

# Polyglot

Pinellas County Schools

*Teachers of world*

March, 2009

*languages use best practices and state  
standards to facilitate student success in the global community.*

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## 2009 International Day “Opens Minds”

More than 600 students from 26 schools (3 elementary, 12 middle and 11 high), and teachers and community supporters attended the 22nd annual International Day held at Meadowlawn Middle, Saturday, March 7, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It was a wonderful day filled with a variety of learning activities and language competitions. The day began with a Parade of Nations during which students from schools throughout the district wore costumes representing a variety of nations. Mr. John DeMado, international foreign language consultant and one of the authors of the middle school and high school Spanish textbook, led students in “raps” in Spanish, French and English, emphasizing the importance of oral language development to literacy. Students were then dismissed to select activities from their passports. They eagerly took part in the day's program, experiencing other cultures and demonstrating their language skills. Many students earned multiple ribbons for presentations of memorized declamations and for speaking extemporaneously in front of native-speaking judges from the community. Teachers guided students in the preparation of *gyozas* (potstickers), *crepes* and *pastelillos*. Students also participated in activities from dozens of cultures, such as Mah Jongg and Tai Chi, and created artistic treasures from around the world, including Mexican *quetzales*, Guatemalan worry dolls, painted gourds and Chinese crafts. Many thanks to Meadowlawn MS for hosting the event again this year. Students spent months prior to the event creating beautiful thematic banners with this year's theme, “Opening Minds to the World Through Languages”. School teams also participated in a dramatic presentation contest. We are pleased to recognize the following schools for outstanding achievement in these areas:

### Elementary School Banner Winner:

### Middle School Banner Winners:

### High School Banner Winners:

### Dramatic Presentation:

### Pam Silva Memorial Summer

### Immersion Scholarship Winner:

### High Point

### First Place:

### Second Place:

### Third Place:

### First Place

### Second Place

### Third Place

### (K-5) Ridgecrest Elementary,

### Mrs. Smith's 1st grade Spanish Immersion class

### Middle School

### High School

### Genesys Gonzalez

### John Hopkins

### Kennedy

### Seminole

### East Lake

### Lakewood

### Pinellas Park

### Tarpon Springs MS

### Lakewood HS

### Osceola HS



### Spanish Summer Immersion

### Program Celebrates 30 Years

Teachers are asked to please encourage interested students to complete the application for the 2009 **Spanish Summer Immersion Program** to be held at Eckerd College, **June 22-26**. Students who have completed two years of Spanish entering grades 9-12 in fall of 2009 are eligible. This year's theme is “El Dorado y El Mirador”, and will feature language activities planned around the cultures of Colombia and Guatemala. The culminating experience will be a “carnaval”. We celebrate the program's 30th birthday this year, and many activities related to the number “treinta” will be infused throughout the week. The application deadline is **May 15**. Partial scholarships are available. Department chairs at each school have applications, which can also be found on the Pinellas County Schools' Office of World Languages web site:

[www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/CI/languages/](http://www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/CI/languages/)

We give special recognition to Renée Belvis, WLTA President and event chair, the Meadowlawn MS administration and staff, especially Mrs. Valencia Walker, principal, Regina Bringas and Jessica Fresia, Spanish teachers, and Ryan Hooper, head plant operator. Many thanks as well to the International Day core committee members: Sylvia Amaya, Pam Benton, Danny Boulteris, Diana Cano, Jeanette Chávez, Geri Craven, Michael Eby, Leni Fernández, Ann Footlick, Jennifer Gil, Esther González-Wright, Vanessa Lieberz, Kristen Parks, Mildred Piolo, Alexandra Robalino, Joy Segovia, Linda Santiago, and to Nancy Engelman, office secretary for world languages.



# News from the Schools...Middle Schools

## Morgan Fitzgerald MS



Members of Kristen Parks' Spanish club at Morgan Fitzgerald MS made simple piñatas using paper cups (left). Her advanced students also enjoyed cooking in December while working with the food unit.

