

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

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MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

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AIS students make a splash with Oceans



Aichi International School students with the Nagoya Oceans at Taiho Yakuin Arena. MARK REED

Aichi International School (AIS) has had a busy, exciting, sporty autumn. On October 8, the annual Sports Day competition took place in Nijigaoka Park, in glorious sunshine, with the Edinburgh (blue) team winning the kindergarten event, and the Cardiff (red) team taking the honours in the elementary competition. This was only a day after grades 2, 3, and 4 visited Suzuka Circuit in Mie prefecture to watch the Formula One practice races.

Earlier in the autumn, 30 students were lucky enough to visit the Taiyo Yakuin Arena, home of the current Asian futsal champions, Nagoya Oceans. AIS students watched Oceans win their game 9-2 against Stella Amigo Iwate, and were then treated to time spent with the Oceans' players and a stadium tour. Students had their photographs taken with team members, and two favourites of AIS students were Brazilian Marquinho and Pedro Costa of Portugal.

Throughout the rest of the academic year further sports-connected projects are planned, such as a visit and tour of Toyota Stadium, home of current J-League football champions Nagoya Grampus, and, at the time of writing, AIS students are awaiting Mandeville, one of the two London Olympic mascots arriving from Argentina, as part of an exchange project that is connected with a variety of schools from around the globe. — MARK REED

Gardening and cooking with Gymboree



Gymboree students at Motoazabu Farm. LENA KAWAMOTO

Gymboree Play & Music Japan recently teamed up with Motoazabu Farm to offer gardening and cooking classes. During the program, which started at the end of September, children had the opportunity to experience growing their own vegetables (from planting seeds to harvesting) and to make a simple dish using the vegetables they grew. Children also took some seeds home with them to try growing vegetables there.

The program also included Japanese-language cooking classes for mothers, focused on making vegetable dishes that their children would enjoy eating.

The current series of classes ends on November 25, and families can still participate on a class-by-class basis (¥5,500 per class). Classes are held on

Fridays from 4:15-5:15pm at Motoazabu Farm and are targeted at children aged three years and up. Openings are still available in the harvesting classes on November 11 and 25, but spaces are limited so interested families should contact Gymboree at 03-5449-2311 as soon as possible.

Motoazabu Farm is located near Motoazabu Hills Residence at 1-4-4 Motoazabu. For more information about their programs and services, please refer to their website (<http://motoazabu-farm.com>) or call 03-6805-1661 (Japanese only).

Gymboree Play & Music is the global leader in classes for children 0-5 years old. Free trials are offered daily at both locations. For more information about Gymboree's unique, age-appropriate programming, please go to <http://www.gymboree.jp>. — NICOLE YAMADA

Community spirit in action at Katoh Gakuen



(Left to right) Ayumi, Yui, and Manami assisting parents during Katoh Gakuen's Fall Bazaar. MIKE BOSTWICK

On October 2, Katoh Gakuen Junior and Senior High School once again opened its doors to the community with its annual Fall Bazaar.

Reflecting the efforts of students and staff, coupled with the hard work done by the school's parent association, a number of stalls were run and operated for the occasion. Most proceeds are to be donated to Tohoku earthquake victims and organizations such as ARK (Animal Rescue Kansai) and Free the Children.

Visitors certainly didn't go hungry throughout the day as grade 7, 8, and 9 students were helping to serve up a number of delicious Japanese and western dishes. The bazaar also featured fun

activities and entertainment for people of all ages. A number of children eagerly took part in arts and crafts sessions. The grade 11 students lent a helping hand as they demonstrated how to create original greeting cards. There was even an opportunity for guests to drop by the grade 10 theatre to take in few short films and Japanese dramas.

There was an array of products on sale, including handicrafts, household and gift items, as well as items for children, including toys and books. Of course, none of this would have been possible without those who find reward in donating their time and hard work for a good cause. — CARL HADLEY

American School's KEEP extended campus trip

One of the highlights of the American School in Japan's (ASIJ) sixth grade is the extended campus trip, KEEP (Kiyosato Educational Experiment Project).

Kiyosato is located in Yamanashi Prefecture, about a two-and-a-half-hour bus ride from the school. The area is a high-altitude recreation complex set in dairy farming land, among the majestic backdrop of the southern Japanese Alps, including Mount Fuji. This Middle School extended campus program continues to provide opportunities for student growth and success.

