

Three religions, one day of celebration

In case you were wondering about the little shepherds, saints, knights and pilgrims, parading on the school ground on October second, it was the pluralistic religious celebration of three important events in Islam, Christianity and Judaism .

The Feast (or Exaltation) **of the Cross** celebrates the discovery of the Holy Cross by Saint Helena during her pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 326 CE. Helena and her son, the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, then built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on its site .

Eid al-Adha honors the story of Ibrahim (Abraham), ready to sacrifice his son Ismail (Ishmael) to God and the intervention of the angel Jibra'il (Gabriel). In Muslim tradition, the event is celebrated by offering adhiya (sacrificed animals). Its meat is divided into three parts, one for the family, one for relatives, friends and neighbors and one for the poor and needy.

Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles) celebrates one of the three Jewish Pilgrimage Festivals to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem (shalosh regalim) and remembers Gods "clouds of glory", shielding the Jewish pilgrims from the hardships of the Sinai desert. During its ceremony, the Sukkah -a temporary wooden hut with a roof of branches- serves as a place of dwelling during the 7-day festival of shelter and harvest .

The children played out the stories of these three festivals in costumes and with songs and dances, they had prepared with first grade teacher Nadwa Jaber and second grade teacher Yasmin Alkalek, in front of an enchanted audience.



Olive Day and Farewell to Liora



This year's Olive Day marked another greatly anticipated and cheerful annual event for the primary school children, as they celebrated the harvest of olives and learned about the ancient tradition and the many uses of the olive. So on 28th of October, Father Paul of the Latrun Monastery, who cherishes Olive Day as much as the children do, invited all the WASNS pupils to the monastery. The scenic walk was a great way for the children to start their outdoor experience, and when they arrived, they began to pick the olives and feel first hand what it means to harvest. After that, each class together with their homeroom teacher sat down to have breakfast in the Monastery's beautiful surroundings. Then it was time to get into the art of production.

With awe and curiosity, the children watched and listened as the monks led them on a visit to the olive press and showed them the stages of producing olive oil.

The rest of the day was accompanied by olive-related activities, like storytelling, baking, science and guessing games, but there was one bittersweet occasion that stood out. This year's Olive Day was also the last school day of beloved teacher Liora Erez, who has taught in Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom for almost two decades. Liora started out as a sports and social studies teacher, then became a homeroom teacher and also served as a vice principal for two years. Her great dedication to her subjects and the school made her a favorite among students and staff alike. So on Olive Day, the children and teachers took the chance to give her a farewell card from each class and say their goodbyes. There were tears and heartfelt parting words, as everybody will sorely miss Liora and her inspiring commitment.



Alefba/Alefabet

Party of the Letters

On the last day of November, the first graders of WASNS Primary School, parents and teachers came together on Sunday evening to celebrate their learning of the alphabets. This is a special day of elementary school life, but in a school like in Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom Primary it is also a celebration of its bilingualism and the egalitarian status of both Arabic and Hebrew. For the children, it primarily seemed to be an exciting "night out", at which they got to dress up, present they learning books, alphabet skills and crowns, play letter games, and last but not least: feast together, in alphabetical order, of course.



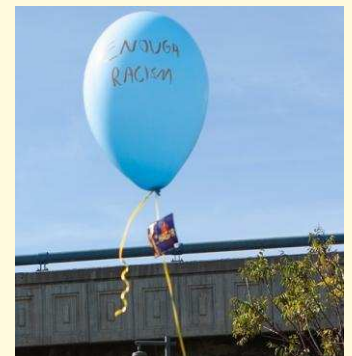
After all the families arrived and placed their pot luck dinner according to the starting letter of the Arabic and Hebrew alphabet on the banquet, the ceremony began. The first grade language teachers Nadwa Jaber and Hadas Harel acted as conductors, as the children gave an endearing singing performance of the both alphabets, while the proud parents watched and took pictures.

From there, the families joined their children in three alphabet games, each in one class room, consisting of a letter fishing pond, letter bingo and memory games, as well as letter painting and coloring exercises. Judging from the happy faces and chatter all around, the fun and learning experience was equally divided between adults and children. The finale, of course, were the delicious meals at the end of the evening, after which everybody left truly satisfied from A to Z.



Hand in Hand March

On the night of the 29th of November, criminals broke in to the Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem, sprayed anti-Arab graffiti on the walls and set fire to one of its classrooms. When the sad and shocking news of the hate crime reached us, there was great despair in the community of Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom and its primary school. Hand in Hand has been our partners in peace for many years and built its schools on the WASNS educational model. There are now five bilingual Arab and Jewish schools throughout the country. Naturally, our first urge was to show our solidarity and empathy. On the day after the attack, a delegation of members of the WASNS community and Primary School children, their parents, teachers and principal went to Jerusalem to join in a march supporting peace and pluralism. Together with 2,500 other demonstrators, we declared our support and alliance, encouraging the population of the Hand in Hand School in this difficult time and showing yet again that "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies."



The sixth grade class welcomed students and teachers from the Freiherr-vom-Stein-Realschule School in Duesseldorf, Germany this November for a one week visit at our primary school. Our school connected with the school in Duesseldorf when the Israeli coordinator of the international education network iEarn suggested that we begin to collaborate, because both schools have a multicultural, multi-religious and multilingual population.

