

Husky Tracks

Newsletter of Hokkaido International School

Celebrating 50!

The 50th Anniversary of HIS has been an exciting one with three major events that have included a Family Day Picnic, a Gala Reception and a weekend of performances. The events have blended the celebration of HIS history with a fundraising effort for our future.

HIS had perfect weather for Family Day, and families enjoyed food and activities and the time to visit. Alumni visited the wonderful history display of both pictures and video. A new 50th anniversary photo of the school community is in the main hallway on the first floor as a reminder of the special day.

The Gala Reception brought together the HIS community as well as local dignitaries and friends throughout the years. It was a beautiful evening of food, entertainment and even a few speeches. The event also raised money toward the Endowment Fund.

The performance weekend provided a chance for students to enjoy more of the festivities with a weekend of fun performances and even some theatrical coaching.

Money raised from these events goes directly to the Endowment Fund that will be a perpetual fund for the future of HIS to assist with student scholarships, teacher professional development and special educational purchases.



Students, parents, alumni and staff let fly balloons to celebrate H.I.S.'s 50 years of service to the international community of Sapporo during the 50th Family Day, September 13, 2008.



We're Going on a Leaf Hunt

The kids in the Early Years, First and Second grade classes enjoyed cooperative learning events in October. They took a field trip together to Eniwa Shinrin Koen. During this trip they observed the changes fall was bringing and collected leaves. The next day, all of the kids gathered for a day of learning collaboratively. "Literature Theme Day" for Primary Students was based on the book, We're Going on a Leaf Hunt by Steve Metzger. In different multi-age teams the kids dramatized the book, (which was later performed for the elementary school); sorted, classified and graphed the leaves that they had collected; worked with literacy on a "word family" task, made a colorful tree snack to enjoy and painted a forest of falling leaves which now decorate our multi-purpose room.

The teachers noticed that the kids worked hard at being respectful and tolerant of the differing abilities seen in mixed age groups and were helpful and supportive of each other. We saw some kids really enjoying the chance to be leaders and heard others express that they enjoyed working with a broader and more diverse group than they often do. Some of the kids' comments during these two special days include,

- It was neat to eat our lunches with our new friends.
- We went through the forest, but we weren't scared. It was not so dark. (unlike the book)
- We did a leaf hunt and saw long worms and many snails, but we did not see a skunk!
- We want to do a Literature Theme day again!

Late Start for Students Means Early Start for Staff

HIS Executive Board instituted a Late Start program to give faculty time one day a week to focus its efforts on school-wide collaboration. With students arriving an hour later, faculty has time to meet in both collaborative teams and as an entire staff to plan curricular events.

From this effort the faculty continues to work on standards and benchmarks for skills that go across the curriculum and through the grade levels, for example communication and problem solving. This work is progressing and the staff hopes to complete work on this portion by the end of the first semester.

On other days the faculty works on team collaborative projects that blend the disciplines, resulting in student collaborative projects throughout the school. The jr high is studying Asian literature, history, art, music, and sports while the Sr High focuses on Modern European Culture. Collaboration is essentially an aligning of the curriculum -- through common themes and timing of curriculum content -- so that the learning that students are encountering has connections across several classes. This brings teachers in partnership as they work closely together to meet common goals of the curriculum. Examples of this can be seen in humanities, where novels and readings taken up in literature classes, come from the same region



and time periods that are being covered in history. This allows teachers to reinforce common concepts between subject areas and it permits students to make better connections between their learning, which we know as key to improving memory of those concepts, ideas and knowledge.



The Computer Will Come to You!

The new portable computer lab for the 2nd floor elementary classes makes it possible for all students to access the internet from their classroom whenever they would like. Twenty laptop computers with wireless connections enable students to work individually or in groups.

The Executive Board

The Executive Board keeps an eye on the big picture—a bird’s eye view of HIS as it is at the present moment. It also strives to have a strong vision of HIS’ future. The Executive Board (often called simply “the Board”) has five areas of responsibility.