Students explore this natural environment with the support of the park rangers and work together in nature hiking, milking cows, nature craft with items collected in the adjacent fields and forest, and butter making. Skill building and cooperative games are features of the schedule. The night activities, led by teachers, allow for several hours of programs that develop public speaking, dancing, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

This year the school was fortunate to have beautiful weather for three consecutive days, experiencing the best sunshine and views in 22 years! Staff were pleased to note that this year's group formed friendships during their time away in the mountains. As a community, ASIJ values these constructive connections and the positive energy shared among the sixth grade students.

At other times in the year the other grade levels in Middle and High School also go on extended campus trips to explore Japan, visiting areas as diverse as Okinawa, Nagano, Kyoto, and Hiroshima. — MAKI USHIGOME

TAIP's words of thanks

Tokyo Association of International Preschools (TAIP) would like to thank everyone for their participation in what was another successful annual conference, held at Tokyo YMCA on October 15. TAIP extends a special word of thanks to the volunteers who helped set things up on Friday evening before the conference. Thanks also to all guest presenters and to the teachers who attended.

TAIP is committed to offering professional development opportunities not just to member schools but also the wider international preschool community. — CHRISTOPHER HOLLAND

2012 teen travel plans

Rustic Pathways is now accepting applications for its summer 2012 teen travel programs. Educational adventure trips for next year will take young people to destinations such as China, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Vietnam, India, Peru, Tanzania, Cambodia, Ghana, Laos, Morocco, Panama, Mongolia, and Burma. See <http://www.rusticpathways.com> for more information.

Treehouse Montessori's tenth anniversary tree

As one of the final events to celebrate its tenth anniversary, Treehouse Montessori School held a tree-planting ceremony in its garden on a warm sunny day in October. Each child in the school participated in the event by putting soil on the roots of the oak tree.

In reaching this ten-year milestone, staff reflected upon how fortunate they felt to be able to provide countless opportunities for the next generation. The tree was planted as a symbol of how they aim to continue to provide quality education for children, by focusing on each individual's potential and their inner core. — JENNY VYVIAL



Treehouse student Reyone Love participating in last month's tree planting ceremony. JENNY VYVIAL

Japanese language teachers' conference at NewIS

New International School will be hosting the third all-Japan conference for Japanese language teachers at international schools on November 12. Presenters include Professor Emeritus Kazuko Nakajima of the University of Toronto who will talk about achieving biliteracy, and Yukio Yoshimoto of Rikkyo University, an expert on kanji teaching and learning whose methods turn kanji learning (and

teaching) from an ordeal into a delight for native as well as non-native Japanese speakers.

The Japan Council of International Schools (JCIS) is funding the speakers, so the cost is zero for teachers from JCIS member schools and only ¥2,000 for teachers from non-member schools. For registration information, contact Steven Parr at sparr@newis.ed.jp.

School trips and visitors for the new BST year

It's been a busy start to the school year at The British School in Tokyo (BST), with plenty of school trips and activities taking the students out and about in the city.

The whole school BST Outdoors program started in September, with all secondary school students enjoying a week-long residential trip to Hakuba. Students were challenged to face new adventures such as camping and hiking, kayaking, canyoning, rock climbing, and mountain biking. The Outdoors program supports core curriculum subjects and offers a real opportunity for personal growth in developing a sense of teamwork and camaraderie.

Year 4 students went on a trip to the Edo museum, and made careful observations of artefacts on display as part of their historical inquiries about that period. Year 2 went to Tokyo Tower and Zojoji Temple to support

their learning in geography on Japan and also their religious education curriculum topic of Buddhism.

Year 12 students were on their Work Placement Week, finding out about being an employee and getting a taste of what life will be like for them after school. The students were in a wide variety of industries including recruitment, hospitality, finance, and education. BST staff said, "We are extremely grateful to the companies who cooperate with us on this programme — the students all came back to school with lots of stories and enthusiasm."

There were also plenty of visitors to the school, in the form of little furry creatures, as Year 1 had a "Pet Week." Students brought in rabbits, hamsters, fish, and guinea pigs, and talked about how to look after their animals, what they eat, and how to play with them. — NANCY JENKINS



A Year 1 student at The British School in Tokyo, during the recent Pet Week activities. BST

Riverside adventures at Summerhill International



Summerhill students and their parents on a recent trip to the river after digging up potatoes. SUMMERHILL

On October 7 the students, parents, and staff of Summerhill International School went on a potato-digging excursion outside Tokyo. The students were excited about simply riding on the luxurious buses, but the real fun was getting to explore an interesting place and have a new experience.

Once everyone got off the buses, they headed straight for the lush fields that could be seen in the distance. The smell of woodsmoke and potatoes cooking was already in the air.

