

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK:

November 14–18, 2011



International Education Week (IEW) is an annual opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education is part of an effort to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States.

This year, IEW will be November 14–18, 2011. First held in 2000, IEW is celebrated in more than 100 countries worldwide. Promotional materials and other information are available on the official IEW website from the State Department: iew.state.gov. IEW also has a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalEdWeek>.

The IEW website offers a list of suggested activities for K–12 schools, for colleges and universities, for non-profit and community organizations, businesses, and local governments; for foreign embassies in the United States; and for U.S. embassies, Fulbright commissions, and educational advising centers worldwide. One such celebration took place last year at French for Fun, a unique Language and Cultural Center in Lafayette, CA, offering programs for all ages, infants through adults [see article below].

As International Education Week leads into the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, consider what you can do to take the time to focus on international education with your students and in your school.

“French for Fun” Center Celebration for IEW

BY AUDREY LEE

During the week of Nov 15–19, 2010, International Education Week was celebrated at French for Fun Language and Cultural Center, by students, faculty, staff, parents, and grandparents.

Students ranging from preschoolers to teenagers embarked on an exhilarating journey across Europe, Africa, Asia, North America, and Central and South America. Prior to the celebration week, we started collecting photographs of parents and grandparents of every student at French for Fun. We also created a simple survey requesting the languages that their family members spoke and their country of origin. The response was tremendous and very impressive. To represent the diversity at our Center, our teachers created a world map in the hallway and posted the photographs illustrating our students' heritage and origins of their parents and grandparents.



Gradually, as photographs went up, our students—preschoolers to middle-schoolers—were mesmerized looking at the faces of the world and the people in their community. Our classrooms were festooned with flags of different countries. Parents and grandparents supported their children’s learning by bringing in traditional artifacts, costumes, musical instruments, books, and handmade tribal goods to embellish our displays of these countries and cultures. The authentic cuisines shared in their presentations enlivened our senses and awoke our willingness to sample delicacies from cultures near and far. Many of our parents and grandparents participated as guest speakers in the classrooms throughout the week sharing their experiences of living and growing up in another country, such as China, Korea, Japan, Russia, Poland, India, Peru, Syria, Algeria, Nigeria, Malaysia, Mexico, and Morocco. Languages and writings of their native cultures enthralled these students who are already coming to the Center to learn a second language. The preschool children were especially proud to see and hear their friends, who come daily to the Center to learn French, also speaking, writing, and reading in other native languages.

The success behind International Education Week clearly shows that today, more than ever, it is critical for the people of the world to learn to understand and respect one another’s cultures, languages, and beliefs. What is even more remarkable is that we are able to bring this to the consciousness of our preschoolers. Our preschool program’s focus is to present diversity in the form of language, cultural gratitude, and family appreciation.

ACTFL’s message is that to succeed in today’s global environment, we must respond to students’ increasing need to complement their academic and career learning by preparing them with the international skills that allow them to understand and work with people from other countries. Our preschoolers are already on this path towards making this a possibility for the rest of their lives.

Learn more about French for Fun at www.frenchforfun.com.

Audrey Lee is a volunteer and parent at French for Fun Learning Center in Lafayette, California.



Preschool students at French for Fun take part in 2010 International Education Week activities.

**INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION
WEEK 2011**
November 14-18
U.S. Dept of State
U.S. Dept of Education
<http://iew.state.gov/>

Quiz Yourself and Your Students

Among the items online to get people ready for International Education Week 2011 are several “Global IQ Quizzes,” including a Continent IQ Quiz, a Cultural Geography IQ Quiz, and a Physical & Cultural Geography IQ Quiz. These are based on questions provided by the National Geographic Society from previous National Geographic Bee competitions. A sample question from the Cultural Geography IQ Quiz would be:

Q: Bengali is the official language of a densely populated Asian country in which over 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Name this country.

- A. Bangladesh
- B. India
- C. Sri Lanka

Do you know the correct answer? Check out all the different quizzes at iew.state.gov/quiz.cfm. You may even want to consider holding your own Culture or Geography Bee in your class or school.