

Leapfrog Newsletter

April 2011

www.leapfrogkindergarten.org

New Playgroup Leader Pam Spencer



As some of you may know **Miss Mary Ann** is leaving us at the end of June. Her shoes will be difficult to fill but we are delighted to announce that **Pam**

Spencer will be taking over the role from **August 2011**. Pam is a very experienced Kindergarten and Playgroup teacher and we know you will all make her feel welcome!

Maternity Leave and Full Time Mandarin Teacher



As you may have noticed, **Kristrun** is about to pop! She will be on maternity leave from next week but will be back with us again in August this year.

We are delighted to announce that **Vivian Wong**, our Kindergarten Mandarin teacher, will not only be coming in to work with us again after Easter, but also adding extra days to her schedule! We will shortly be working on a new programme which will create more 'Mandarin' time at kindergarten in the future, in terms of both direct teaching and informal interactions through play. WE are delighted to offer your children this fantastic opportunity at such an impressionable stage in their lives!

Successful AGM

On March 31st the Parents' Committee held a very successful AGM. Twenty four families participated in the meeting and reflected on events of the past year as well as adding their input to Leapfrog's future. All parents will receive the minutes by email. Please let Ailish know if you do not get these.

Hulda Gardarsdottir (Leapfrog's Chairperson) went through a detailed report on the things that we have accomplished in the past year. We are very proud of the results and we have included her report in our Newsletter. See pages 2 to 5.

Sponsored Walk, May 28th 2011

Please note!

The walk begins at 3pm from the kiosk at the Pak Tam Chung Visitors Centre, then back to Leapfrog for BBQ and fun. This is a really great event for all the family and the sponsorship money raised will go to pay for necessary annual maintenance of the school.

Alisie Barrett and Trevor Ayson are on the Leapfrog's sub-committee for this event and Ailish will take care of the admin side.

Volunteers are always needed and many of the jobs are done on the day. Ailish will ask you to let her know if you will be able to help, and how.

More details later!



From our Halloween Party 2010

IMPORTANT DATES

Time goes by so fast when you are having fun!

- **15th April** - Last day of term. Party day. Half day for Kindy from 11am-1pm for both groups. Combined party for all playgroups from 9am-11am
- **Sponsored Walk May 28th**
- **May 3rd** - First day of **NEW Summer Term**
- **May 10th & June 6th** - Public Holidays, no school
- **June 30th** - Party day, last day of Summer Term.

Leapfrog's Handbook

We are proud to present a brand new Handbook for Leapfrog Kindergarten and Playgroup. Our handbook is a joint project between Leapfrog's committee and staff members. The handbook covers all our policies and procedures along with practical details about the school in general. A Handbook like this is a live document, and constantly under review. Our Handbook is only available on our website and will not be printed out or issued in other ways.

Go to www.leapfrogkindergarten.org/quicklinks and enjoy reading!

Chairman's Report

Chairman's Report - Leapfrog's AGM, Thursday March 31st, 2011

By Hulda Gardarsdottir



Our last AGM was held at Leapfrog in December 2009. I would like to go briefly through what we have been doing since then at Leapfrog. One of our biggest concerns for last year was Kindergarten enrolments. We hired more staff but we were still affected by the fact that we split up our classes (from one mixed age group to K1 morning classes and K2 afternoon class) and the fact that our Kindergarten staff was a bit unstable. Around the same time last year, 6 children had been enrolled in Kindergarten (for 2010-2011) but this year we have over 22 children confirmed (for 2011-2012), with more in the process of registering. We are looking at the happy, and highly likely situation, of a maximum of 15 children both in K1 and K2.

Due to the fact that we needed more children we had to reduce our salary expenditure so that we could survive without risking the school. Kristrun's job was reduced from 100% time down to 60% and Louise took a voluntary reduction in pay. This has all worked out very well and we have now been able to recover Louise's salary. Kristrun's position, however, will remain the same when she comes back in August.

Our current Playgroup Leader has resigned. We thank Mary Ann for her ten year contribution to Leapfrog and wish her all the best for the future. She will this Summer finalize her Early Childhood Education Certificate. She has been working hard for the past three years to achieve this and we understand that she wants to move on to different projects. There will be many little people who will miss Miss MaryAnn so we hope she stays in touch and makes an appearance at our Halloween parties where her famous decorating skills will be sorely missed!



