Dear Charter Oak Families:

March is already here and spring is fast approaching! This is a busy and exciting time for all of us with many important events that require your attention.

On March 3rd we will have our second Magnet and Pre-Kindergarten Open House this year. If you missed our first one on February 11th, you will have an opportunity to learn about all the exciting opportunities at Charter Oak, including information regarding our expanded pre-kindergarten program, which next year will offer 80 spots for children ages 3 and 4. Remember that even if you reside in the Charter Oak neighborhood, you will have to submit an application for pre-kindergarten. Here is the summary of the most important information regarding the process:

- Application Process Started: **January 11, 2016**
- Next Parent Information Meeting at Charter Oak International Academy: **March 3rd, 6:30 PM**
- Application Due: **March 11th, 4:00 PM**
- Lottery Results Mailed: **March 25th**
- Responses to Acceptance Due: **April 27th**
- Waiting List Review: **Late June to Mid-August**

Also this month, starting on Tuesday, March 8th we will have our student-led Parent/Teacher Conferences. I am sure that you will be excited to hear, first hand and from your own children, the incredible growth our students have experienced since the fall conferences. Please make sure to check dates and times since dismissal time is changed to accommodate the conferences. The student-led conference is a model that is unique to Charter Oak at the elementary level, a signature experience and reflection of our philosophy to empower our students as IB learners. Please don’t hesitate to provide us with comments and feedback as we are always trying to improve our practices.

Artbeat will start during the same week of conferences. As you may know, this is our district’s annual student art exhibit featuring selected pieces from all elementary schools around West Hartford. The exhibit at the SaltBox Gallery on Buena Vista Road will be open until the beginning of April.

Also on Saturday March 19th, we will have our Family Academy. This incredible community event sponsored and organized by our Family Resource Center will start at 9:00 AM. Please make sure that you complete the registration forms. March is also the month to start state testing. SBAC will be administered to grades 3, 4, and 5. Like in previous years, Science is limited to 5th grade with the traditional CMT test. The Science test will be administered on March 10th. This year, SBAC testing will be shortened since the writing performance task for the English Language Arts has been eliminated by the State.

Also for 5th grade parents, please remember that 5th to 6th grade Orientation Night is on March 14th at Sedgwick Middle School. This is a very important event for our 5th grade families. They will receive thorough information about transition to middle school.

As you can see, a very busy month of March, with plenty of opportunities for all to support our children and stay involved in the many activities programmed. All this will take us to spring, which on some days feels as if it has already arrived.

With much appreciation for your support and commitment,

Juan Melián
Principal
Queridas Familias de Charter Oak:

¡Marzo ya está aquí y la primavera se acerca rápidamente! Este es un momento realmente ocupado para todos con una gran cantidad de eventos que requieren de su atención.

El 3 de marzo tendremos nuestra segunda Sesión Informativa como escuela magnet este año. Si se perdió la primera el 11 de febrero, tendrá la oportunidad de conocer de todas las nuevas oportunidades que se presentan en Charter Oak el año que viene, incluyendo información sobre nuestro programa de pre-kindergarten, que como saben, ha sido expandido hasta 80 estudiantes de 3 y 4 años de edad. Recuerden que incluso si usted reside en el vecindario de Charter Oak, tendrá que mandar una solicitud de pre-kindergarten. Las fechas más importantes del proceso son las siguientes:

- Proceso de solicitud comenzó el 11 de enero
- Próxima Sesión Informativa es el 3 de marzo
- Solicitudes deben ser entregadas antes del 11 de marzo
- Resultados de lotería serán facilitados el 25 de marzo
- Respuestas con aceptación deben ser dadas el 27 de abril
- Revisión de la Lista de Espera se realiza desde el final de junio a mediado de agosto

También este mes, el 8 de marzo comenzarán las conferencias de padres y profesores lideradas por nuestros estudiantes. Estoy seguro de que esperan con ilusión estas conferencias en donde escuchan de primera mano y de sus hijos, el tremendo crecimiento que nuestros chicos han tenido desde las conferencias de otoño. Asegúrense de comprobar las fechas y horas dado que hay cambios en las hora de salida de la escuela algunos días. Este tipo de conferencias es un modelo único en el nivel primario en West Hartford, una experiencia especial de Charter Oak que refleja nuestra filosofía de dar poder a nuestros estudiantes como estudiantes IB. No dude en mandarnos sus comentarios y sugerencias para así continuar el proceso de mejorar nuestras prácticas.

