



The International School's TIS News is published three times per year to update our community on school programs and activities. To subscribe, please contact Marketing & Communications Director Linda Bonder, LBonder@intlschool.org, 503-226-2496 x104. We do not share our mailing lists.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S TIS NEWS

IB central ideas invite inquiry into *Who We Are*

What is the importance of family? What happens when we lack one of our senses? What foods do we need to be healthy and strong? What does it mean to be an immigrant? How do dignity, justice, and equality relate to our lives? These questions and many more are discussed in TIS classrooms as students explore the International Baccalaureate theme *Who We Are*.

As one of the IB's six trans-disciplinary themes, *Who We Are* is an exploration of the nature of self; of our beliefs and values; of physical, mental, social and spiritual health; of our families, friends, communities and cultures; of our rights and responsibilities; of what it means to be human.

All TIS students study a *Who We Are* unit at some point during the year, and each grade explores the theme through a different, age-appropriate *central idea*.

A look at the *Who We Are* central ideas shows the many interesting paths of inquiry and the progression of concepts from the youngest to the oldest grades (see sidebar inside).

When the students in Helen-laoshi's Chinese lowk class studied families as part of the *Who We Are* theme, they started by asking questions about each others' families and sharing photographs from home. They interviewed their parents to learn more about parent roles at home and at work. Students surveyed their classmates to find out how many parents, siblings and animals each child has. Then they worked together to record their results on a bar graph. Through these activities, students began to understand that all families are different and that each one is special. For the final steps, students created a book about their family which they presented to the class.

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Chinese track graduates continue studying, exploring

"When I need my times tables, I still do them in my head in Chinese," says TIS Class of 2005 graduate Leah Pons. Leah is now in tenth grade at Riverdale High School, and looks back fondly on her TIS experience. "I like full time immersion. I just like the idea of learning a different language." Reflecting on TIS, "I think about the Chinese dance troupe – I think I did it every year. It was a lot of pressure, but it was fun. In ninth

grade I was reintroduced to performing through my church choir, and it made me think about performing while I was at TIS."

After fifth grade, Leah attended the Chinese program at Hosford Middle School where she felt she was particularly well prepared in math and far ahead of her peers in Chinese. "Now I'm getting tutored twice a week (instead of doing Chinese in school), so I'm moving ahead

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The International School provides a unique multicultural environment where children are fully immersed in Spanish, Japanese or Chinese language and culture. Children become fluent in another language, at home in other cultures, and engaged in math, science, social studies and arts. The International School was founded in 1990 and today is an International Baccalaureate Candidate school educating nearly 400 students.

Winter Festival in the Gerding Theater

TIS students welcomed the holiday season with the annual multicultural Winter Festival, held this year in three shows at the Gerding Theater at the Armory in Portland's Pearl District.

Dressed in brightly colored costumes, students of all grades danced, played instruments, and sang in Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese. The audience was treated to songs from around the world including a Colombian Cumbia, a Chinese rendition of "Jingle Bells," and a Japanese version of the Sound of Music's "Do re mi" among others.

See more Winter Festival photos at intlschool.org/u/11.



Who We Are (cont'd)

At the same time, two floors below, the Japanese kindergarten class was exploring *Who We Are* through the five senses and how they help us function in life. Hideko-sensei really wanted the children to get an idea of what it was like for people that lived without one of their senses. As an experiment, she blindfolded the children and they walked from their classroom to a nearby restroom. Afterwards, they mapped the path they had taken and brainstormed ideas that would have made the walk easier for a blind person. Later, the class invited a blind man to visit. "They had so many questions for him," says Hideko. "They were really curious about things like how he cooks at home." They drew pictures about what they had learned from him, and Hideko helped the students write an article about the experience. "They are still talking about it," says Hideko. "It was very memorable."

Fourth grade classes at TIS examine the theme *Who We Are* by looking at the media's effect on behavior. The Spanish 4th graders in Maestra Maria's class love the unit. "We started by analyzing all kinds of ads: TV, magazine, newspaper," she explains. The students learned that media can influence our

body image, food choices, and lifestyle. TIS Marketing Director Linda Bonder visited the class to talk about how to be conscious media consumers by keeping in mind the advertiser's intent. The class is now making their own public service announcements. "The kids are doing everything," says Maria. "They're working in groups, writing scripts, acting, directing. Their announcements touch on subjects like smoking and eating disorders, so they are also learning about health-related issues in the process."

The trans-disciplinary themes, each based on a meaningful, universally significant issue, are studied over a period of six to eight weeks. The themes allow for in-depth inquiries without the confines of traditional subject areas. As students study each central idea, they learn math, science, and social studies concepts. At the same time, they gain deep understanding and learn the skills needed to acquire, organize, and communicate knowledge - skills that enable them to become independent learners, capable of pursuing knowledge beyond the classroom and throughout life.

For more on the IB at TIS please visit www.intlschool.org/about-tis/ib/.

PRE-K

People make choices to have strong, healthy bodies.

LOW-K

Many different families exist and everyone has a role in their family.

KINDERGARTEN

Our senses help us to function in life.

FIRST GRADE

Body systems work together to make the human body function.

SECOND GRADE

Our roots as immigrants have shaped the citizens we are today.

THIRD GRADE

People in a community depend on each other.

FOURTH GRADE

The media can positively and negatively influence our behavior.

FIFTH GRADE

People in societies have different levels of rights and responsibilities and sometimes have to fight for their rights.

