

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

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MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

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Chateau School travels 365 days a year



“Diplomats” (l to r, in the foreground) Masaichi Maehara, Apple Hutt, and Napoleon Bovrisse with “ambassadors” (l to r) Robin Furlong and Diana Motyovszki. CHATEAU SCHOOL

“Pack your suitcase, grab your passport, and get ready to depart on an educational adventure that inspires for a lifetime.” This is the message from a new school with a concept that has yet to be seen by most children — a magical world of cultural immersion and academics that aims to imaginatively prepare them for the world around them.

Chateau School’s unique concept plans to deliver world diplomacy, elite education, and creativity to the neighbourhood of Omotesando’s fashion district. Its emphasis on design and the use of local materials from throughout the world creates and influences diverse inspiration even in the youngest of children.

Each morning, “diplomats” aged 0–6 years old check in at Chateau School’s “customs” counter in order to visit the country of the day — passport in hand and luggage in tow. Greeting them are “ambassadors” who all speak more than three languages. Not just anybody can pass through this lavender-frosted checkpoint, and diplomats proudly bear their Chateau Bon Bon Diplomat Honour Badge as they prepare for their worldly and educational excursion of the day.

Whether it’s becoming familiar with the texture of lentils and rose petals from India, building a marble maze of wooden blocks imported from Switzerland, creating a volcano to replicate one of the many found in Iceland, introducing Russian caviar comprised of black Swarovski crystals, or visiting the United Nations University library to understand how to better the world, Chateau School is designed to be a leader in cultural education.

Chateau School plans to incorporate the International Baccalaureate Programme within the coming years and to deliver an exceptional education that already includes its unique 50-page termly review for each child. The toddler group, “Lollipops,” and the preschooler group, “Chocolat,” are expected to develop and pioneer world leadership in today’s international society. At Chateau School, the idea of unity and non-prejudice are practised as the young representatives of the world share and learn together.

For more information see <http://www.chateaubonbon.com>. — RINA BOVRISSE

British School geography trips around Tokyo area

British School in Tokyo (BST) primary students had a busy start to the new academic year with lots of trips around Tokyo and the surrounding countryside to support their core curriculum subjects.

Year 2 students visited Tokyo Tower and Zojoji Temple to support their learning on Japan’s geography and their religious education topic on Buddhism. Back in the classroom they recorded their findings on the geographical features of Tokyo, and completed paintings of Tokyo Tower in the style of Robert Delaunay!

Year 5 had an exciting week focusing on “jobs.” BST parents came into the school to talk about their professions, and students asked questions to find out what skills and qualifications are required for a range of jobs. The week culminated in a trip

to Kidzania where all the Year 5 students had the opportunity to try out real careers for themselves.

In late autumn, Year 6 took their Japanese skills and their geography topic on mountains out into the sunshine to Mount Takao. They took a cable car up the mountain and then walked to the summit where they interviewed local hikers about the impact of tourism on the natural environment. Once back in school, some of the students presented their findings in an assembly watched by their parents and the rest of the Year 6 students.

Year 4 students studying the Edo period in history walked a part of the old Tokaido, experiencing firsthand what it must have been like. The trip included a visit to Hakone Sekisho, the checkpoint where travellers had to show their



Year 4 students from the British School in Tokyo on their recent trip to Hakone’s Edo museum. BRITISH SCHOOL IN TOKYO

permit to be allowed to pass and continue on their journey.

Curriculum trips continue in terms 2 and 3 and everyone is looking looking forward to reading the reports. — NANCY JENKINS

Two Christmas performances at Makuhari



Some of the kindergarten children with staff, singing during the "Penguin Pete" performance on the morning of December 14. MAKUHARI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Moriyama merry madness



Aichi International School students in last month's "Phantom of the Christmas Show." AIS

On Friday, December 12, 2011 the annual Aichi International School (AIS) Christmas Show was held in a theatre in Moriyama, Nagoya.

The show, "Phantom of the Christmas Show," was based around the phantom trying to prevent

the new owners of the theatre from holding a Christmas concert. Despite the presence of the phantom, and with the support of some carol singers, the owners were able to audition a number of acts for their Christmas show.

