MEADOWBROOK SCHOOL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

‘If it’s Tuesday, this must be Belgium...’
Students ‘travel the globe’ without leaving the building

BY KATHRYN A. BURGER
Of Community Life

First-grader Matthew Killian wouldn’t leave for school until his airline ticket was in order. Why? His mother, Colette, said, “He told me he needed the ticket to get from ‘Argentina’ to all the other countries he’d be visiting that day.

That’s just one example of the excitement and anticipation that was generated by the first-ever Meadowbrook Multicultural Festival. The entire school community worked together to transform the school’s classrooms and several other areas into more than 25 different countries representing every continent, including Antarctica.

Dianna DeFalco, the school’s guidance counselor, explained the goals of the program. “Multicultural education helps students to understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities, as well as recognize the accomplishments of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups.”

To reach these goals, a multi-disciplinary approach was used. Donna Marie Cozine, Ed.D., principal of Meadowbrook, said students learned about their class’s assigned country in a variety of ways. “Our art teacher worked with each class,” to create projects representative of their country. The students played

These mummies were made by the students in Marie Cartwright’s fourth-grade class. They formed a backdrop for a variety of pyramids, this one made from Legos.

Multicultural Festival
The Meadowbrook School classes and the countries they were assigned are listed here.

Pre-K and Kindergarten
Greece
Italy
Spain
United Kingdom
First Grade
Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Peru
Second Grade
Australia
Canada
Mexico

Third Grade
China
Japan
Philippines
Russia
Fourth Grade
Egypt
Kenya
Morocco
Parent volunteers represented eight countries:
Columbia
Ecuador
France
India
Ireland
Norway
Taiwan
Ukraine

In “More objections raised to Wachovia plan,” Feb. 7, page 4, Bruce Meisel was said to be a major stockholder for Pascack Community Bank. Meisel is chair-

CORRECTION

man of the board and owns 2.5 percent of the common stock and has options for another 2.3 percent.

Kindergarteners at Hillside's Meadowbrook School visited “India” (the school’s art room) during the Multicultural Festival. Pictured with school principal, Donna Marie Cozine, Ed.D., center, back row, are the Meadowbrook parents who volunteered to decorate the room and educate their student visitors about their homeland. They are, from left, Aditi Sen, Rashmi Shah, Radhika Murali and Asha Velagala. Kindergarteners from “Italy” are, from left, Stephanie Smith, Quinn Arcaro, Carly Pia and Trevor Lauber. They are each holding their “passports” which were stamped as they visited each country-classroom during the festival.

At right is one of the many table displays in “India.” Below is a sand-art design that welcomed visitors.

PHOTOS BY KATHRYN A. BURGER
First-graders from Audra Davis' class, wearing their Greek togas a laurel of leaves, visited "Japan" and worked on a craft project. They are, from left, Gregory Solurie, Sydney Griffiths, Michele Enrico's third-grade classroom.

Michele Enrico's third-grade classroom. There was faux sushi, artfully made of candy and cereal, and samurai warriors made from plastic spoons and paper. The sign on the bulletin board adorned with miniature Japanese flags read, "Welcome to Japan."

Half of the all-purpose room was Taiwan, one of the eight countries that parent volunteers set up. Tables displayed toys, dolls and traditional clothing and jewelry. While Jean Chen, mother of first-grader Claire Hsu, demonstrated one of the toys, Candice Chao, mother of first-grader Brian Hsei and fourth-grader Kevin Hsei, spoke to the fourth-grade "Moroccans" students, each of whom wore an elaborately decorated fez, complete with tassel.

In Egypt - Marie Cartwright's fourth-grade classroom - a display of mummies was the backdrop for several incarnations of the pyramids. To make the mummies, the students applied layers of paper mache to plastic water bottles and then painted and decorated them.

There wasn't enough time for each class to visit each country. It was difficult to walk past classrooms that had been transformed into Spain, Australia, China, Norway, Russia and so many other countries and not have time even for a short visit. After their "itinerary" had been completed, and they returned to their "home country," some made their own excursions to countries they hadn't been to.

After their morning travels and lunch, the students and staff had a short trip to the all-purpose room where a special program, in keeping with the international theme, capped off the day. The BI-OKOTO African Drum and Theatre Group presented an entertaining and educational program for the entire school.

Dr. Cozine, who was attired in a beautiful traditional Indian dress and dramatic dangling earrings, credited the enthusiasm and hard work of the teachers, students and parent volunteers for the success of the program. She said when a notice was sent home about the upcoming festival and asking if parents wanted to represent their home countries, the response was almost immediate. Parents, from eight different countries, volunteered. "Next year, I think there will be more," Dr. Cozine said with a smile.