

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

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MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

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Makuhari International's costume parade



Makuhari staff and students in their book-inspired costumes during their annual book week. PAUL ROGERS

During the week beginning February 6, Makuhari International School (MIS) held its second book week. This event was established at MIS during the 2010–11 academic year and now takes place annually during February. It is a week set aside to celebrate and encourage reading. This year MIS

had a five-day celebration of books and reading, including an author visit, a book fair (where children and parents spent a lot of money!), in-class activities, and a book parade with prizes for the best costumes. It was quite amazing to see the children appear in costumes showing characters

from the books they had read — ranging from dinosaurs through to Alice in Wonderland and Darth Vader. And it was great to see all the teachers dressing up as Dalmatians. Makuhari doesn't yet have 101 teachers, but the school keeps on growing! — PAUL ROGERS

Treehouse Family Fun Day

The children at Treehouse Montessori School have been practising for the Family Fun Day scheduled at the beginning of March. Family Fun Day is an event for both the children and their parents, held annually at the gymnasium in the Yokohama Country & Athletic Club. Adults and children compete in races and games, and there is a relay race competition for everyone, including the teachers, at the end!

The highlight of the day is the performance by the Bluebird Class (children from 4–6 years old), who will be putting on a beautiful show of dancing with ribbons. The children cannot help but think that they are like the Olympic gymnasts when they are practising.

The ribbon performance is definitely a good motivation for children to work on coordination, concentration, and self-discipline.

Having lunch with their parents is another thing that the children look forward to on this day every year. The day ends with the presentation of medals and a photo with the entire group. — JENNY VYVIAL

Japanese Culture Unit at ASIJ's Early Learning Center

Wrestling in school is usually frowned upon, and teachers do everything they can to prevent it. But the American School in Japan's (ASIJ's) Early Learning Center has been promoting wrestling recently — sumo wrestling that is! The PTA treated the students to a visit by two young sumo wrestlers, Takamiryu-san and Takamisato-san, as part of the semester-long Japanese culture unit.

These young men were extremely patient and friendly with ASIJ's aspiring, want-to-be sumo wrestlers, and the children learned so much from them. The children were very interested not only in the physical aspect of this sport, but also in the ritual and history of the sport. They even got to try their hand at competing in the ring with the real sumo wrestlers, which made for some fun photo opportunities.

In addition to the sumo visitors, children also got to spend a musical morning learning all about taiko drumming and traditional Japanese instruments when a group of musicians visited the school. The sessions they did for the audience of students, teachers, and parents

were both entertaining and educational, as the audience learned how they could make music using everything from their hands and a roll of tape, to more traditional instruments such as the taiko drum. Both events were a great way to get the Japanese Culture Studies off to a good start and the children are excited to learn much more over the coming months. — JUDY BENEVENTI



An ASIJ Early Learning Center student wrestling with a recent visitor to the school. ASIJ

Chateau School travels from the Great Wall to a tropical rain forest



Diplomats sharing Asian regional costumes and local artistic objects from home: (left to right) Nico Ueda (Laos), Callia Koshiba (Korea), Quiara Koshiba (Vietnam), and Kito Kondo (Japan). CHATEAU SCHOOL

Chateau School diplomats were immersed in the cultural exploration of Asia for the first two months of 2012. The expedition began with learning about the dynasties of the Far East and concluded with the Silk Road and the Great Wall of China.

February was the last month of term at The Chateau School. Diplomats received their detailed assessments and review of their development and progress. Along with a written review, diplomats received a certificate for the completed term.

Every weekend in February was filled with workshops and parties. The Canvas Workshop held at Keio University saw over 3,000 children sampling the programs at Chateau School. The workshop was a huge success and will be featured on the national media network sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture; the Ministry of Economy; and the Cabinet Office.

March begins with a journey to South America. The Chateau School will turn into a tropical rain

forest so that diplomats can discover the beauty of wild habitats while looking at environmental projects, endangered animals, World Heritage, the Amazon, Machu-Pichu, Chile, and Argentina and conducting botany experiments. Diplomats will participate in an environmental action to purchase acres of tropical rainforest in Colombia. Geometry will be introduced by studying the lines and geoglyphs of Nasca and Pampas de Jumana, and algebra will be incorporated by counting the numbers of tresses on wild animals. During their South American adventure, children will focus on self-expression and emotional gestures, learning the dance moves of the samba and tango.