When German teacher Norbert Krebs started writing to village member and homeroom teacher Raida Aiashe at WASNS Primary School, they found out they had a lot to talk about: How does each school live with its heterogeneity? How do the lives of children and adolescents in the two schools compare? How are peace, justice and equality of different groups promoted? And what subjects can be used as common sustainable projects for an educational partnership?

The two classes, through the internet, began to create projects that they could each do in their schools, sharing and comparing progress and change. In the first project, each class planted daffodils and tulips. Together they compared how the flowers reacted in different climates and environmental conditions measuring their daily growth and sending each other pictures .



In a second project, "The View from My Window", they shared written essays about what they saw from their bedroom window. This gave each side a glimpse into the world and life of the other. Raida, being the pupils English teacher, was very enthusiastic, because English became the 'mediating' language of the partnership. (to see 'the view from our windows' and the daffodil project, go to <http://awaybuttogether.net/projects/>)

The 'virtual contact' through the internet became so exciting, that the two schools began to plan to visit one another and on November 2nd, the German pupils arrived at WASNS. Each child was placed in a family with one of our 6th grade students. The children took part in school life; attended sports class; worked with our pupils and art teacher Michal Moses on recycling junk into art; and went with science teacher Voltaire Shamshoun on a nature tour to get acquainted with the plants and animals of the region. The two classes also went to Jerusalem and visited Yad Vashem, the church in Ein Karem and the remains of the old Arab Village of Sataf. In addition, they took trips with their host families, which included expeditions to the Dead Sea, the Tel Aviv Port, and Jaffa.

One of the highlights was a barbecue at the house of one of the host parents, where the children ate and played together. You could hear a wild mix of Arab, Hebrew, German and English from all corners of the garden. All in all, it was an amazing experience for both groups as they started out shy and progressively warmed up to each other. It began our school children's first international, cross cultural friendship and our pupils are now planning to visit their new friends in Duesseldorf this spring.



Eng	Arabic	Hebrew	German
1. Good morning	صباح الخير	בוקר טוב	Guten Morgen
2. Yes	نعم	כן	Ja
3. No	لا	לא	Nein
4. Thank you	شكرا	תודה	Danke
5. Come	هيا	הבא	Komm
6. Sorry	عذرا	סליחה	Tut mir leid / Entschuldigung
7. please	من فضلك	נא	Bitte
8. Welcome	مرحباً	ברוך הבא	Gern gesehen / Bitte schön
9. good bye	وداعاً	להתראות	Auf Wiedersehen / Tschüss
10. good evening	مساء الخير	ערב טוב	Guten Abend

National Science Quiz

Whoever said that science is boring? Well, the pupils of Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom Primary School have quite the opposite opinion and they showed their excitement and scientific entrepreneurship when participating in this years national space and astronomy quiz. The competition is led by the Association of Israeli Astronauts and experts from the Weizmann Institute of Science. Over a hundred primary schools from all over Israel take part.

The competition is named in memory of Ilan Ramon, Israel's first astronaut in space. It is hosted nationally online, with the computer screen being projected on the wall of the classroom. When homeroom teacher Reem Nashef registered her 6th grade class for the quiz, she knew the preparations would be an extra challenge in WASNS Primary School, since she had to teach the subject matter in both Hebrew and Arabic, with complex astronomical terms and relations translated into both languages. However, she didn't hesitate and launched herself and the children "into outer-space", as they painstakingly studied the needed material.

After the first round in the competition, our 6th grade students made it to the second round with the theme 'objects in space'. To the delight of everyone, they moved on to the third round, focusing on planets, the sun and their characteristics. As a preparation technique, Reem divided her pupils into groups, each group studying and becoming experts on a particular planet, gathering information about it, and then compiling quiz questions on the planet for the rest of the class. On December 16th, the third stage of the quiz began and the children and Reem anxiously gathered in front of the computer screen. As soon as the first question popped up, all the excitement and commitment from months of preparation and being part of the competition broke loose and heated, passionate discussions about space issues buzzed through the classroom. Reem, being as much excited as her pupils, was doing her best to calm them down and boost them to answer the question before the time was up. It was the right answer! Relief and cheers among the students, until the next question appeared.

Onward into the evening, question after question was being answered this way, some wrong, most right, until the third round ended.

Right away, they were told that WASNS was still in the game at the moment. But they had to wait and see, if they made it to the next and final round, until their response times had been checked against all the other remaining schools. After ten excruciating days of waiting, they got the happy news: We made it!!!

For the fourth and final round of the national quiz, which will be held at the Center for Excellency in Jerusalem on January 15th, our 6th graders now will have to build an object about space, which will then be inspected and evaluated by a committee of space scientists. The community of Wahat al Salam-Neve Shalom will keep their fingers crossed and share the thrill with our up and coming scientists at Primary School!



Eid Said! Hag Sameah!
Happy Holidays



This year Christmas, Hanukkah and Mawlid an-Nabi are not so far apart, so on Thursday the school children celebrated all three with performances and a party. Once all the parents and children had settled in the sports hall, the first graders began the event with a song to banish the darkness on the occasion of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of the lights. The second graders then performed a Christmas song dressed as Santa. The third graders followed on with a performance that explained the year of the elephant as the year in which the prophet Mohammed was born. After musical performances and dancing, the children, their parents and teachers went outside to mingle and enjoy the wide range of food that had been brought. It was the last event before the winter break and it couldn't have been a nicer and more cheerful way for WASNS students to start their vacation.