## John Hopkins Middle School

Esther González-Wright's advanced Spanish classes were able to taste traditional "mole" and chicken while learning about Mexican culture. Esther continues to mentor new teachers, Debbie Gómez, Andrea Bonkowski, and Brenda Lankford, who she and Bell Guerra are so pleased to welcome to their growing department.

## Safety Harbor Middle School

Gail Lulek, ESOL teacher at Safety Harbor MS, and her colleague, Maricela Duarte, who teaches Spanish for Spanish Speakers at Safety Harbor, have been collaborating

all year in order to better meet the language needs of the students they share. In December, the SHMS PMAC, in cooperation with the World Languages Department, participated in the school's 10th annual "Holidays Around the World" project. Presentations, projects, and information about Posada, Chinese New Year, Ramadan, Boxing Day, Diwali, Hanukkah, Dias de las Velitas, Three Kings Day, Carnavales, Kwanzaa and Epiphany were featured. Student tour guides led students, staff and visitors through the displays.

Yee-chen Robson's Chinese students also participated in the school's second annual Chinese New Year celebration held January 27, featuring student presentations, projects and food shared with parents in the media center.

## Osceola Middle School

Students in Mirian Arcila's Spanish classes learned "more than they every knew before" about the Panama Canal zone, thanks to the staff of the Panama Canal Museum in Seminole. Mirian took advantage of the museum's offer to make presentations to

students; Osceola hosted the visitors in November. Mirian's students summarized their learning and excerpts from two of these summaries are printed below:

Lekha Kuchampuch—*Mr. Shawn Reynolds came to our class to teach us about the origins of the Panama Canal. I learned it took ten years to finish this canal even though so many people came to work on it. On each side of the canal there are two locks. Locks are wall-type things that can open and close easily, and water is enclosed in it. These locks raise and descend so boats can get across the canal. President Carter is the one who started building the canal. During the building of this canal, there were many things blocking them from finishing, such as malaria. All in all, it took a long time and a lot of people to finish this canal.*

Nicole Melendy - *...The canal makes money from the tolls and the most paid has been \$300,000 and it was the Disney Cruise Ship. The least was a man swimming through, who paid 37 cents. It takes 8 minutes to fill a lock chamber so that travelers can go through. Theodore Roosevelt started the project in 1906 and the canal was handed over to the Panamanians 1999.*

# News from the Schools....

## High Schools

## Palm Harbor University HS

"We have a wonderful department," comments Aimée Alfaro, world languages department chair at Palm Harbor University High School. Teachers in the department are "team teaching", working together to coordinate lessons, activities and efforts. They schedule the teaching auditorium so that they can combine classes for special presentations. Cynthia Ramos, Astrid Remón and Angie Jenkins, your colleagues at PHUHS are very proud of you!

## Gibbs High School

Laura Sosa-Cook and Dacia Cannon are working on the re-development of a Spanish Honor Society at Gibbs. The newly formed SHH sold cards and flowers for Valentine's Day this year.

## St. Petersburg High School

submitted by Mijana Djurdjevic,

SHH Historian, St. Petersburg HS

St. Petersburg High School's Spanish Honor Society had a very productive first semester. We participated in a canned food drive, collected backpacks for underprivileged children, wrapped gifts, and tutored. All of our members donated at least three cans of food to help our school food drive, which aided needy families. Our club was the winner of the drive, raising more food than any other club (approximately 900 cans). We also collected brand-new backpacks filled with school supplies like folders, binders,

Colored pencils and books, which were given to underprivileged Hispanic children in the area. Some members also wrapped gifts for donations and every member tutored for at least two hours at our school or at a local middle school. At one meeting, we had a fun scavenger hunt conducted in Spanish with prizes for the winners. The Spanish Club joined us in December for a delicious holiday luncheon featuring authentic Hispanic foods such as rice and beans, pulled pork, plantains, and Cuban bread. Finally, 47 new members were inducted into the Sancho Panza chapter of SHH on Wednesday, March 4.



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