The Chateau Times — an in-house newspaper created by the diplomats — will start this month. Each month, an outstanding creation is selected by a team of diplomats and will be featured in the newspaper. An “Honour Ambassador” who works in the real world will add comments to each featured artwork. The first ambassador will be Sali Sasaki, an artist based in Paris who was formerly the manager of Creative Cities for UNESCO. Creative Cities is an international network of 25 cities from 17 different countries. Sali’s latest work was in South East Asia, protecting an ancient heritage site based in Bangkok. See <http://salisasaki.com>.

The Chateau School is accepting applications for Easter Camp April 2–6 and Spring Camp May 21–25. Please refer to The Chateau Club for admissions at <http://www.chateaubonbon.com>. — RINA BOVRISSE

Gymboree enhances drop-off program options



Lena-sensei and students during one of Gymboree Play & Music’s drop-off sessions. GYMBOREE PLAY & MUSIC JAPAN

Gymboree Play & Music is most often associated with its mommy and me classes for babies and toddlers. However, its parent-optional programming for 3–5-year-olds provides the perfect environment for older children to gain the self-confidence; sense of independence; and social, cognitive, and physical skills they need for future schooling. Classes available for this age include art, music, sports, school skills, and English. Classes are taught in English with Japanese explanations if necessary (except for the English class, which is an English-only environment).

Classes can be taken alone or packaged into two-hour drop-off sessions. With Gymboree’s flexible schedules, parents can use classes as an after-school option, a preschool alternative, or even as an extra weekend activity for their children. The sessions provide parents with the alone-time they need and give children ample time to make new friends, gain their independence, and play with and learn from their peers.

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, please refer to <http://www.gymboree.jp>. — NICOLE YAMADA

BST's links with Japanese school communities



BST Secondary students and Showa Elementary students making udon noodles. BRITISH SCHOOL IN TOKYO

Beyond the British School in Tokyo's (BST's) immediate community of parents, teachers, and students, there are the two neighbouring Japanese school communities with which the school shares facilities. In Shibuya they share with SKG School

and the Showa campus is actually within the grounds of Showa Women's University.

Fostering links with both schools enriches the learning experience of BST students in many ways beyond the curriculum, with language and cultural

exchanges organized throughout the year.

In October, Year 7 students visited Showa Elementary School and after breaking the ice with a Pictionary game, moved straight onto asking questions in Japanese. It was a great chance for them to practise their Japanese in a fun setting. One of the highlights this school year was the secondary school students' visit to Showa High School where they made and ate their own udon noodles! It was great fun and everyone enjoyed practising their Japanese and English. In January, Year 4 students visited the Elementary School to introduce themselves and participate in classroom activities before inviting the Showa students back to BST to spend the afternoon in an English classroom.

In February and March each year, BST and Showa Elementary students participate in a home stay program during which the students spend a weekend in each other's homes. It is always a great opportunity to learn about each other and make new friends.

It's not just the students who do exchanges though. In January, science teachers from Showa Junior and High School watched a Year 10 practical science class and discussed with students and teachers the differences in the way that science is taught between the schools. It was most interesting and more exchanges are planned before the end of the school year in June. — NANCY JENKINS

The first week in February saw the Aichi International School (AIS) annual talent show, this year entitled "AIS Has Talent." 2012 saw the highest number of entries to date, with a diverse range of talents and skills on show including singing, dancing, magic shows, hula dancing, yoyo tricks, and hula-hoop routines.

Those students who attend after-school clubs also showcased a wide range of skills with songs sung in other languages, children playing piano and violin pieces, and children performing traditional Japanese dance. Both teachers and parents were very impressed with and proud of all the children that took part in the show.

Next up for Aichi International School is a whole-school speech contest, where students have the opportunity to speak from the stage to an audience of friends and family. Everyone is looking forward to hearing what the students have to say on a range of issues and topics of interest. — SHEILA PATTON

Aichi International School has talent!



