

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

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MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

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Summerhill's "Winter Fun"



Summerhill students, along with children from local Japanese schools and some overseas visitors, enjoying the school's recent Winter Fun program with their teachers. JEFF KRATZ

Before the beginning of the winter vacation the students of Summerhill International School had "Winter Fun" — five days of seasonal activities. Making ornaments, writing holiday cards, baking cookies, and making gingerbread houses were all part of the fun, but a few field trips also helped to make this time memorable. The students and teachers had a blast making crafts, playing musical instruments, and exploring the play areas of Kodomo no Shiro in Aoyama.

Other students from Japanese schools who

were on vacation, and same-aged students who were visiting Tokyo for the holidays joined the students who attend Summerhill all year long. The children had a great time meeting new friends and the visitors enjoyed spending time at Summerhill.

Summerhill hosts their Winter Fun program each year during the winter holidays and also has a Summer Fun program. This year's Summer Fun program will run from June 18 until July 20. Please contact Summerhill with any questions at info@summerhill.jp. — JEFF KRATZ

Katoh Kindergarten's annual Kobato Concert

Last December, Katoh Kindergarten students put on a concert at the Numazu Cultural Centre. It was exciting for the children to perform on such a big stage.

Katoh Kindergarten has over 250 students and more than half of them are in a unique English Immersion program. Each class starts preparing for this concert about a month in advance. Learning in a playful and fun environment is key as everyone prepares props, costumes, songs, and dances.

This year the K1 children's performance was all about a typical week at kindergarten. Through music, movement, song, and dance, they showed everyone how much fun kindergarten can be!

The K2 children put on an amusing operetta about 11 cats and albatross, based on a popular Japanese storybook. They ended their performance with a spectacular rendition of the song "Peanut Butter and Jelly." The children even had a peanut butter and jelly party!

The older K3 children created an original pirate story, including impressive jump rope skills, dance moves, and marionettes. The audience was impressed by all. — LISA SANO



K2 classmates performing at Katoh. LISA SANO

CPR and first aid courses

Tokyo CPR and First Aid will be holding courses on February 11. This will be a chance for educators, parents, concerned adults, and teens to take advanced CPR courses and first aid training.

The "Care for Children" course primarily covers child victims, and is perfect for the new parent, older sibling, or preschool/kindergarten staff member. The "Primary and Secondary Care" course covers mainly adult victims but touches on childcare as well. This course is good for corporate personnel, adults living with the elderly, or parents with teenage children.

Courses start at 9:30am, last 6–8 hours, and will be held at New International School in Ikebukuro. ¥12,600 for TAIP (Tokyo Association of International Preschools) members, or ¥14,700 for non-members. Email chris@tokyocpr-firstaid.com.

New instructors join LiVEJAM music school

Music school LiVEJAM, dedicated to teenage music education and performance, has recently added more instructors, bringing the total number of instructors to 12. The most recent additions are Kenji Green and Tommy Jaime.

Kenji is a bilingual guitar teacher who is half American/half Japanese, originally from the state of Washington in the United States. A man of many talents, he also plays the drums, bass, saxophone, and flute. He is also the computer wiz behind LiVEJAM's software architecture.

Tommy is a bass teacher who grew up in California, playing in all types of school bands where he won numerous awards for outstanding bass in regional competitions. He has toured in Japan, China, Korea, Australia, Mexico, and

Canada, performing in many genres. With an outrageous sense of humour (some would say unusual for a bass player?), his lessons are full of laughter. Since Tommy joined, the number of bass students has nearly quadrupled in just one month.

— KEN TAKAGI



Kenji Green sensei and Tommy Jaime sensei. LiVEJAM



Wenlock taking a violin lesson with grade 2 students Hikari Takemoto (with violin) and Koha Kawamoto (with Wenlock). MARK REED

Olympic visitor to Aichi

Recently Aichi International School (AIS) had a visitor, from England — Wenlock, the mascot of the 2012 London Olympic Games. As part of the British Council's E Languages partnership projects, a school in Yeovil sent toy versions of Olympic mascots Mandeville and Wenlock around the world. This project is aimed at raising awareness and interest in next year's Olympic Games.