Durante la misma semana de conferencias Artbeat comenzará. Como ustedes saben ésta es la exposición de arte anual del distrito para estudiantes seleccionados de todas las escuelas primarias. La exposición estará abierta hasta principios de abril.

También, el sábado 19 de marzo, tendremos nuestra Academia de Familia, un evento de la comunidad realmente notable organizado por el Family Resource Center. Comenzará a las 9 de la mañana. Asegúrense de completar las hojas de registro.

Marzo también es el mes en el que empiezan los exámenes estatales de SBAC para los grados 3, 4 y 5. Para quinto grado, también se administrará el examen de Ciencias de CMT el 10 de marzo. Este año SBAC será reducido dado que el examen de escritura de inglés ha sido eliminado por el Estado de Connecticut.

Así mismo, para las familias de grado 5, la Sesión de Orientación para escuelas intermedias será el 14 de marzo en Sedgwick, donde recibirán información sobre esta importante transición.

Como ve, un mes de marzo muy movido con muchas oportunidades para apoyar a sus hijos y mantenerse involucrados en la escuela. Todo ello nos llevará al comienzo de la primavera, que realmente algunos días parece que ya ha llegado.

Saludos afectuosos a todos y mi agradecimiento por su apoyo y compromiso.

Juan Melián
Principal
Curriculum Matters

inquiry
[in-kuh-ree]
noun

1. A quest for truth or knowledge.
2. An investigation

At Charter Oak International Academy, we connect our curriculum to local and global issues, and real-world problem solving situations. This practice gives global issues importance, provoking children to ask tough questions about connections, causation, and responsibility, and to gather and understand varying perspectives.

Teachers use students’ questions to guide inquiry. We know that the “how” of learning - through inquiry - is as important as the “what” - the product. At Charter Oak, we continually strive to increase our ability to create true inquiry-based experiences for our children throughout our curriculum. We had one such opportunity on Thursday evening. Presented in partnership with the PTO, 20 fourth and fifth grade scientists led inquiry experiences for families; supported by Charter Oak parents and teachers.

Throughout the evening, children and their families searched for the truth; answering questions such as:

- What challenges can be solved?
- What questions can be answered?
- Why is this important?
- Can we predict what will happen?
- How can we test our ideas?
- What does data tell us?
- What changes must be made?
- What do I understand?
- Did you arrive at the same conclusion?
- Why did our results differ?

Pre-K and Kindergarten children explored structures through building and blowing bubbles, and took a close look at nature. They used prediction and gathered data connected to the favorite story, The Mitten. Children in grades 1 to 3 explored concepts of responsibility, connections and causation as they considered health and safety issues: how germs spread and food spoils; clean water, and earthquake-safe structures. Grades 4 and 5 tested the effectiveness of their own designs for pinwheels and hovercrafts, bridges and catapults; how slight modifications improve or decrease effectiveness. These students will focus on elements of design and key concepts of form, function, and change.

Family Science Night was an opportunity for questioning and testing hypotheses; constructing; adjusting and re-testing; for challenging ourselves and our beliefs.
**Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC)**

The SBAC State tests will be administered to students in grades 3, 4 and 5 starting in March. Testing will assess Language Arts and Mathematics, and for grade 5, Science. The Grade 5 Science assessment is scheduled for Thursday, March 10th, and testing will continue until the middle of May. Testing schedules will vary by class, allowing teachers to make the best use of instructional time.

**Please help your children by making sure they:**

- get plenty of sleep
- eat a good breakfast
- arrive at school on time
- and are ready to do their best work.

Kate Jerram  
Curriculum Specialist

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**What's Cooking at the FRC**

Coming up on March 1, the FRC will be bringing singer, songwriter Cyd Slotoroff to spend some time in each COIA fifth grade classroom. Cyd will compose songs with our fifth graders and explore song lyrics as she leads a discussion on "Creating Community: Appreciating Differences." Cyd, who comes to us from Arts for Learning Connecticut, will talk and sing about strategies for taking action and for creating a more respectful and peaceful world.

One more time- a huge thank you to everyone who helped make "The Ghost Net: An Environmental Musical" a success. Our cast of 64 actors plus the first grade chorus did an outstanding job. And to the many parents who worked behind the scenes - we could not have done it without you! Many thanks.