Luckily we have hired a new Playgroup Leader - Pam Spencer. As an ex-parent and close neighbour, Pam knows Leapfrog well and she has been working in Playgroups and Kindergartens in Hong Kong for the past 9 years. Pam will start working at Leapfrog in August 2011 ready for the new academic year and we are very much looking forward to welcoming her and benefiting from the new energy and ideas that she will bring.

Playgroup. Playgroup has been stable under the excellent guidance of MaryAnn and all groups are usually always full. We have been offering three Hoppers mornings, two Tadpoles morning sessions, one afternoon mixed playgroup and two super 2's unaccompanied sessions. Next year the program will still remain the same.

Promotion. We have worked hard on promoting Leapfrog in order to attract more children to the Kindergarten. We advertised in Sai Kung Magazine for about 5 months, the most recent ads are now in March, April and May. Sai Kung Magazine came here to Leapfrog to interview our Kindergarten staff and we had a great article issued in November 2010 - you can find it on their web site if you missed it the first time round. We advertised on web sites such as Geobaby and got some free promotion as well on other websites.



Kristrun and Ailish spent quite some time on finding sites with details about kindergartens in Hong Kong and made sure our details were up to date. We printed a brochure that we have been distributing - by direct mail and also by placing it around Sai Kung, at Clearwater Bay school, sending it out to relocation agents and handing it out to any new families who come to visit.

Our fantastic new Logo has been designed especially for us by one of our Playgroup parents, Richard Atkins, a graphic designer. We are very grateful to Richard to giving up his time to give us our very own unique Leapfrog frog! And as you can see we have now set up new signs on the road and by the entrance. The staff are still working on updating all documents around the school and on the website but we are slowly getting there. Ailish is also working on new Leapfrog T-shirts using the new logo and these should be ready for the new school year.

Web site. The staff have been working hard on setting up a community on the web. A year ago Leapfrog did not have an active web site or a domain of his own. Now we have a web site packed with information about the school, both academic and practical details. All of the academic information has been produced by Louise and Kristrun and the admin part comes from Ailish and Kristrun. We now have;

- Active photo site with almost 1000 photos
- Active News-blog for parents. Parents can also be notified through our facebook account. This is also important for us so that our Google search will improve.
- Solid Kindergarten curriculum is available on our site.
- For the Playgroup, learning areas have been defined for greater educational explanation.
- Leapfrog Handbook is ready and approved by the committee. It will be issued on our website within a few days. It describes all our practices and policies that the committee and staff have been working on for the past year.
- All major forms and details about the program are also to be found on the web site, as well as other practical information such as directions and severe weather procedures.



Kindergarten Program. One of the major projects at Leapfrog for the past year has been to provide a full academic program in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage - UK Curriculum with the aim of achieving accountability in every aspect. We have been very lucky to have Louise leading the curriculum program as she is very familiar with the Early Years Foundation Stage, having last year gained Early Years Professional Status.

- We now have a full program of activities for the whole school year, based on specific themes linked with objectives for both K1 and K2.
- We have a written record of the daily phonics program based on the Synthetic Phonics Program 'Get Reading Right'.
- Regular assessment reports are emailed to parents and this year 6 brief progress reports will have been compiled for each child. A portfolio of reports, photographs and examples are sent home at the end of the school year.
- The entire program is under continual assessment and evaluation by the teachers.

Mandarin. Vivian our Mandarin Teacher and Educational Assistant has been with us from April 2010. The teachers have been working on Leapfrog's Mandarin Program, in which we send home sheets with our topics for the whole family to reinforce and develop the work that has been covered.

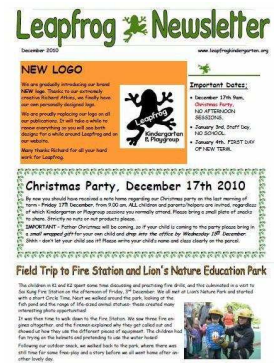
Newsletters. We have issued a monthly Newsletter for the past year and the whole collection is archived on our website and News - blog.

Accounting. A lot of work was put in setting up a new accounting system for the admin side of Leapfrog. We decided to set up MYOB (or Mind Your Own Business) a well known Australian accounting system. Kristrun, Ailish and Julie (our treasurer) have been working hard for the past year to get all that in place and now the first accounting year has been closed. Parents will see the change in the form of new style invoices and receipts, which hopefully are easy to understand and which break down to reflect exactly which classes you are paying for.

Staff meetings are now held regularly and meeting minutes are sent to the committee for their information. A log book for the Kindergarten is also kept on the teachers desk for a greater transparency of what happens within the school.

Fundraising.