A wide variety of acts were included in the three-hour performance, ranging from hula hoop girls, to 20 Orca students (5–6 years old) waltzing while accompanied by nearly 50 violinists playing "Can You Feel the Love Tonight." There was also a sixth grade student singing and playing an acoustic version of "Love Story" with the support of a couple of younger students. Larger numbers of students sang "Day Dream Believer," "Hi Ho Silver Lining," and Christmas songs such as "Winter Wonderland" and "Last Christmas."

The show was a great success, and students were rewarded by a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, who gave out presents to all the students at the conclusion of the show. — MARK REED

Summerhill's seasonal celebrations and songs



Summerhill International School students and staff in their seasonal performance. JEFF KRATZ

Summerhill celebrated the season to gather friends and family together to enjoy the holidays by holding its annual Christmas show. Instead of using the different classes to string together a story, they allowed the classes to choose which kind of

individual performance they would like to do.

There was a penguin dance with the oldest students singing while the youngest danced, and a performance of "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" in sign language. Another class sang "Feliz Navidad" and there was a great reindeer dance to the tune of "Run, Run, Rudolph." All in all it was a spectacular show.

After the performances there was a surprise visit by Santa Claus who brought along his bag filled with gifts for each student. Back at school everyone gathered again for a Christmas party. Overall the day went smoothly and the students were proud of their performances. — JEFF KRATZ

Last month, staff rushed around worrying whether the Christmas performance would be as good as the previous year's, whether children would remember their lines, and whether the pianist would get through 15 songs without any mistakes!

But there was no need to worry, and kindergarten staff breathed a sigh of relief after surviving the performance; described by parents as being "wonderful, super, with fantastic staging, and with lovely singing." "Penguin Pete" was the theme of the show, and to see the children waddling around the stage as penguins while singing about their "flip flap feet" was a really fun experience.

As the school gets bigger (with almost 200 in the elementary school now) it gets more difficult to organize entire school performances, so the older students held a pirate-themed Christmas show the day after the kindergarteners' show.

Secret Santa visited all classes on December 21, bringing presents at the beginning of the class parties, as excited children and tired staff wished each other a Happy Christmas and looked forward to their Christmas break. — PAUL ROGERS

Christmas with Gymboree at Isetan and Mitsukoshi

Gymboree was asked again this year to hold their fun-filled events at two major department stores in Tokyo — Shinjuku Isetan and Ebisu Mitsukoshi. The agenda was created in the Christmas spirit and included special holiday music and craft activities, which were enjoyed by children and parents alike.

During the art activities, children decorated their own musical instruments, which were then used during the music activities and taken home with each family as a special souvenir of the event. The live music activities included popular holiday music as well as songs from *Colorful Musica*, the CD created by Gymboree's own teachers. Children and parents had fun using their instruments and dancing to world music during the live session.

Gymboree Play & Music is the global leader in music classes for children 0–5 years old. Free trials are offered daily at both locations in Tokyo. For more information, see <http://www.gymboree.jp>. There is currently an "Introduce a Friend" campaign to save ¥5,000 off one month of class fees. — NICOLE YAMADA



Gymboree staff entertaining shoppers at Ebisu's Mitsukoshi during the holiday period. GYMBOREE

Treehouse annual performance at YCAC

Treehouse Montessori School celebrated the festive holiday season on December 9 with their annual singing and dancing performances at the Yokohama Country and Athletic Club (YCAC).

The show started with "Jingle Bells" and "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star," which were sung by the entire school, including even the youngest child — a one-year-old. Some of the other performances included an ensemble with various instruments played by the older children. The hand bell performed at the end of "Jingle Bells" was very impressive and touched the heart of everyone. The finale was a very upbeat song that got everyone on their feet and dancing.

After a delicious lunch, the children were overjoyed when they heard bells ring and Santa Claus visited. Each child was given gifts and the party ended happily with some photos with Santa. — JENNY VYVIAL



Students from Treehouse Montessori School at their annual show at YCAC. KERRY RAFTIS

New Year, new food concept at Aoba-Japan

Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) is happy to announce the provision of new food programs along with its service partner, To the Moon and Back Catering. These new programs are based on the school's belief that food is a vital part of daily life beyond basic sustenance. Starting this year, A-JIS began new programs to support a love and knowledge of cuisine that is so needed in this modern world of high calorie, fast, unhealthy, and processed food. The school's new "slow" food mission is to create and sustain a culinary program that is wholly integrated into the curriculum and culture, as well as daily life.

