staff spoke of how usually reluctant speakers of English "came out of their linguistic shells" during the trip, and thereby created lasting memories for teachers as well as students.

There were opportunities for some students to show off what they had learned in Japanese history and explain it in English for the first time. There were others who took advantage of



Katoh Gakuen students during their graduation trip to Kyoto and Nara. KATOH GAKUEN

the immersion in Japanese culture to wonder, in English, about what really makes them Japanese. Finally, there were those who just wanted to sit down and have a chat in the hotel lounge after dinner. — GEOFF PARMENTER

A-JIS earthquake and tsunami relief efforts



A-JIS students form the Japanese flag. A-JIS

The Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) community has begun ongoing efforts to provide relief for the people of Japan affected by the earthquake and tsunami of March 11. Through

a number of fundraising events and activities, A-JIS has been able to contribute significant funds to both the Japanese Red Cross Society and UNICEF Japan.

In addition, the A-JIS community came together to assemble a large number of hygiene and cleaning kits that were distributed to people in the worst affected areas. Each hygiene kit consisted of two towels, four toothbrushes, a tube of toothpaste, two bars of soap, and two combs/brushes.

A-JIS has further fundraising events and activities planned that will carry through until the end of the school year. For more information on A-JIS relief efforts, please see the A-JIS website: <http://www.aobajapan.jp>. — NEAL DILK

J's supports OGA for Aid

February was a busy month for J's children as they visited the police station, the dentist's office, took a field trip to Kidzania, made cookies and pastries in the "bakery," and celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday with the classic *Green Eggs and Ham* snack.

After the confusion of mid-March, followed by spring vacation, the J's community resumed their regular activities, and lots of laughing, playing, learning, and growing went on in each class. Teachers have been taking extra care to make sure students feel safe, have fun, and experience a stable environment during this time of unease.

May's theme is spring, so the children are planting, watering, and growing their own gardens, as well as talking about the environment — discussing the concepts of "reducing, reusing, recycling" and what individuals can do to care for the world. Everyone at J's welcomes the change of season, as they look forward to more picnics and outdoor exploration, as well as the addition of a new drawing class to Wednesday's schedule.

J's International School supports the relief and recovery work of OGA for Aid, a small volunteer organization that has been working from a base in Minami Sanriku Cho to help those in need along the northern Tohoku coast. This organization has been on the ground and delivering supplies since March 19, and J's International School has offered its space in Tokyo to serve as a donation drop-off centre. Food, goods, money, vehicles, and even letters of encouragement to the affected families and towns are welcomed — please call J's on 03-3452-2078 to coordinate donations for OGA for Aid.

J's aims to be a pillar of support to the children and families that survived the earthquake and tsunami disaster of March 11. J's hopes to bring moral support and courage through writing and drawing cards and pictures, and sending photos. All are welcome to become "OGA for Aid penpals." Please contact ogaforaid@gmail.com for more information. — ANGELA ORTIZ



J's students at a recent visit to the police station. J'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Graduation at Makuhari International School



K3 students from Makuhari International School pose for their graduation photograph. MIS

On April 5, Makuhari International School (MIS) held its delayed graduation ceremony for the kindergarten children who were moving up to grade one of elementary school.

Proud parents watched the ceremony as the children read out their own speeches before being presented with their certificates. Teachers spoke about the K3 year, and then all students sang the MIS song before being presented with flowers and walking outside for a group photo.

Despite the earthquake, tsunami, and continued uncertainty in Fukushima, Makuhari were delighted to report that almost all grade one

students returned to MIS when school opened after Easter. Teachers were very happy to see students' smiling faces at graduation. Indeed, overall, MIS was fortunate in that enrolment actually increased between March and April.

With regard to all those who have suffered since March 11, MIS is pleased to announce a sizable donation has been made to the Japanese Red Cross. Like other schools, MIS wishes to help in any way they can, and extend their heartfelt sympathies and best wishes to those who have been less fortunate than the majority of children, families, and staff at Makuhari. — PAUL ROGERS

Yokohama's Treehouse supports play therapy for children in the north

The Treehouse Montessori School in Yokohama community has been collecting items for the Japan Association of Play Therapy's clinical psychologists and doctors to use in their efforts to provide therapy for children affected by the earthquake and tsunami. Parents helped collect toys and other items that were requested by the Association to assist them in their work.

The Japan Association of Play Therapy has been working with the UNICEF House in Tokyo to provide training for play therapists. Therapists work with teachers and volunteers so they can allow children to express their own feelings. For more information about the Japan Association of Play Therapy please see <http://playtherapy.jp>.

Amid the support activities for other children, Treehouse children were also able to celebrate Easter as students decorated eggs, and hunted for sweets that had been hidden throughout the school garden. The school is looking forward to a field trip at the end of May, where they will visit a local aquarium.

And finally, Treehouse's ten-year anniversary celebrations that were originally scheduled for March, will also go ahead at the end of May. — JENNY VYVIAL

ASIJ reaches out to Japan

The ASIJ community around the world has truly come together to do what it can to help those affected by the earthquake and tsunami. ASIJ prides itself on being highly dedicated to service year-round, but the devastation in the north of Japan has called on the school community to go above and beyond to dedicate themselves to helping the country they feel so fortunate to live in.

ASIJ alumni quickly spearheaded fundraising efforts around the world and have already given over \$2 million to the relief efforts through various initiatives. Marcus and Andrew Ogawa challenged the community to donate to the Red Cross and have offered to match any gifts given up to \$500,000 — they have already surpassed their \$1 million target.

ASIJ has also launched a Japan Relief Fund that will support its own direct relief efforts. The ASIJ community and friends, including international schools and organizations from all over the world, have contributed almost \$40,000 directly into the Relief Fund. Student groups throughout the school are engaged in activities ranging from fundraising drives to charity shows and Futsal tournaments. The PTA's Spring Gala auction — which was scheduled for the day after the earthquake — was rescheduled for May 1 and held in support of the



ASIJ delivers school desks to schools that lost everything in Ishinomaki City. TAI DIRKSE

Relief Fund.

With the money raised already, ASIJ has purchased 400 desks and some school supplies for four elementary and junior high schools in Ishinomaki City that lost everything. Two faculty and staff relief trips to Tagajo and Kesenuma to deliver specific supplies and cook dinner for over 360 people were also funded. For many survivors it was their first hot meal in a couple of weeks. Another group of 28 ASIJ employees are planning to travel to Tagajo and volunteer to clean up some

houses so that residents can move back into their homes. Long-term, ASIJ hopes to identify schools in the Fukushima and/or Miyagi areas to which they can provide assistance in rebuilding efforts.

At ASIJ, people believe in the school's mission of "developing compassionate, inquisitive learners prepared for global responsibilities." There will never be a better time than now to live that mission and join hands with others. ASIJ thanks everyone in their community who is helping to achieve this. — MATT WILCE