

THE SHARK

The American International School of Rotterdam

Director's Message

In the first issue of The Shark I issued a challenge to the fathers in the AISR community to become more involved with your son's / daughter's education. I would like to build on that theme and suggest that there are some myths and stereotypes that you can dispel for yourself and the girls in your family regarding math and science. There is a myth that boys are more interested in math and science than girls. The reality is that in upper elementary school both boys and girls indicated the same level of interest in math and science. This however begins to change as students move through middle school and the myth becomes the reality. That leads us to another myth - when girls just aren't interested in math and science, parents cannot do much to change that. The reality however is (research bears this out) that parental support has been shown to be a crucial factor in a girl's interest in math and engineering. Parents can talk about women who are successful as scientists and engineers and help to build a greater sense of what is possible and

can do to turn that myth around. If you would like more detailed information, the research documenting this was done by the National Science Foundation and their research titled, Gender in Science and Engineering.

Parents of students in middle and high students there are two events to be focusing on right now. The first one is the Progress Report for this first quarter which was mailed home today, 7 September.

These reports are being sent home four weeks before the close of the first quarter, which ends on 5 October, and are an indication of how your son / daughter is doing so far this school year. The second event is Middle and High School Open House on Thursday evening, 13 September at 6:30 PM (see the attached flyer for more detail).

Next Tuesday, 11 September, the Board of AISR will be having its first meeting of this school year. As always, the Board will be meeting in the school's library and it is

open to all members of the AISR community.

Brian Atkins, Director

Elementary Principal's Message

On behalf of the Elementary teachers, I would like to thank you for taking the time to come to the Open House last night. It was very clear from the wonderful turn-out that you recognize how important it is to know what is going on in your child's classroom. The teachers really value this evening as it is an opportunity to tell you about the curriculum, special projects and their expectations regarding student behaviour and standard of work for the school year. I hope that you also found the evening to be valuable. If you still need to discuss individual questions, please call and make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher.

On Thursday, we welcomed another two students: Maria who joins Grade 5 and Gema who has joined Grade 3. We wish them a very happy and successful time at AISR.

Grade 2 Up-date

This is what Ms. Sherritt has to say about her second grade students:

"Did you know that the English word 'alphabet' comes from the Greek alphabet? Did you know that girls in ancient Greece could not go to school?

Did you know that the first Olympics ever, were held in Ancient Greece? To find out more about these questions, ask any second grader because we are becoming ancient Greek experts! We have been learning about what daily life was like back then, and we have been reading the many myths about the Greek gods and goddesses. We are busy now preparing for our Greek Festival where we will make a presentation to our parents about the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus, and our parents will also see some of the Greek art projects that we have been working on. And, we get to experiment with some Greek food too.

We are also looking forward to our first fieldtrip to the National Antiquities Museum in Leiden where we will have a special tour of the Ancient Greek exhibit. We hope to see a lot of interesting ancient Greek treasures.

In math we have been busy writing math stories and we are looking at strategies to remember all of those pesky math facts! We have been working in our Language Centers where we have been reading and writing some great stories, and we will soon be starting our very own Power Point Portfolios at the Computer Station. There is never a dull moment in second grade.

REMINDER: If possible, please put your child's name on his/her clothing, especially with regard to the P.E.

uniforms. We have had an unusually high instance of lost clothing since the beginning of the school year. Thank you for your help with this matter.

Important Notice

The Nutrition committee will have their first meeting on Thursday September 13. If you have questions, please contact me at school, 010-4225351 or via e-mail at a.blitz@aisr.nl. Have a wonderful weekend.

Anne-Marie Blitz, Elementary Principal

From the Counselor

Thank you to all of the parents who attended the Transition to High School evening presentation last Wed, August 29th. We hope that the information you received about your child's transition to high school will be helpful as they complete the next four years of academics and become young adults.

To parents of 10th and 11th grade students, I have met with both classes this week and given them information about the PSAT exam which they will take on October 20th. Please ask to see the handout which they have received which

includes a sample practice test that they can work on. Teachers in the English and Math classes will also be going over some of this material with them in class. I will be giving the parents a letter at the Open House which explains more about the PSAT. More information about test day will be given out closer to the date.

For parents of Middle School students, the House T-shirts have been ordered for all of the MS students. The Houses were established a few years ago as a way to build teamwork and make friends across grade levels. Last year we decided to change the house names to more represent our team name, (the Shark), so the MS Houses are named The Hammerheads (Yellow), The Tiger Sharks (Green), The Great Whites (Red) and the The Makos (Royal Blue). Depending on which House your child is part of, they will receive a t-shirt of their house color which has the AISR shark logo on it. During the year, activities are held as part of the MS seminar time when teams participate in House activities. These can be as diverse as working together to make their house banners (which are on display by the HS Art room), or participate in a Knowledge Bowl, Spirit Week, or even in an athletic relay activity.