In the fields, the children eagerly looked for potatoes and unearthed them with their shovels. After some time spent digging in the fields, they washed up and found a beautiful clearing in which to relax. Everyone talked as they ate lunch on the scenic riverside. Some of the students, parents, and teachers even walked around in the river and found some interesting animals and plant life. The enticing weather helped everyone to enjoy time together outside. Many pictures were taken and many memories made. — JEFF KRATZ



Aoba-Japan students and staff white water rafting on a recent school trip. AOBA-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Typhoon rapids for Aoba-Japan International

Every year the eighth and ninth graders from A-JIS embark on an overnight adventure trip to the Yuzawa area of Niigata. The highlight is always rafting on the Tone River near Minakami.

Students and teachers embarked on a white water rafting trip down the storm-filled river just a day after a strong typhoon had passed through.

Less hazardous, but equally enjoyable, was the zip-line adventure in Yuzawa Kogen Highland. Students enjoyed spectacular views from the top of the ropeway, and experienced the thrills of riding down the rope and pulley systems through the forest. With camping, food, conversation, and hiking, this was a very welcome break from the daily routine of school at A-JIS. — ROYCE JACOBS

Makuhari cultural exchange with New Zealand



Children from MIS and the three New Zealand schools before their tea ceremony held in Kaihin Makuhari Park.
MAKUHARI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Last month, Makuhari International School (MIS) was delighted to accept a visit from over 20 children from New Zealand as they took part in an International Exchange Day. The children and their teachers, from three schools in New Zealand, spent a few days with Shibuya Makuhari Junior High School.

MIS staff organized an interesting and varied program for their new friends. This included a presentation in the school hall from both sets of children. The children from MIS talked in detail about life in Japan and Makuhari in particular, and especially about the recent events of March 11. It was fitting that they were then able to hear alternative views on what happened in Christchurch, New Zealand at the time of

their recent large quake. The children were soon discussing both events in great detail.

MIS children were also lucky to witness the famous Haka dance from their new friends.

Students sang the school song and then gave the guests tours of the school, while getting to know their new friends. The children went to the local park together where they took part in a tea ceremony and had a fun Japanese lesson from one of the MIS elementary school Japanese Studies teachers, after which there was time to play rugby on the recently expanded school field.

Staff felt that the International Exchange Day proved to be a real success, and look forward to building on it when Makuhari children go to New Zealand in the future. — PAUL ROGERS

The “Princess and the Pea” at J’s International

Along with the lovely weather, the month of October brought to J’s International School the theme of Fairy Tales. A “Kings’ Ball” was held, to which only kings, queens, princes, and princesses were invited. Everyone showed up in their finest dresses and suits, and special treats were served.

The story of the “Princess and the Pea” was a big hit in the Busy Bee class. A big bed was made and the children took turns taking a rest; they ALL claimed they could feel the pea under layers of mattresses.

For Halloween, J’s will become a haunted mansion. Visitors beware! — MANA ORTIZ



Cecilia about to hide the pea under all the mattresses. MANA ORTIZ

LIVEJAM’s 4th recital

Music school LIVEJAM’s student recital JAMOUT! Vol. 4 was held on October 8. About 40 students in ten groups performed in front of a record-breaking audience of nearly 200.

Yuki and Ran, two junior high school girls from a private Japanese school, formed Lady Bug and sang “Speak Now” by Taylor Swift. After starting guitar lessons only in June, this was their very first time on stage — they said their legs were shaking, but they performed the song flawlessly.

Whiplash — half made up of international school students — invited Gyo, a vocalist from a private Japanese school, to sing a heavy metal song by Iron Maiden. Thunder Goat also invited a Japanese vocalist, Miya, to sing a Demi Lovato song. This mixture of local and international school students was a common theme.

Ethan, a 10-year-old American and, the newest and youngest member of LIVEJAM, stole the show when he performed “Grenade” by Bruno Mars. Although he was supported by an instrumental recording rather than a band, his Mohican hairstyle



Audience in a frenzy to LIVEJAM All Star teachers’ band at last month’s recital. KEN TAKAGI

and choreography were huge hits.

About 40 percent of the audience was parents and other middle-aged adults, which is unusually high for this type of “rock concert.” Parents who attended said, “The show was a blast! I am still stomping my feet!” “Seeing my son sing on stage for the first time, I could not help tears falling down

my cheek” and, “Thank you for providing a venue where parents and children can share a valuable experience and become good friends again.”

The event was a chance for the students to really immerse themselves in music, and for parents to share a common experience with their teenagers. — KEN TAKAGI