

'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 counties 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."

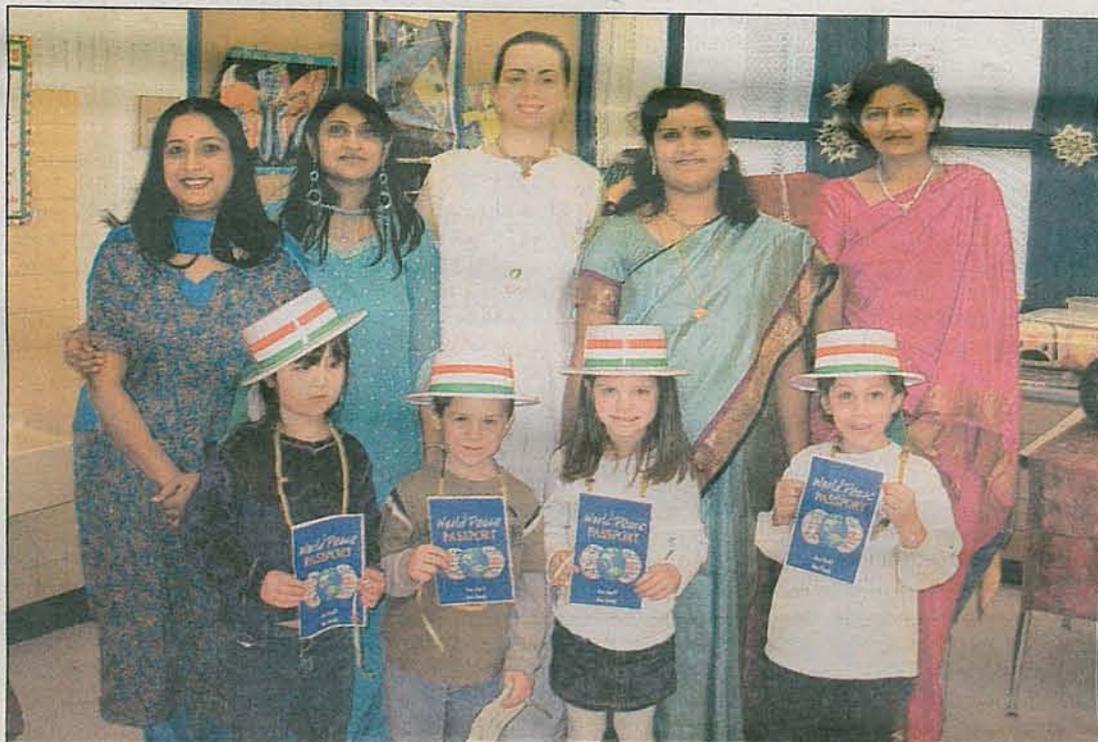
To reach these goals, a multi-disciplinary approach was used. Donna Marie Cozine, Ed.D., principal

of Meadowbrook, said students learned about their class's assigned country in variety of ways. "Our art teacher worked with each class" to create projects representative of their country. The students played

SEE NATIONS, PAGE 46



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.



PHOTOS BY KATHRYN A. BURGER

Multicultural Festival

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

Pre-K and Kindergarten

Greece

Italy

Poland

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

Kindergarteners at Hillsdale'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.



♦ CORRECTION ♦

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-

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

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FROM PAGE 3

games associated with different countries in their physical education classes and they learned about the music of their countries in music class. In the media center, they did research, pulling books about their countries. In their technology classes, they were helped to make PowerPoint presentations and used the Internet to gather information." The classroom teachers infused their lessons in other disciplines with information about their countries.

And so, the day finally arrived, after nearly two months of work and planning. Each class had been given an "itinerary" - the "countries" they would visit and when they would arrive and depart. They each had their own "passport" that was stamped at each destination. As with any trip, planning was essential. With 28 destinations - not including the main office that was Antarctica that day, complete with an impressive penguin-themed display - and 20 classes of students, organization was essential.

And everything was. The students, even the youngest, moved from classroom to classroom in orderly, happy groups, talking and laughing.

The kindergarten class visiting India (the art room) all wore white boater hats with streaming hatbands of red, green and white, the colors of the Italian flag. They sat in rows and listened as one of the parent volunteers spoke about her homeland. The room was organized by four Meadowbrook moms, and had several tables artfully arranged with an astonishing array of Indian clothing, fabrics, jewelry, and other items. There was even a traditional sand-art design on the floor just inside the doorway.

In Japan, the students from Greece were visiting. It was easy to tell their "nationality." While they were all wearing togas over their school clothes, the real tip-off were the laurel of leaves each wore. There was no mistaking Japan, which on any other day is 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 "Moroccan" 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.

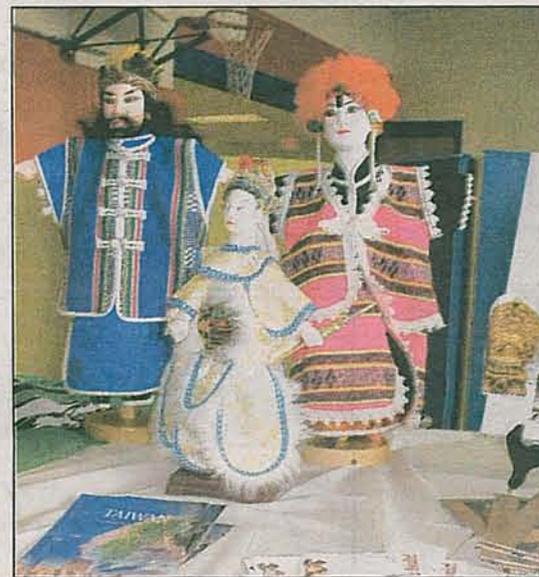
After their morning travels and lunch, the students and staff had a short trip to the all-purpose room where a special program, in keeping with the international theme, capped off the day. The BI-OKO-AFRO African Drum and Theatre Group presented an entertaining and educational program for the entire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



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, Nicolle Kalos, Damien Blendy and Nicholas Nocero.



These dolls, above left, dressed in traditional Taiwanese attire were part of the display set up in the all-purpose room. Above right, this startlingly realistic sushi made by a parent from candy and cereal was among the displays in "Japan," Michele Enrico's third-grade classroom.

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.



At left is one of the many Samurai warriors made by third-graders and displayed in their classroom.



At right, parent volunteer Jean Chen demonstrates how to play with a Taiwanese toy as fourth-grade 'Moroccans' watch.