Ms. Sudzina, the MS Coordinator, and her team of seminar advisors have planned some activities for the kids to participate in throughout the year. Teams can accrue

points and share the honor of "winning" the House trophy that is on display outside of the library in the glass case. A big Thank You to the PTSA who has contributed the bulk of the money spent to purchase the house T-shirts.

For parents of elementary students, I have begun the process this week of entering the elementary classrooms (grades 1-5) to do the monthly guidance lessons. These lessons are based on character values and give me a chance to talk about important life concepts that we want our AISR students to exemplify. This includes subjects like friendship, honesty, caring, and kindness and I encourage discussion, as well as planning activities where the students can apply the lessons to "real-life" situations.

I would like to encourage the parents of the students in the secondary school to join us at the Open House, next Thursday evening, Sept 13th. You will receive valuable information from each of the teachers about what will be covered in the curriculum for this year. Wear good walking shoes, ladies, as you will be following your child's timetable throughout the evening and visiting all eight of their classes in a period of about an hour and a half. You will definitely get a workout going up and down the stairs! I look forward to seeing you there.

Ruth Lopez, Counselor

A Start to TOK

Many parents have seen their students' schedules and noticed that if their child is in 11th or 12th grade in our school, it is very likely that they will be taking the Theory of Knowledge class. Just what exactly is that and what does the class entail?

TOK as it is known by many is the subject which asks, "How do we know whether or not something is true?" in all of the other subjects. Many of the students get annoyed at all of this questioning in the beginning. After all, they have just spent at least 11 or 12 years in school being taught a lot of information about a lot of subjects. They have come to believe that there are certain truths, which are just "true" and that nothing else could be an option. With a jolt, they come to realize in the first few days of the TOK classes, that they actually cannot take anything for granted as being simply true. Some truths are more "true" than others. While the natural sciences and mathematics offer us comfortable facts, which are true until proven untrue, areas like the arts and ethics seem to become extremely problematic, and the students wonder how humans have even made it this far without having mass scale nervous

breakdowns because of the high level of decisions which have to be made, based on information which is entirely not concrete.

This is why many teachers recommend starting off the TOK course with an ethical question, which everyone in the class is going to be able to have ideas about. This year's 11th graders were faced with the thorny task of thinking about what to do in the Trisha Marshall case, which was a real life example, and which involved trying to understand the decision taken whether or not to keep a brain-dead woman on a life support machine in order to save her unborn fetus, just 17 weeks into the pregnancy. A complication involved in the decision is that the mother got shot while committing a criminal act, and was a heavy drug and alcohol user. Using the Inspiration Program in the computer, which enables the students to draw up their different points of view in a flow chart, they were able to draw up at least 20 arguments for and another 20 arguments against turning off the life-support machine. They suddenly realized that ethical decisions, although based on sound thought and discussion, are as about as frail as life itself. I have printed off an article about Ethical Education in the classroom from IB World Magazine for you to read, and if you want to find out what happened in the Trisha Marshall

case, just google her name on the internet and you will find many articles about it.

Lynda Boot, TOK

AISR SHARKS

David is our Athlete of the Week

Sept. 3-7 2007



David is a member of the U12 Soccer team. He scored a hat trick and had one assist in the Shark's victory over Antwerp. As a midfielder he covered the field and helped the team both offensively and defensively. He demonstrated a positive attitude in training leading up to the game and was a positive leader for his peers. David has exemplified the spirit of the team so far this year by taking training serious and realizing that teamwork is needed in order for everyone to improve.

AISR's Board of Trustees



What is the Governance Committee of the AISR School Board?

The primary function of the Governance Committee is evaluation. We are responsible for the annual Parent Survey which is administered in the spring of each school year. Two years ago, we took the survey into the electronic era and found that, happily, we received a greater response. Anonymity and the ease of responding immediately with the click of a button have made the survey much more useful for us. From the survey, a summary is always published in the SHARK or a letter is sent home with the highlights – areas where we are “doing well”, as well as “areas needing improvement”. The goal of

the survey is to make AISR the best possible educational institution for your children.

In addition, we conduct a staff survey of the Director and the Elementary Principal. The School Board is also evaluated. Just like the parent survey, these surveys are conducted electronically.

Another “job” of the Governance Committee is the recruitment of new School Board members.

Currently, Ms. Clare Millard is the Committee’s Chairperson. The Governance Committee includes, Ms. Erin Sherritt, Mr. Larry Rosenblatt, Mrs. Elizabeth O’Dwyer, Mrs. Anne Marie Blitz and Mr. Brian Atkins. We meet every 6 weeks throughout the school year, with more meetings in the spring to administer the surveys.