The 2011–12 school year started with the promotion of international food days, exposing students to new ingredients and new types of meals from around the world. During Halloween, A-JIS students carved pumpkins, baked the seeds, and enjoyed the results as decorations for the annual middle school dance.

An after-school cooking club called Chef-tastic for students from ages 6–16 was launched! Each week, students learn how to read and interpret recipes, how to cook for themselves and their friends, and all about food service professionals as a vital part of every community throughout history.

Weekly food trivia quizzes with tasty prizes are being added to lunchtime, and students and families can now purchase homemade snacks from our new school store instead of buying chemical-laden konbini foods.

Future plans include window farming early in the spring, when each class can grow and observe

herbs and leafy greens right in the classroom. This will lead to the development of a full school garden and outdoor classroom in the 2012 school year. Students, staff, and families will be involved in all aspects of farming the garden and preparing, serving, and eating food as a means of awakening their senses and encouraging awareness and appreciation of the transformative values of nourishment, community, health, and well being. — LAUREN SHANNON



Aoba-Japan students at their new after-school club, "Chef-tastic." A-JIS

Experiential education with Rustic Pathways adventure programs

Ever since John Dewey wrote *Experience and Education* in 1938, the idea of organizing school curriculum to highlight experience as the central role in education has been at the centre of debate. Even nationally recognized practices like Outdoor Education, Youth Empowerment, and Active Learning still rely on what Dewey would call an authoritarian, strict, preordained knowledge approach; one that is too concerned with delivering knowledge and not allowing students to create knowledge through experience. Many educators find that with state-mandated curriculum and strict graduation requirements, implementing experiential education can be difficult.

Organizations like Rustic Pathways have picked up the mantle in helping provide these experiences. While not all of the 120+ programs offered are purely experiential education-based, the company is making large strides in that direction. One program, for example, takes students to rural Cambodia where they work to solve a real problem within a local community. As a team, students must

design, propose, and budget a service initiative as well as work side-by-side with community members to complete the project. Another program places students in charge of a ten-day day camp for impoverished Costa Rican children. Students organize and lead educational activities to complement the Costa Rican's normal curriculum. Many of the other programs offered by Rustic Pathways implement methods of experiential education, and new programs are constantly being developed to meet this ever-growing need.

While the complete transition of practices from traditional education to experiential education will take time, organizations like Rustic Pathways are rising to the challenge.

For more information about Rustic Pathways, visit <http://www.rusticpathways.com>. For more information about experiential education, check out works by John Dewey including, *Experience and Education*, *Democracy and Education*, *The Child and the Curriculum*, and *The School and Society*. — WILLIAM HAYNES



Children benefitting from the activities conducted by Rustic Pathways program participants. RUSTIC PATHWAYS

ASIJ's robotics team's third consecutive VEX championship win



The American School in Japan robotics team club with their winning robot. AMERICAN SCHOOL IN JAPAN

The American School in Japan's (ASIJ) robotics club team competed in the Asian VEX Robotics Competition in Taipei in November and took home an award for the third consecutive year. Team member and senior Momona Yamagami reports on the competition.

We waited nervously in the final moments. "And the winner of this round is..." The crowd was silent, holding its breath for the final verdict. "rrreeeed team, 16-15!" We heaved a sigh of relief, before we went crazy over the

black negation barrel that was just hanging over the goal where we scored the most points. Our team was made up of nine members, with senior Skyler Adams as our captain. We started building our robot back in August, and although we were planning to finish building by homecoming in October, and just work on autonomous, we ended up changing the design at least five times. A day of building the robot was not complete until we dismantled it at least once.

During the competition, we had a lot of close games, especially when our axle bent halfway through, when one of our batteries stopped working, and when the robot tipped over. Sometimes, we managed to put a white doubling barrel in our goal just seconds before the timer ran out, and there was another time when we somehow managed to quickly score a white in one of the goals, go back to our side, then score a black one on the opposite side of the field, all within 20 seconds. Although we had some technical problems, we managed to patch up the robot in time for all its games, and the robot and our drivers managed to pull victory after victory, until we held the title of Tournament Champions. Sure, we don't run around throwing balls at each other; the robots do that for us—but the tournament was just as intense, with crowds cheering, heart-stopping moments, and a shiny trophy for us to bring home.