1. Policy Setting: the Board reviews current policies, drafts policies when appropriate, and votes on policy acceptance.
2. Finance: the Board approves the budget and oversees the Headmaster’s administration of the budget. The Board reviews monthly and annual financial reports filed by external auditors.
3. Program Assessment: the Board makes sure that HIS is meeting its goals for academic and extra-curricular programs. Normally, the Headmaster assesses these programs and reports back to the Executive Board.
4. Headmaster: the Board is responsible for hiring, evaluating, and keeping or dismissing the headmaster. All other personnel decisions are the responsibility of the Headmaster.
5. Long-term planning: the Board writes and annually reviews a five-year, long-range plan.

To accomplish all of this, the Executive Board meets once a month, and various subcommittees hold additional meetings. The Executive Board members must judge all decisions and actions in terms of what is best for HIS students.

The HIS Executive Board has eight members, two of whom are always the Headmaster and a representative of the U.S. Consulate. Board members are volunteers who rely on the support of the entire HIS community in order to do their best for HIS. Besides, Mr. Richard Branson, Headmaster, these are the other seven members:

Mr. Jerry Halvorsen (Chairman)

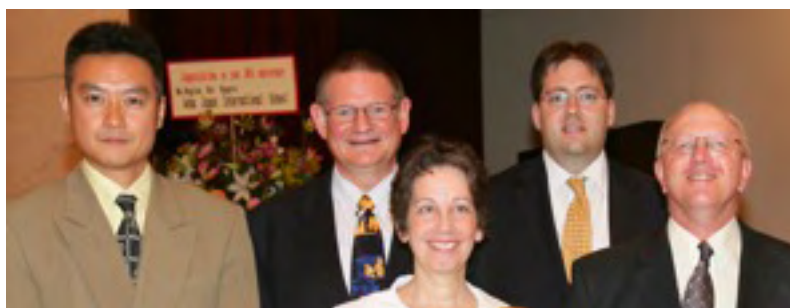
- Father of Mark (Class of 2003) and Michael (Class of 2007)
- Number of years on the Board: 8.
- From: USA (Wisconsin and Minnesota). Has lived in Hokkaido for 28 years.
- Teacher at Sapporo International University.

Mr. Dale Viljoen (Vice-Chairman)

- Father of Stephen (Class of 2000), Peter (Class of 2001) and Luke (Class of 2009)
- Number of years on the Board: 6
- From: South Africa. Has lived in Hokkaido for 30 years.
- Christian pastor working with OMF International.

Ms. Suzanne Yonesaka (Secretary)

- Mother of Kenta (Class of 2006) and Ayana (Class of 2009)
- Number of years on the Board: 3
- From: USA (California). Has lived in France and in Sapporo for 28 years.
- Professor at Hokkai Gakuen University.



T. Midorikawa, D. Viljoen, I. Hillman, S. Yonesaka, and J. Halvorsen celebrate at the HIS 50th Anniversary Gala, September 14, 2008.

Mr. Teiji Midorikawa (Treasurer)

- Alumni (Class of 1979); Father of Isshin (Class of 2016) and Ryutarō (Class of 2019).
- Number of years on the Board: 3
- From: Tokyo. Has lived in Sapporo since age 5.
- Owner audio equipment repair/re-sale company on the internet.

Mr. Phred Kaufman

- Father of Shoshanah (Class of 2007) and Jonah (Class of 2010).
- Number of years on the Board: 15
- From: USA (California). Has lived in Japan 32 years.
- Owner of a pub and of an import company.

Mr. Ian T. Hillman

- Representative of the United States Consul General
- Number of years on the Board: 3
- From: USA (Iowa).
- United States Vice Consul in Sapporo.

Mr. Tatsuaki Ikeda

- Student at HIS from 1969 to 1970; Father of Emily (Class of 2018).
- First year on the Board.
- From: Sapporo. Has lived in Eastern Hokkaido, Canada, Australia and Costa Rica.
- Owner of an English conversation school; imports and retails salt, olive oil, sugar.