Liz O’Dwyer, Governance Committee

PTSA News

We take great pleasure in announcing the success of this year’s Welcome Picnic. A record number of over 420 persons representing 130 families attended this festive event. What a great start for a new school year.

Fun was had by all, child and adult alike. The weather was supportive, allowing all to enjoy the school yard to its max.

The unexpected large crowd did bring with it some constraints like the long queues many had to endure. We wish to thank all for the

patience displayed. Also, for any that did not fully enjoy the juicy BBQ, we hope that the wonderful dishes provided by the excellent chefsmanship of the school moms and dads made up for the shortfall.

A very sincere thank you to all the volunteers who donated their time and efforts at the grill, the food tables, the bar and the bouncy castle, as well as all those who helped with set-up and clean-up...we could not have done it without you.

All the families who signed up for the sponsor program have been matched. If your new sponsor has not been in contact with you, please notify Maureen at ptsa@aisr.nl.

Kindly note that the next General PTSA Meeting will take place on the 19th September at 1.30pm in the usual location of our school's cafeteria. Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Events

Dok 99 Bowling Fundraiser for African Flying Doctors

September 30, 2007

Straatweg 99

3054 AB Rotterdam

Telephone (010) 422 07 48

rotterdam@dok99.nl

Have fun with all the new friends you made at the Welcome Back Picnic by going bowling on Sunday, September 30 from 1-3 pm. This should be a fun family outing. The entrance

fee will be €12 per person for 2 hrs of fun. All proceeds go to African Flying Doctors.

We will NOT provide transportation and please note that parents must accompany their children.

Please complete the form below and include your money in sealed envelope labelled "Bowling" to the AISR front office

Return slip by September 25th

Family Name:

Number attending:

Adult English Lessons

*Location: International Education Center
Rotterdam (AISR/JSR Building)*

Your child/children are receiving an excellent education, which includes the learning of the English language as an integral part. Maybe you, as parents, would like to take advantage of your time in Rotterdam to improve your English. Learning English will make your life here easier and more enjoyable, will help your children, and will also be useful to you when you return to your country. English lessons for adults are held in the school building during school hours. There are groups for all levels from beginners to advanced, and new members are welcome to

join at any time during the year. The groups are small and friendly and provide a good chance to meet and talk to parents of other nationalities.

The Tuesday 12.45 and Thursday 11.00 classes offer the optional possibility to study for a Cambridge University certificates FCE and CAE, but still allow for plenty of conversation.

Provided there is enough demand, the lesson times will be:

Tuesday

11.00-12.30, Reading group (a nice novel)

12.45-14.15, Upper Intermediate (CAE) (new class this year)

Thursday

*9.00–10.30 Beginners/Lower/Int.
(vocabulary/conversation)*

10.45-12.15, Intermediate/ (FCE)

*12.30–14.00 , Intermediate
(vocabulary/conversation)*

Friday

*12.30-14.30 Advanced
(vocabulary/conversation)*

The lesson fee is 9 euros per lesson (except for Friday 10 euros per 2-hour lesson) to be paid at the beginning of each month. Lessons recommence after the summer break on Tuesday 4, Thursday 6, and Friday 7 September 2007.

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact me (Mary) directly or fill in the slip below and return it to school, and I can help you decide which group(s) would be best for you.

I look forward to meeting you

Mary Tomlinson: tel.: 010-4704424 or e-mail: maryjt_nl@yahoo.com

Adult English Lessons

I am interested in the English lessons for adults and would like to know more.

Name

Telephone

Number _____

Welcome Back Asian Luncheon

All are invited to the first gathering of the school year.

Time: 12:00 p.m. onwards

Date: Tuesday 11th September

Location: at the home of Mida Abdullah

Address: Pastoor Canniuslaan 31

2661 HW Bergschenhoek

Tel: 010-524-8000

Please bring a dish of your choice.

If you need a ride please meet Shinobu at the school cafeteria at 12:00 p.m.

As usual all are welcome including younger children.

Treasure Island DVD

Last year the 5th Grade Class performed Treasure Island. This wonderful performance was taped by the High School Students.

Several parents have requested a copy on DVD. For those of you who are interested in purchasing a copy, please stop by the front office and put your name on the list so that we have an idea of how many copies to make.

Important Upcoming Events

- September 7 Progress Reports mailed home*
- September 10 HS @ AIS*
- September 11 MS home vs ISA*
- September 12 HALF DAY*
- September 13 HS @ ISA*
- September 13 Middle/High School Open house @ 6:30 p.m.*
- September 17 TRIP WEEK*
- September 27 MS @ ASH*
- September 28 HS soccer/BIS home*
- September 29 MS/HS mini-tournaments*