AIS was proud to receive Wenlock, named after the town of Much Wenlock, and regarded as an inspiration for the modern day Olympics. Students had photographs taken with the Olympic mascot and then posted them on the E Languages website, alongside schools in England, Spain, and Argentina, where the mascots had already visited.

At the same time that Wenlock was in Nagoya, AIS grade 3 and 4 students were writing letters and making *nengajo* (New Year's postcards) as part of an exchange project with a school in Lancaster. This project, plus work completed as part of Wenlock's visit, provided students with opportunities to use their English and communicate with students outside Japan. — MARK REED

Science comes alive at Aoba-Japan International

The Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) annual Upper Elementary Exhibition Festival was a huge success. Over fifty students participated in bringing hands-on science experiments to life for their visiting families. Students showed off everything from basic electronic circuitry and water clocks to kinetic energy experiments.

During this half-day event, the hallways and elementary classrooms of A-JIS were transformed into a cutting-edge research facility, with young scientists standing proudly in front of their discoveries.

This event provided students with an opportunity to share their learning about the scientific method, and at the same time have fun exploring science with their families. — ROYCE JACOBS



Junka Arai, Lorentz Eriksson, and Daiki Murase with their science activities at Aoba-Japan. A-JIS

Girls' futsal kicks off at the American School

As Japan still basks in the glory of its women's national soccer team winning the Women's World Cup, ASIJ's Middle School has started its first girls-only soccer program in addition to its existing co-ed soccer team. The latest addition to ASIJ's 100-plus co-curricular options, the new girls' futsal team will play FIFA's official small-sided soccer game. Clearly an idea whose time has come, girls' futsal puts ASIJ in the new 10-team Kanto Plains league. 34 middle school students have signed up to the program, which is coached by elementary school librarian Wouter Laleman and middle school teacher Steve Harris.

Futsal is a sport with a surprisingly rich history. Though small-sided soccer continues to be played in many different forms around the world, futsal became FIFA's official version in the late '80s and in 2008 celebrated its fifth World Cup in Brazil, where it is the type of soccer most locals grow up playing. The close ball control, quick thinking, and tactical awareness that futsal encourages



The newly-formed ASIJ Futsal Mustangs. ASIJ

are often cited as reasons for the beauty of the Brazilian game. Futsal is also a crucial part of youth development, as it demands creative play and emphasizes physical contact.

ASIJ's Futsal Mustangs practise twice a week and will play home and away games on four Saturdays this winter in their inaugural season. — STEVE HARRIS

Saturday programs at New International School

New International School has begun a Saturday program on two Saturdays a month, with an option of a two-and-a-half hour English class and/or a two-and-a-half hour class in Mandarin Chinese. Classes are fun, thematic, activity-based, and intended to be of value to both native and non-native speakers of each language. For further information, call 03-3980-1057 or check out the website at <http://newis.ed.jp>.

Tohoku International School scholarship fund

Tohoku International School has created a scholarship fund to support families in Sendai who were severely affected by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, and appreciate any support that enables them to help these students and their families. Donations can be made by bank transfer to 77Bank; Miyamachi Branch; (Gakkou Houjin) Nankou Gakuen; 9046984, ordinary savings account. See <http://www.tisweb.net>.



Makuhari students performing Christmas carols at a local residential home in December. PAUL ROGERS

Gymboree Play & Music Japan's Valentine's events

Valentine's craft events will take place at Gymboree's Motoazabu site on February 5 (Sunday), and 7 (Tuesday) from 12:30–2pm.

During the events, children aged 16 months–5 years will have the opportunity to create their own Valentine's cards to be distributed to their friends and teachers at Gymboree. Although the concept may be new to Japan, in the United States it is very common for children to create and send Valentine's cards to their friends and teachers at school. Gymboree staff hope their members will enjoy experiencing this American tradition and help them bring it to Japan.