- Sponsored walk in April 2010 - HK\$17,689
- Halloween Party in November 2011- HK\$39,000. Great Party despite being held on a rainy day! Less people came to see us but those who did spent more, so it turned out great.



Open House, Parents' Evening - October 2010. We offered parents to come for a visit and presentation to get to know our program a bit better. For the first time we invited Hoppers parents to join us and it was very well appreciated.

CPR Course for helpers and parents is currently on. We have also started working on staffs' qualifications and Kristrun and Fe have updated their skills just recently. In September we are organizing a course for the rest of the staff to take.

CCC application. We decided to apply for a Child Care Centre registration for the Playgroup. Kristrun has been working on the application all year. It has been time consuming and it seems like it could take at least another 6 months to finalize the registration. When the registration is in place it means that we can offer larger pre-Kindergarten Classes for unaccompanied children under the age of 3.

Kindergarten Registration. All year, Kristrun and Richard Latker (our current Supervisor) have been working on finalizing the permanent registration of the Kindergarten. To make a long story short - this has not yet been finalized but it seems like in the next few months it will work out. The main reason for the delay is the fact that we needed to change the purpose of the lease - and that has taken a long time and still has not been finalized. Everything else is in place with the Education Bureau and in the mean time we have a valid registration. Last month we had unexpected quality inspection from the Education Bureau - we are expecting a letter from them confirming that our program is up to standards ;)

HKPPA. A lot of things went on with HKPPA last year. To be brief, as some of you may know - HKPPA is THE HONG KONG PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUPS ASSOCIATION, a registered educational charity, established in 1979 as a branch of the British Pre School Playgroups Association. Leapfrog has been a part of HKPPA from the day Leapfrog was founded. All parents pay annual fees to HKPPA, as you should all know. Much went on within the HKPPA board in the last year. One of the biggest things was actually discussed in our last AGM, which was the fact that all the membership (i.e. all the parents of registered children) could be held liable for any accident or incident occurring in another HKPPA school. The most important thing to do to avoid Leapfrogs' parents being liable for Leapfrog or the other schools belonging to HKPPA, was to register Leapfrog with the Company Registry as a limited liability company. This has now been dealt with and Kristrun has been given the authority to finalize all the necessary documents to complete the process. Please approach Kristrun directly if you want to know more about the HKPPA matter. She is now Leapfrog's representative on the HKPPA board.

To maintain Leapfrog's non-profit status as it is now, we will simply ask the Inland Revenue for a non-profit status for Leapfrog Limited. This is quite common here in HK and should be in place within a couple of months.

Thanks. I would like to thank our fantastic staff members and committee members for all the hard work that they have put into making Leapfrog a better school. We should all be proud of what we have accomplished this past year and I do hope that next year will be even better for Leapfrog!

Thanks for your continued support!

Hulda



Work Experience Girls!



Last week we were lucky enough to have two lovely Year 10 students from KGV to help us in the Kindergarten.



ten. They took excellent care of the children and helped Miss Louise in preparing for classes.

Many thanks to Manon and Eliza for your help. Good luck at school!



Many thanks, Ayson Family



Elisha's 4th birthday was quite an event! Firstly we all shared a yummy cake, and then we heard of a special donation to Leapfrog by the whole Ayson family. It had previously been suggested that each child might bring one book to our class library as a memento of their birthday, but on this occasion, it was five books in total! The family had the fantastic idea of contributing a whole set of 'kids4kids' stories,

which have been written and illustrated by children at local schools, such as Renaissance College. The Renaissance authors even signed their publication personally for us. We are most grateful to all concerned, and are looking forward to sharing and enjoying these lovely new books.

Thank you!

New Calendar for 2011-2012

Want to plan next years Holidays?

We have now issued next years calendar on our website.

New Photos on our web site

Don't forget to take a look at our photo site. It's also a great idea to share the link with your families abroad.

www.photos.leapfrogkindergarten.org

Prompt Pickup and Drop-off

Dear Kindergarten Parents & Helpers

As we are always busy planning and preparing for our classes, we would like to remind you to ensure your children are picked up promptly. It's also important for us that children arrive as close to the time our classes start as possible so that we can use every minute to prepare our lessons. Please do not enter the classrooms until five minutes classes start.

Thanks for understanding

Leapfrog Teachers

Leapfrog Kindergarten and Playgroup

School Registration No. 564770

No 11 Pak Tam Chung, Sai Kung Country Park.

Postal Address: PO BOX 121, Sai Kung

Tel: 2791-1540

admin@leapfrogkindergarten.org

www.leapfrogkindergarten.org