TIS 5th graders present to audience of 500 in Japan - in Japanese, of course

TIS fifth graders Elisabeth and Kilian put their Japanese skills to the test on their two-week class Capstone trip to Japan last November. For their first week, they toured cultural highlights of the country with their TIS teacher Taka-sensei and their parent chaperones. With stops in Tokyo and Kyoto, the students cycled through a bamboo forest, experienced an early-morning auction at the Tsukiji fish market, visited the Kinkakuji golden temple, and impressed locals with their knowledge of Japanese tea ceremony.

"My favorite part of the trip was Kiyomizu Temple - the water temple in Kyoto," Elisabeth remembered. "We got dressed up in kimono and walked around the temple. People were looking at us like they wanted to know who we were - these blond-haired, blue-eyed kids speaking Japanese and wearing kimono."

"I liked ordering food for my parents," recounted Kilian. "When we walked up to the counter and I started ordering, you could tell the server was thinking, 'I can't believe he is speaking Japanese - this really makes my life easier!'"

For the second week, Elisabeth and Kilian stayed with separate host families and attended school with their peers. Both students quickly felt at home in Japan. They made fast friends with their host siblings and with classmates at the host school, and they found the school work to be comparable to their work at TIS. "We spoke the language

and it felt pretty familiar," Elisabeth explained. "I never really got lonely or homesick," Killian said, "I was too busy having fun."

As part of their school week, Kilian and Elisabeth gave a speech in Japanese to the 500 students at their host school. "The amazing teachers at TIS have brought my child to this place, where she can experience, learn, bond and even give a presentation to an audience of 500, all in a language that is not her native tongue," said Matt Schweitzer, Elisabeth's father. "There are not enough words in English to communicate my respect and gratitude for all of the teachers that have taught Elisabeth over the last 6 years."

See more about Capstone at intlschool.org/capstone.



Elisabeth and Killian dressed up in Kimono at the Kiyomizu Temple with a former TIS student who now lives in Japan.



Read in Your Pajamas Day - still a favorite

What could be better on a winter day than cozy pajamas and a good book? On one of the coldest days of the year, TIS students participated in the English Department's fourth annual "Read in Your Pajamas" Day.

In each English room and throughout the library, students in first through fifth grade curled up with their treasured stories from home and books from school. English teachers and many parent volunteers came in pajamas and read to small groups of students; while other students snuggled up in a quiet corner to read independently or with friends.

English teacher Dan Pack felt that Pajama Day was a great opportunity for his students and him to see each other in a different context. "We got to know one another more as people than just as teacher and student. I love that."

English teacher Kristie Weldon says Pajama Day is also a favorite because it is about reading purely for enjoyment. "So much of school is about reading for a purpose. Pajama Day is a chance for the kids to read and to see adults reading simply for the fun of it."

See more pajama day photos at intlschool.org/english.

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**Where they went:
TIS Classes '07, '08, '09**

Gilkey International Middle School	Private	18
East/West Sylvan	Public, Spanish	14
Mt Tabor	Public, Japanese	5
Northwest Academy	Private	4
Oregon Episcopal School	Private	4
International School of Beaverton	Public	2
The Madeline School	Private	2
Metropolitan Learning Ctr	Public	2
Hosford Middle School	Public, Spanish / Chinese	2
Holy Family Catholic	Private	2
Trinity Lutheran	Private	2
Other - private (1 student each)	Private	2
Other - public (1 student each)	Public	5

Other news

Custom House Update: After months of due diligence, the TIS Trustees will be taking their final vote in late February on whether or not to accept the Custom House. See updated news at intlschool.org/customhouse.

The November 2009 TIS Auction raised \$140,000 including \$60,000 for the Special Appeal for Books, Learning Resources and Technology! The purchases are rolling in, getting catalogued and ready for classrooms. Watch the spring TIS News for details! See auction photos at intlschool.org/auction

Chinese Track graduates (cont'd)



Leah Pons - TIS '05

with my Chinese.”

Leah went to China with her TIS Capstone trip, and has been back with her adoption group. “I would like to go back again to tour and to use my Chinese some more. I really want to keep up with the language.”

TIS Class of 2006 graduate Naomi Garland is in ninth grade at Franklin High School. She is the only freshman taking advanced Chinese and is preparing to take AP Chinese next year. “Most of the kids in my class speak some Asian language at home. I skipped one year of Chinese after TIS, so my reading and writing slipped, but my speaking skills are close to theirs.”

Like Leah, Naomi doesn't use her Chinese much outside of classes when she's in the States. “When I'm here in Portland, it's like my Chinese gets stuck because so few people know it. But when I'm in China, it just comes out – it's something I have.”

Naomi has been back to China twice since her Capstone trip, including a two week internship at the Wolong

Panda Reserve. She and a few other TIS grads worked with the people there, cleaned cages and did whatever needed to be done. “Thanks to TIS, I didn't just get told about China. I got the experience of it, more than reading and writing, I got to see it and experience it.”



Naomi Garland - TIS '06

Now Naomi wants to explore more of the country. “I want to go back to China so badly. I want to go around more, not just to where the tourists go. I want to visit my orphanage again. I want to see what else there is, to go into remote areas and talk to people there. . . I wouldn't be able to do any of this if I didn't speak Chinese.”

Looking ahead, Leah Pons is thinking about journalism school, possibly at the University of Oregon because of their strong Chinese program. Naomi Garland is interested in psychology, possibly leading to work with orphanages and doing business in or with China.