Gymboree 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



Students enjoying a previous craft event held at Gymboree. GYMBOREE PLAY & MUSIC JAPAN

programming, please refer to <http://www.gymboree.jp>.

Gymboree's current "Introduce a Friend" campaign saves ¥5,000 off one month of class fees. — NICOLE YAMADA

Excellent report for The British School in Tokyo

The British School in Tokyo (BST) is celebrating success after being confirmed as an "excellent" education facility, the highest mark possible, by a team of independent inspectors from the International Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

At the end of 2011, a team of inspectors spent six days at the school, looking at every aspect of BST. Their purpose was to benchmark the school and to measure it against every other British school in the world, including those in the United Kingdom.

The inspectors carefully scrutinized eight areas, including academic provision; encouragement of personal, moral, and cultural development; school governance, leadership, and management; security and safety at the school; and involvement



BST teachers' commitment to their students was commended during the recent ISI inspection. BST

of parents and carers in their children's education. In all eight aspects, BST was found to be providing the very best that any school could deliver.

The inspectors describe BST as "a dynamic, creative educational community, which is successful in meeting its aims in delivering a world-class British education in Tokyo to international students from over 50 countries."

Some highlights of the report are:

- The school is meticulous in the approach it takes to monitoring pupils' personal development, as well as their academic progress.
- Staff know pupils very well, and show true commitment to their welfare, health, and safety.
- Results are far above the English national average for maintained schools for pupils aged 7 to 11.
- At the GCSE level, results are above the English national average for maintained schools.
- Pupils are very well prepared for a return to senior schools in the United Kingdom and breadth and challenge are provided in the sixth form curriculum through a qualification recognized by universities worldwide.

The full report can be found at <http://www.isi.net>. — NANCY JENKINS

Makuhari visits local residential home

Toward the end of December, some of Makuhari's kindergarten 3 children went to an old people's home in Mihama-ku and sang a selection of Christmas carols and songs. It was a great occasion that was hugely enjoyed by all — especially when the residents joined in with the singing. The children sang over ten songs from memory and then presented the residents with flowers and talked with them. As always, the Makuhari children and teachers enjoyed integrating with their local community. — PAUL ROGERS

Japanese culture week at Treehouse Montessori

Treehouse Montessori School celebrates every new year with Japanese Culture Week. It has always been the children's favourite event and they look forward to it every year.

The 2012 version started with a discussion about Japanese new year and what traditional events take place at this time — Japanese families usually get together for extensive celebrations.

Each child talked about how they had spent their long holidays and their New Year's resolutions. Having been greatly influenced by the earthquake in March, the majority of the children had resolved to help others in need much more.

The most popular part of the event took place on the second day where the children made *mochi*, dipped it into soy sauce, and ate it with seaweed.

Other fun things the children did included playing with traditional toys that, over time, may be forgotten in Japan. This event ended with an introduction to *shuji* (Japanese *sumi* calligraphy) and each child had the opportunity to write "*shogatsu*" (New Year). The children were very proud to be able to take home a beautiful piece of *shuji* writing. — JENNY VYVIAL



Christopher and Liliana from Treehouse Montessori School, with their New Year's messages. JENNY VYVIAL

Chateau explores Asia and welcomes the New Year

Chateau School had a festive week of winter camp during December. New diplomats from other schools were invited to discover the various winter holidays celebrated by different cultures. Diplomats explored the world through cooking and cultural workshops.

January began with an overview of Asia linked to academic activities. The school's curriculum focused on comparative cultural studies of various countries, and their regions and ethnic groups. With the start of the New Year, *taiko* and *koto* music welcomed diplomats back on their first day of school. The children continued their day with a walking tour of the Meiji Shrine. At the shrine, they participated in the Japanese rituals for blessing the New Year; this year is the year of the dragon.