P. Kaufman and Headmaster R. Branson join together at the 50th Anniversary Gala to kick off the HIS Endowment Fund.

Hooray for Overnights

Traditionally the school year starts with an outdoor/overnight activity to promote student bonding and friendship. Senior high students hike up Mt. Soranuma spending the night in a rustic lodge, while jr high students bike in Domin-no-Mori and sleep in tents. In both activities, students cooperate together on meals and in outdoor games and sports activities. New and returning students unite to turn initial fears and hesitations into cheers for a great time.

You *Live* at School?!

It's 7:30 am and the dorm students trickle down for breakfast to the dining room on the first floor. There is fruit, an oven-toasted dish of ham, cheese and egg sandwiched between slices of bread, fruit juices and selections of jam for those who want a simpler fare to be found on the typical morning slice of toast.

Breakfast completed, students rush to showers and rooms to get ready before heading out the door and their 3 second commute to the school itself where they launch themselves into the regular routines of the day.

Many of them will not see the inside of the dormitory until 5:00 when they leave school and return to the dorm to study, relax or nap until 6:30 dinner when the smells of Mr. Yonesaka's dinners brings everyone down to the appointed meal time again. There is always the last minute rush to see who is missing before dinner can begin, then the long line-up of students snakes it's way from the living room, through the dining room to the kitchen counter where students dish up their dinners and scatter themselves at the three large tables that accommodate them at meals. It's a good time to chat, joke and talk about common classroom experiences from the day.

If it's a day like today, it will also happen to be someone's birthday and Mrs. Ratzliff will have a baked dessert ready -- the request of the birthday individual -- for everyone to celebrate with. With that done, students retreat to their favorite study locations: their room, the lounges on each of the dormitory floors or they may choose to be a part of the study group that forms at the dining tables on the first floor.

Study time ends at 10:00 and is often followed by a "7-11 Run" for an evening snack before Mr. and Mrs. Ratzliff make their rounds to get people to bed and have lights turned out. Certainly private study generally continues afterwards in the quiet of individual rooms but when that's done, it's time to crawl into the bunk beds and drop off to a blissful sleep until morning and a new day.

AdHOC Adventures

The Adventure Hokkaido Outdoors Club gives students and community members a chance to relieve the stress of studying and urban life. Whether you want to try rock climbing, snowboarding, sea kayaking, white water rafting, or even a midnight snowshoe hike, AdHOC adventures are waiting for you. Encouraged by Mr. Piazza and Ms. Brown students enjoy outdoor opportunities and leadership training. Here the Mukawa River provides thrills and challenges during the September AdHOC activity.



Mark your calendar:

The King and I Friday, March 13

Presented by the junior high drama class

Kitara Concert Wednesday, May 27

Presented by all elementary and secondary music students

Japan Culture Week 2008-2009

This year's annual Japan Culture Week (Nov. 4-7) featured the traditional sport of Sumo. Japanese classes combined with P.E. to research and present Sumo's history, the system of tournaments, and modern-day Sumo. Guests included the chairman of the Sapporo Sumo Association, the Sumo champion of Hokkaido, and the Hokkai Gakuen High School Sumo club. The students' research and practice culminated in the H.I.S. Sumo Basho. The all school event made the gym ring with loud cries of excitement and encouragement.

The Hokkaido Sumo champion visited school to demonstrate sumo exercises and techniques for all P.E. classes during Japan Culture Week.



• SUMO •

The entire school participated in the H.I.S. Sumo Basho. Every class selected champions to wrestle in the ring and prepared advertisements for showing during intervals between bouts. Each Yokuzuna had a traditional apron for parading while referees dressed in gunbai and kimono.



The computer class made four presentations using iWork'08. Topics included Anime, games, Japanese characters, and castles. The audience was fascinated with the use of IT to bring familiar stage and screen images to life. ESL classes presented comical views of Japanese traditional folktales. The Aozora volunteer group introduced a number of traditional Japanese games and styles of play to H.I.S. students. This is the fourth year students from Preschool through Gr. 6 have been able to enjoy many activities led by Aozora. The music class uniquely utilized the body as a percussion instrument to introduce the stage-work *Mikado*. Throughout the week, students demonstrated their keen knowledge of traditional Japanese culture as well as modern Japanese culture.