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**Grade 5 Math Placement Test**

Grade 5 students will participate in a math placement screening which will be administered during the week of April 6th. The factors considered for math placement in middle school next year include the following: student performance on the placement screening, current progress in Grade 5 mathematics, motivation, and use of higher order thinking skills. Parents/guardians will be notified by letter during the first week of June regarding sixth grade math placement recommendations. Please contact your child’s teacher if you have any questions regarding the upcoming math placement screening.

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**Save The Date:**

Family Academy  
Sat. March 19  
9:00 AM to 11:30 AM.

Our last Family Academy before we move to the new building is going to be a memory maker. Don't miss it!

Registration forms will come home soon.
Grade 2 News

Fabulous Fables

Thanks to a generous grant from the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools, second graders had the privilege of working with author and illustrator Mr. Rick Labadia. Mr. Labadia worked with second graders to help students strengthen character development and story events through illustrations; bringing their stories to life! Students wrote their fables and then had to be thinkers and choose which medium they would use for their illustrations. They became knowledgeable about the pros and cons of watercolors, oil pastels and colored pencils. Students had to be independent and confident when deciding the type of book they would create. Some students chose to construct flip-books, puppet pocket books and bound books. Students demonstrated their enthusiasm when they shared their published fables with special guests on Thursday, February 18th at our Author’s Tea. In the final step of the project, students will once again demonstrate their self-management skills when creating a digital copy using the app Book Creator which will be uploaded into Seesaw.

The Second Grade Team:

Jill Devor
Jessica Dunn
Kirk Williams
News from Español:

The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that in 2060, almost one in three US residents will be of Hispanic descent. In other words, the 2012 Hispanic population of 53.3 million will more than double to 128.8 million. As demographics and cultures change, there will be a greater need for people to become more fluent in other languages, including Spanish, in order to interact more effectively with one another, both socially and in business. Students at Charter Oak are fortunate to have the opportunity to learn another language from pre-K on.

During their seven years at Charter Oak, our students learn the fundamentals of second language learning through an array of topics and themes related to their everyday life, such as: greetings; likes and dislikes; calendar, time and the weather; sports and pastimes; and culturally significant travel and holidays. Children begin building knowledge, vocabulary and basic skills, then expand and deepen their understanding through a curriculum that spirals to incorporate more complex grammatical structures and vocabulary. With a focus on listening and speaking in the early years, and the additional focus on reading and writing in the intermediate years, children develop their communicative skills in a second language.

Through our International Baccalaureate Program and its transdisciplinary units of study, our students are also able to enhance their knowledge of this second language by making connections with math, language arts, science and social studies curricula. The following are two examples of the type of connections we make:

Second Grade
Who We Are: Fairytales and Fables:

We read the story of Little Red Riding Hood in Spanish and talked about the elements that define this type of book. The students compared the vocabulary in the Spanish version to the English version read in class. We also read and compared two other versions of this story in Spanish and talked about fractured tales, in which characters, setting, plot or points of view may be different from the original version - sometimes with surprising results! The students expressed their opinions about their favorite version and learned why these books are popular in many different cultures.

Third Grade
How we Organize Ourselves:
Economics and Currencies

Third grade students are learning about economics, and how people meet their needs through the exchange of goods and services between producers and consumers. Students learned that people use money to purchase what they need around the world - although not necessarily the same money. Through discussions and the usage of Google’s currency converter, the students observed that outside the United States, currencies have different values and looks. Some students brought in examples of currencies from their own countries or places their families had visited, and shared them in class. Last but not least, they learned about the role of the banks in exchanging currencies and how they charge fees in order to provide this type of service.

For more information about our program, please contact me:

Montse Rich
(AKA Señora Rich)
Montse_rich@whps.org
(860) 233-8506 Ext. 2936
Art News:

Congratulations! The following talented students are part of the annual town-wide ArtBeat 2016 exhibit which features the best artwork from all of the West Hartford Public Schools in grades Kindergarten through 12. The artwork is on display at the Club House and Saltbox Galleries located at 37 Buena Vista Road in West Hartford.

The opening reception will take place on Wednesday, March 9th from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and the run of the show is March 9th – April 3rd. Hope to see you there!
Please call 860-231-8019 for Gallery hours.

- 4th Grade Collaborative Sculpture by Mrs. Behlman’s class
- Leila A.
- Caleb A.
- Saniya C.
- Azul M.
- Kelly S.
- Fatima W.
- Leo W.