New International School hosts conference for Japanese language teachers of international schools

On November 12, New International School hosted an all-Japan conference for international school Japanese language teachers in Japan. The presenters were Professor Emeritus Kazuko Nakajima of the University of Toronto, an expert on bilingual language acquisition and heritage language education; and Yoshio Yoshimoto of Rikkyo University, an expert on innovative methods for teaching kanji.

Over 70 teachers attended, representing 23 schools, including those as far away as Sapporo and Fukuoka. The Japan Council of International Schools fully funded the presenters.

An increasing number of the students at international schools are children of Japanese parents or of international marriages where one parent is Japanese, for which such professional development opportunities for the Japanese language teachers are invaluable. The conference was overwhelmingly well received by the attendees.

The Japan Council of International Schools aims to promote, support, and improve English medium member schools serving the international community in Japan. For more information see <http://www.jcis.jp>.

Travel the world in three days at Katoh Gakuen

With homemade passports in hand, the children of Katoh Kindergarten's Immersion program departed for their annual International Day event.

The imaginary travel plans for the event were made up of each class taking one day at a specific destination over a period of over three days. This year, the little travellers' itineraries sent them venturing to Spain, Greece, and Jamaica.

In Spain, the children were greeted by the local *torero* (bullfighter), and were introduced to various Spanish phrases. Then they filled their empty stomachs with a traditional gazpacho dish and made *palillos* (castanets) to use to dance to the exotic sound of flamenco music.

In Greece, the children were first greeted by teachers dressed in *chitons* (tunics) and practised Greek phrases such as Καλώς Όρισες (*Kalós órises*) "welcome" and Γειά! (*ya*) "hi". After making their wreath-crown souvenirs from Ancient Greece, they chanted ΚΓειά σου (*Yiá sou*) "goodbye" and Ευχαριστώ (*Efsharistó*) "thank you".

Finally, in the tropic room of Jamaica, pirate captains greeted the little shipmates, and they adventured through Jamaica via movie projector. Once they arrived on the island, the children were inducted onto the "Katoh Pirate Ship," by making pirate hats and Rasta dreadlocks.

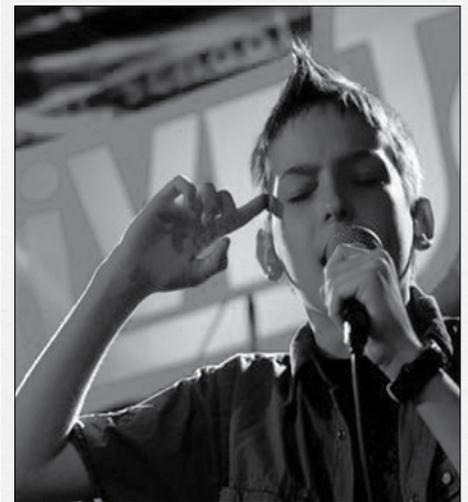
The big finale was a special guest performance by volunteer parents who participate in flamenco dancing classes. The little travellers were astonished

LiVEJAM music school student recital vol. 5

Music school LiVEJAM's next student recital (JAMOUT!) will be held on Friday, February 3rd in Ebisu. This will be the fifth show where LiVEJAM rents a live house, regularly used by professional musicians, for its performances.

This time, with more new students, there will be more new bands, such as an all-girl band, a standards' band, and a hard rock band.

Ethan (LiVEJAM's youngest student, who just recently turned 11) has plans for a unique and surprising performance that will most likely exceed his last one in October where the audience went crazy as he stole the show. The young vocal wonder also took advantage of the recording facility at LiVEJAM in December, when he recorded Christmas songs to hand out as gifts to his family and relatives. — KEN TAKAGI



11-year-old Ethan captures hearts at October's recital. KEN TAKAGI

by the sight of such gorgeous dresses and by the sound of such new music. They cheered and clapped with the dancers as the International Day event ended with the resonance of stamping soles and cries of "Olé!" and "Bién!" — TODD ARAO



Teacher Brad Carpenter and students of Katoh Kindergarten as they "travel" to Greece together. LISA SANO