The MIKADO

*The Jr. High Drama and Music Explorers classes combined to present a shortened musical version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*. Students portraying the Japanese villagers in the *Mikado* actually come from 7 different countries.*



Indigenous Groups Study Starts with a Field Trip

As part of H.I.S.'s ongoing work on collaboration the 3rd through 6th grades have gotten together, along with Mr. Sugino (music), Mr. McKinney (ESL), and Mrs. Arno (art) to study the cultures of indigenous groups from around the world. Each grade level will focus on a certain region; the third grade becoming experts on South American rainforest tribes, the fourth grade on the Aboriginals of Australia, the fifth grade on various African tribes, while the sixth grade studies the native North American tribes.

Every week the three grades will meet together to share what they learned about their region. Each meeting will focus on a different aspect of tribal life, such as shelter/housing, clothing/diet, weapons/tools, family structure, myths/beliefs, and the effects of colonization.

The unit got off to a great start on Monday, November 10th, as the students piled into the school busses and made the long journey to the Ainu Museum and Village in Shiraoi. The aim was to become aware of Hokkaido's own indigenous group before learning about other peoples around the world. The students were very excited as we entered the smoke filled Big House in the middle of the village. A multimedia presentation about Ainu culture was followed by Ainu performers playing various native instruments. The students all loved seeing the costumed performers share their culture through song and dance.

The students then moved on to another part of the village where they were put to work making mukkuris, a traditional Ainu musical instrument. The rest of the day was spent visiting the museum and enjoying the simple pleasures of the village's beautiful lakeside location. All in all it was a great day and an exciting start to what promises to be an interesting exploration of native cultures.



Journey North

For the second year in a row, 3rd and 4th graders plant tulip bulbs on school grounds in coordination with the Journey North Tulip Project. School groups around the world plant the same type of tulip bulbs in November. Keeping planting conditions as similar as possible, students will be able to mark the day next spring when the tulip sprouts first show, as well as when the tulips first bloom.

Students from schools throughout the northern hemisphere communicate via the internet to track the arrival of spring gradually moving north. To the H.I.S. students excitedly waiting for winter's deep snow, spring seems a long way in the future.

New Teachers Hail from Three Continents

Ms. Celia Lopez is from Peru. She graduated as a Meteorologist from Agriculture - La Molina University in Lima, then came to Japan in 1995 with her husband. She earned her Masters at the Graduate School of Environmental Earth Science of Hokkaido University. Besides teaching the jr high and senior high Spanish classes here at H.I.S., Ms. Lopez teaches Spanish at Sapporo Medical College and Hokkaido University. She most enjoys spending her free time with her husband and sons, Enrique (6th grade) and Daniel (2nd grade). "My husband and I dream of visiting friends we have made here, who now live all over the world."

Ms. Sophie Brown was brought up on the west coast of the South Island, New Zealand. She is passionate about outdoor pursuits such as rock climbing, kayaking, snowboarding and alpine adventures and has enjoyed winters in Europe and Canada. Ms. Brown majored in Physical Education and Mathematics, teaching those subjects for a number of years in New Zealand. She has actively participated in and coached a number of sports, including field hockey, cricket, touch rugby, volleyball and multi-sport events. "It is awesome to be living in Japan and experiencing such a diverse lifestyle. I love the food and meeting new interesting people."

Mr. Robert Johnston comes from Michigan but has already spent about 7 years in Japan. He is certified in Middle/High School Mathematics and Science, with a Masters from Eastern Michigan University. He has taught in Kagawa and Tokyo and has now finally made it all the way north to Sapporo. He really likes the cooler weather here as it is similar to that of Michigan. He knows a lot about computers, motorcycles, and sumo. "I am enjoying working here and this is the best group of students that I have ever worked with."