Mrs. Drown
Art Teacher

Applications for the 2016-2017 Charter Oak International Academy Pre-School program are available on the Charter Oak International Academy website, the West Hartford Public Schools website, in the Charter Oak main office and in the Residency Office at the Town Hall. (www.whps.org)

Applications are due in the Residency Office at Town Hall by March 11, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

From the Office of the Superintendent:

The West Hartford Source Line (860-233-2334) will no longer be updated with school closings, delays and early dismissals.

The sources for this information will continue to be Connect-Ed notification calls, announcements on local radio and television stations and our website (www.whps.org).

RECESS POLICY

Children should be appropriately dressed to spend time outdoors during recess. Warm clothes, gloves, hats and boots are required during winter months. Boots and snow pants are required for playing in the snow. Children well enough to come to school should be well enough to be outside during recess. Exceptions, for medical reasons, may be granted on an individual basis. In the event of inclement or severely cold weather, outdoor recess will be canceled.
## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, 2/29</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchestra - Gr. 5</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAR Assembly Explorations</td>
<td>2:00 &amp; 2:45</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Various Rooms</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, 3/1</strong></td>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Various Rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achieve</td>
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<td><strong>Wednesday, 3/2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Band - Gr. 4</td>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band - Gr. 5</td>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, 3/3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chorus - Gr. 4&amp;5</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Music Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Achieve</td>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>Various Rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnet/PK Parent Information Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, 3/4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal’s Breakfast</td>
<td>8:40</td>
<td>FRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>PK Field Trip</td>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>Auer Farm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior Achievement Day (Gr. 1-5)</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Various Rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, 3/7</strong></td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchestra - Gr. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 3/8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EARLY DISMISSAL NO ACHIEVE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, 3/9</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Band - Gr. 4</td>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Band - Gr. 5</td>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>ArtBeat Opening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular Dismissal</td>
<td>2:00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, 3/10</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chorus - Gr. 4&amp;5</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Music Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>EARLY DISMISSAL NO ACHIEVE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, 3/11</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>EARLY DISMISSAL</td>
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**Kindergarten Alert**

If you have a child who is eligible to enter Kindergarten in the fall of 2016 (five years of age on or before 1-1-17), please call the school office at 860-233-8506 as soon as possible. We would like to add your child’s name to our incoming kindergarten list.

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Longing for that old week-long February vacation? Sick of the same old scenery? Well, here are some apps that will allow you to escape West Hartford for a few hours from right in your own home! We want our students at Charter Oak to develop a Global Perspective, so what better way than to take them to some places around the world, and without breaking the bank! Check out these apps for some “virtual field trip” opportunities!

**National Geographic: National Parks**- Visit 25 of the top U.S. National Parks with this app! From Volcanoes in Hawaii to the Arches in Utah, you can explore these parks through pictures and basic information. If you find one that really intrigues you, you can buy the full park guide for $1.99 for more pictures, statistics and information about the park!

**The Life of Art**- Have you ever wondered how museums select pieces of work to display? This app will let you explore some objects that are within the Getty’s galleries and explore their history, artistic technique and more. Is creating Modern Art more your child’s cup of tea? Then check out the **Moma Art Lab** app to allow your child to create their own masterpieces!

**WWF Together**- Is your child crazy about animals, but it is a little too cold to make a trip to the Zoo right now? Use this app to explore animals from all over the world! The app gives some basic information about the animals, statistics about them, their location in the world, and of course adorable pictures.

**Kids Discover Apps**- Unfortunately, these apps are not free ($1.99 - 2.99/each) but they will allow your child to explore Washington D.C. to Antarctica or go back in history to Ancient China and Egypt. Read short articles related to each place, explore it in 3D and find additional resources about each place. There are also apps by Kids Discover related to science concepts too, such as weather, the sun and geology.

I hope these apps help you travel the world without having to leave the comfort of your home! Enjoy!

Diana Coyne
ICT Teacher
On March 2, 2016 we celebrate Dr. Suess’s birthday and Read Across America Day. This year Dr. Suess would have celebrated his 112th birthday! Here at Charter Oak International Academy we will be celebrating Suess-style with fun activities and read alouds in the classrooms. You can celebrate your own special way at home too.

- **Read to Your Pets** - Becoming a strong reader takes practice. Reading aloud to a nonjudgmental animal gives beginning readers a comfortable way to practice reading and an opportunity to spend time with a beloved pet.

