

Platanus

Ojima Elementary School Newsletter

Principal: Mr. Kazuyuki Saotome

Visitors from USA –International Understanding Exchange-

On Monday, September 11th, Ojima Elementary School welcomed a group of seven visitors, including three school teachers from Mooresville, IN, USA.

At their arrival at the main entrance at 10:30 a.m., Mooresville teachers were excited seeing the slippers for the visitors neatly lined up on the floor all facing the same direction. The teachers started their tour as enthusiastic as even taking pictures of the slippers.



The first group of students who welcomed the visitors was Weekend Tea Ceremony Club members. Under the guidance by the club's two teachers, two 3rd grade students, a girl and a boy, and three 6th grade girls served Japanese tea and sweets to the teachers showing their hospitality. Given explanations of Japanese tea ceremony manners and Japanese sweets, the teachers were delighted by their first time experience.



During the third period, the teacher group observed a 1st grade Language Arts, a 2nd grade Math, and a 5th and 6th grade P.E. In the 1st grade Language Arts class, the teachers were impressed with that even 1st graders were capable of listening to their teacher keeping their posture straight and that the class as a whole was learning the Chinese character writing stroke orders.

In the 2nd grade Math class, they saw the goal of today's lesson and math calculation formula were neatly written on the board, and the students were learning calculation methods using them.

In the P.E. class in the gym, the teachers were very impressed to see students lined up in formations keeping even space in-between them and uniformed movements of students performing group assembly exercise.



For the fourth period, the teachers attended a 5th grade English class. Working with the homeroom teacher and an assistant language teacher, Mooresville teachers participated in the classroom activities. Students were very excited with their firsthand experience of native speakers' English.



At lunch time, the visitors observed lunch routines starting with a group of 2nd graders preparing to serve school lunch. Students, putting cooking coats and masks on, lined up in two rows and went to the kitchen without teacher's supervision. "We will enjoy a delicious meal. Thank you," said the students in unison. Then they carefully carried the food, paying attention to their surroundings, to their classroom. The rest of the students were waiting quietly in their seats with a placemat spread on their desks. The teachers were very surprised at and impressed with all of what they saw.



Split in two groups, the visitors ate their lunch with 3rd grade and 4th grade students. The menu of the day was *Niku-jaga* (meat and potatoes), salad, rice with seaweed seasoning and milk. The teachers looked at their lunch plates curiously and seemed enjoying the meal.



Also during the lunch break, Mooresville teachers received a special visit by six student representatives in the principal's office. The students gave the teachers heartfelt gifts of *origami* balls and cranes which all of the 6th grade students made specially for them. A 6th grade girl, who had transferred to Ojima Elementary from a school in Indiana in June of this year, facilitated as a translator. The teachers looked very happy and deeply moved.

The teachers observed the cleanup activity by students next. All students went to their assigned areas to clean. The teachers were very surprised to see even 1st and 2nd grade students cleaning using brooms, dust pans, and wiping cloths. Mooresville teachers were also explained about Saturday cleanup activities by PTA. They mentioned that there was no such culture in Indiana and it appeared that they could not believe how devoted the parents of Ojima Elementary were.



The teachers looked at special classrooms next. At the music room, a 4th grade girl entertained the guests, without a prior arrangement, by playing the trumpet. They seemed to be particularly interested in the library, the school lunch kitchen, home economics rooms, and the school infirmary.

At the end of their visit, the assistant principal gave a presentation about Ojima Elementary School in the principal's office. Using visual images and video clips, Ms. Kojima explained the school history, daily schedule and school events for the visitors' better understanding of Ojima Elementary School. Mooresville teachers commented that they learned a lot through the school tour. They were particularly impressed with that all teachers at Ojima were interacting with students with a smile in their faces, and that there were student committees, assigned roles and jobs given to students in their school life and individual students engaged themselves in taking responsibilities. Mooresville teachers were able to witness a scene of Japanese school life as well as how great Ojima Elementary students are.



Ojima students were very excited with their international exchange experiences too.