Cultural journeys to Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Burma were experienced using the diplomats' five senses. Through academic enrichment activities, the cultural norms and lives of the inhabitants of each country were studied. During the comparative cultural activities, they discovered interesting similarities in weaving and differences in the strokes of letters during calligraphy. Regional flower arrangements were experimented with, using each region's precious colours. Diplomats also tried different styles of flower arrangement, from ikebana to Vietnamese flower arrangement, to welcome the New Year.

February's theme is scheduled to be China. Diplomats will have a special cultural excursion to celebrate Chinese New Year in Yokohama's Chinatown. The field trip will include a visit to a Chinese temple, a savoury dim-sum lunch, and attendance at a dragon dance performance and



Chateau School diplomats start their day with practical life activities on their first day back before discovering the world of Asia. Diplomats (l to r): Kosaku Nitta, Masaichi Maehara, Lotea Camus, Apple Hutt, Comeru Yaginuma; ambassadors (l to r): Diana Motyovszki, Robin Furlong. CHATEAU SCHOOL

New Year's parade. The day will end with a visit to the Chinese market. We will shop for ancient ingredients and spices, and continue the journey to China back at the Chateau School. The diplomats will have the opportunity to use their culinary skills in experimenting with Chinese cuisine.

The week starting February 6 will focus on "Diplomat's Health Development," looking at Chinese natural herbs, physical therapy, tea ceremony, and a spiritual study of the moon and the human body. The last day of that week is global "Foot Day." Chateau School will be inviting a health development brand, SWISSIES, to offer foot counselling, foot printing, and exercise workshops. Diplomats will also receive a pair of shoes to monitor their comfort.

Keio University is offering workshops that feature a sample of Chateau School's curriculum and programs on February 25 and 26. Over 3,000 children are expected to attend.

Other news: Chateau Salon, a weekend workshop and party rental space division of Chateau Bon Bon in Omotesando, will be offering a special Valentine's weekend on February 11 by FAFA x Chateau Bon Bon. The workshop and party are open to the public. RSVP at <http://www.chateaubonbon.com>.

And finally, Chateau School is searching for a highly motivated international educator. Resumes should be sent to chateaubonbon@gmail.com, Attention: "Customs." — DIANA MOTRYOVSZKI

New opportunities with Rustic Pathways for 2012

With over 120 programs across 19 countries, Rustic Pathways offers students an array of opportunities for personal growth and experiential learning, firmly believing that they have a program to match any student's interests. Students can make a positive impact on the world through service opportunities such as monitoring the health of a reef in the Fiji Islands, working at the pre-eminent conservation centre for giant pandas in China, and designing sustainable projects for indigenous villagers in Peru. Moreover, students can choose to learn Mandarin Chinese in Dali, China; push themselves physically by climbing to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro; or study for a Wilderness First Aid and CPR Certification in Thailand.

Rustic Pathways recently announced a number of new developments that further diversify their program offerings for the summer of 2012. The new Advanced Photo Workshops in Ghana, Morocco, and Mongolia build on a strong foundation of

introductory photography programs around the world. These next-level programs allow students to work with two professional photographers to create a polished portfolio and personal photojournalism project. Students must submit an application for acceptance to these advanced programs.

Rustic Pathways is initiating programs in the Dominican Republic, and with stretches of some of the most beautiful beaches on earth, lush mountains, and warm local people, the Dominican Republic is an amazing addition to the family of host countries. Four programs that encompass eye-opening service work running a children's summer camp, incredible adventure activities such as white-water rafting and horseback riding, and a flavour of Latin music and culture are offered.

There are a number of new service projects being offered in conjunction with Save the Children, the leading organization working to improve the lives

of children around the world. Save the Children allows Rustic Pathways' students unparalleled access to world-class development work. For the summer of 2012, Rustic Pathways has literacy projects for young children in Kentucky and South Carolina in the United States, and an infrastructure development project in impoverished areas of the Dominican Republic.

Log onto <http://www.rusticpathways.com> or email kporter@rusticpathways.com. — KEVIN PORTER



Rustic Pathways' new workshop. RUSTIC PATHWAYS