- **Dr. Suess Dance Party** - Put on some music and call out for the dancers to:
  - Ooze and wiggle like Oobleck
  - Swing an arm like Horton the elephant’s trunk
  - Jump up and down to Hop on Pop
  - Run for fun in the hot, hot sun
  - Frisk about like the Brown Bar-ba-loots
  - Hum and splash like Humming-Fish
  - Run and fly a kite like Thing 1 and Thing 2
  - Go bump, bump and jump on the hump of the Wump of Gump

- **Mapping The Places You’ll Go** - Hang local, regional, national, or world maps and use different colored pins with notes to show your child’s favorite places to visit, special vacations, or planned trips. Have other note cards and pins for friends and family to mark their spots on the map.

- **Suess Spa Day** - Start with foamy footbath while reading The Foot Book. Then place cooling slices of cucumber on your eyes while listening to I Can Read with My Eyes Shut! Last, enjoy a Pink Ink Drink with a reading of The Tooth Book. When you’re done reading and drinking, brush and floss your teeth. Remember to take a photo of your smile and hang it in the bathroom as a memento of your spa day!

- **Watch the show The Cat in the Hat Knows A Lot About That!** On PBS Kids!

Find more activities at:
www.seussville.com/parents/activities

Marcie Redden - Reading Specialist

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**ESOL Student of the Month**

Each month, the ESOL department will select a Student of the Month. The selection of this student will be based on his/her work ethic and progress in the acquisition of English in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. February’s Student of the Month is Fatima W. She is a first-grade student in Mrs. Hyland’s class and was selected because she consistently works hard to improve her reading and writing in English. Congratulations Fatima!

**In My Own Words**

By Nicole G-C

Life is Sweet

In fourth grade, we are working on writing biographies. In order to understand what information goes into a biography, I have been reading examples in my ESOL class. One of the people I read about was Milton Hershey. He was born in 1857 and was the man who invented Hershey’s chocolate. However, many people may not know that he failed many times before he became successful and that he did much more than just make chocolate. Hershey tried to open a candy store twice and failed, but he did not give up. Finally, in 1894, he started the Hershey Chocolate Factory in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and later opened a factory in a town that was then named after him in Hershey, Pennsylvania. During World War II, he created a chocolate bar for soldiers to carry as emergency food and with the money he made selling chocolate, he opened a school for orphan boys. The school that he opened still exists today and is called the Milton Hershey School and it is a boarding school in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Today, people can also visit Hershey Park in Hershey, Pennsylvania which is an amusement park with tours of the chocolate factory.

Follow us on Twitter at ESOLTeam@CharterOakESOL

Lillian Rausch & Amy Little
ESOL Teachers
Charter Oak International Academy’s Cultural Day Celebration

Thank you to the following families and students who helped make our Cultural Celebration Day a huge success, and to the many others who attended the event and enthusiastically participated.

Monica Ahern, Fran Baci, Alan Bruce, Astrid Calderon, Manuela Canales, Maureen Colon, Liz Conran, Diana Coyne, Penelope Drown, Nichola Dustin, Lorna Farquharson, Sandra Felicissimo, Ann Marie Gauvin, Keith Griffin, Kim Hughes, Cynthia Isales, Kate Jerram, Tracy Krasinski, Joey Meyers, Eleanor Michael, Karin Montiel, Andres Montiel, Norida Napier, Theresa Nicholson, Nanette Paridy, Nello Picone, Melissa Platzer, Kirsten Sanderson, Gregory Scranton, Lisa Scranton, Nichole Seger, Theresa Severance, Sheila Thurlow, Mylinh Truong

Student Participants:

Lillian A. Andrea N-G.
Maise B. Tyler N-G.
Violet B. Pace P.
Gabrielle F. Kai S.
Juliana F. Miya S.
Christina G. Michael S.
Alejandro H. Bruno T.
Azul M. Marianna T.
Sabrina M. Julian W.

And a huge thank you to all the families who prepared food!
Parents and students are invited to join us at Sedgwick Middle School on the date assigned to your child’s current school.

6:30-7:30 pm Presentation in Auditorium

Monday, March 14th
Braeburn, Charter Oak and Webster Hill

Monday, March 21st
Duffy, Wolcott and eligible Smith students

Snow Date: March 28th
Please bring non-perishable food items to the opening.

ARTBEAT
2016
Annual Student Art Exhibit
Saltbox & Clubhouse Galleries
37 Buena Vista Rd., West Hartford, CT

Opening Reception March 9, 2016
4:30 - 6:30 pm

Sponsored by West Hartford Public Schools & the West Hartford Art League.
Please call 860-231-8019 for Gallery hours.