Members of an Aichi International School after-school club performing at last month's talent show. AIS

Goldilocks musical at New International School

New International School's (NewIS) annual English musical, open to the public, will take place on March 7 at Theater Green near the school. Over 70 children from ages 3–14 will be performing Roald Dahl's version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, with live music. Will Goldilocks be found guilty in court? The school invites you to come and find out!

NewIS also has a Saturday program, open to the public, that features two-and-a-half hour classes, twice a month, with a choice of English and/or Mandarin Chinese. Some children learn both languages. They will have the option to learn them in the school's summer program as well. For more information, check the website at <http://newis.ed.jp> or call 03-3980-1057.

Valentine's sale at Aoba

Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) held a bake sale and coffee morning on Valentine's Day last month. Parents donated baked goods, stationery, and handmade items. They enjoyed getting to know each other over coffee afterward.

Last month, grade 6 students from A-JIS went on the school's annual ski trip to mark their transition from elementary to middle school.

Katoh's Personal Projects shine



Grade 10 students showcasing their personal projects. From left to right: Daisuke, Mao, Yuhei, Yuzu, and Manami. GAY-ANN BAGOCHAY

A boat made of pet bottles, a lamp made of milk cartons, and a stylish, new school uniform design. These were just some of the creations produced by Katoh Gakuen Gyoshu's Grade 10 students for their MYP Personal Project. The Personal Project is an opportunity for students to apply the skills they have learned through their years in the MYP and to showcase their creative talents.

The students based their personal projects in "areas of interaction"; areas where their education

connects to the world. One student based his project in Health and Social Education and wrote a powerful novel about how a young person might deal with a grandparent with Alzheimer's disease. Another student took action through Community and Service, qualifying as a soccer coach and coaching an elementary school soccer team. All Grade 10 students have found the Personal Project to be a challenging yet rewarding experience. — DAVE ALGIE

World-class photography programs for teens

With a focus on experiential education, Rustic Pathways has long been offering programs that supplement classroom learning with hands-on opportunities. Photography is one of the areas in which Rustic Pathways has designed specialized programs for high school students looking to expand their skills while staying in amazing destinations. With programs for the curious student picking up a camera for the first time and also for the practised photographer looking to develop a professional portfolio, there is a program for every level of experience.

The Himalayan Photo Expedition is a two-week-long program in India that takes students from colourful local festivals to the Taj Mahal at sunrise. Tribal Shooters and The Village Documentary Project are two programs that combine community service and learning about photography in the Hill Tribe region of Northwestern Thailand. Students live in traditional villages and they experience and document the local way of life.

There are two multi-country photography programs for adventurous travellers. Frontier Photography is an exciting photographic study across Thailand, Burma, and Laos. Students spend time photographing a diverse range of

subjects, from the various ethnic groups of Eastern Burma to the French colonial architecture of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Luang Prabang. From the picturesque waters of Ha Long Bay to the striking form of Angkor Wat, the Snapshots of Indochina program visits some of the most beautiful locations in South East Asia.

Rustic Pathways is also excited to announce



Photograph taken by Rustic Pathways program student. RUSTIC PATHWAYS

Winter sports games at J's

January brought a "Winter Sports" theme to the children at J's. From ski jumping to ice skating, in the warmth of the classrooms the children learned about different games. To bring sportsmanship home, the school held a sports day.

After designing original "hachimakis" (bandanas), the older children participated in javelin throwing, tug of war, and races. The younger ones enjoyed indoor bowling, jumping on the trampoline, and walking on the balance beams.

The children struck champions' poses when they were awarded their "good sportsmanship" medals.

A relaxing pajama day topped off the month. The children and teachers arrived and spent the whole day wearing their favourite comfy clothes. They talked about their favourite stuffed animals, snuggled under their favourite blankies and on pillows, and ate popcorn. — MANA ORTIZ



Axel getting ready for "the games." J's INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

three new Advanced Photo Workshops for the summer of 2012 in Ghana, Morocco, and Mongolia. These programs are designed for the experienced photographer who is considering continued or professional study. Students on these programs will assume the life of a photojournalist and each will design their own projects with the help of two professional photographers.

See <http://www.rusticpathways.com> for more information. — KEVIN PORTER