Sullivans multiple intelligence festival aims to inspire children

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

The Sullivans Elementary School promoted multiple intelligences with its 9th annual Multiple Intelligent Me (MIMe) festival May 20.

"This yearly celebration of the educational theories of Dr. Howard Gardner has grown into an international cultural and recreational festival which is unanimously thought of as a highlight of the Sullivans School year," said Sullivans Elementary School public affairs representative and fourth-grade teacher Steve Parker, in a school press release. "The festival is the brainchild of Dr. Andre Elliott, a former teacher at Sullivans who has since moved on but left a wonderful legacy behind him."

Gardner formally introduced his theory of multiple intelligences in his 1983 book "Frames of the Mind."

According to Gardner's website, the theory covers six intelligences:

• Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals.

• Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations and investigate issues scientifically.

• Musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition and appreciation of musical patterns.

• Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems.

• Spatial intelligence involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

• Interpersonal intelligence relates to the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people.

Additionally, intrapersonal intelligence entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations.

"We know that kids learn in different ways," Elliott said. "Some learn by touching. Some love to listen and then, maybe from listening, they can make music. Some kids love, what we call, kinesthetic activity. They like to move their bodies and they feel good when they do that. However, most of us are visual, we look at something and we want to try it out."

According to Parker, the festival included classical guitar demonstrations by Michael Symonette, who teaches several instruments at the Community Center, a roller derby demonstration presented by the Sushi Rollers, a local based, female roller derby team and *Taiko* (drum) performances presented by Kathy Korcal.

"Our host nation contributed a hip hop dance class from Hana Japan and the Sparkling Spurs, a Japanese Country and Western dance group, taught the children line dancing formations," said Parker. "Japanese cultural classes were taught [such as playing the] *koto* (harp) [and] *shamisen* (lute), [teaching] ikebana (flower arrangement), origami (paper folding), tea ceremonies, Japanese story telling, kimono wearing, calligraphy, *mochi* pounding and *zen ga* (painting) by members of the Yokosuka International Association, Sullivans host nation teachers and others."

Sullivans third-grade student Ashlynn Knight, really enjoyed learning to play traditional Japanese songs on the *koto*. She recommends other kids learn to play the instrument as well.

"They should have the opportunity of trying this, because it's awesome," said Knight. "It's fun to listen to the sounds."

According to Elliot, most children have childhood dreams such as being an astronaut, athlete, a musician or firefighter, however, as adults, how many actually live out their childhood dreams? For instance, some people live theirs dreams vicariously through video games pretending to be an athlete, or pretending to play musical instruments and it does nothing to develop athletic or musical ability. To become an athlete or musician a person needs to actually play a sport or instrument.

The Sullivans Elementary School students learn to play traditional Japanese songs on the koto, a type of harp, as part of one of the many cultural exchange events showcased during the 9th annual Multiple Intelligent Me festival held at the school May 20.

"I would encourage kids to not take the route of [the video game] "*Guitar Hero*" and pretend they can play [the guitar]," said Elliot.

Getting involved is essential to turning dreams into reality and it requires going beyond simply daydreaming without putting in real effort to achieve them.

"If some kids are lucky, they will have already found their life dream, by the time they leave elementary school. We might be able to give them their dream before they even get out of high school, they might have already discovered it. Elliot said. "So, opening their minds, to me, just gives them an early opportunity to move toward a path of learning and something they may stay with for the rest of their lives."

For more information on the theory of multiple intelligences visit the website www.howardgardener.com.

Pet of the Week

The Pet of the Week this week is Charlie. He is a handsome orange tabby with a short tail. He is sweet and friendly, enjoying the company of humans of all ages. He is a personal assistant kind of guy, so if you are looking for a cat who will keep you company, this is him! Charlie is neutered and up-to-date on his care so he is all set to go to his forever home. To find out more about Charlie or any animal at Pets Are Worth Saving (P.A.W.S.), contact them at 243-9996, by e-mail to usskittytalk.yokosuka@gmail.com or visit the P.A.W.S. website at www.pawsyokosukajapan.com.

Photo courtesy of P.A.W.S.

The editor asks:

Did you know, Father's Day, a holiday that honors fathers worldwide and celebrated in the United States on the third Sunday of June, originated in the United States in 1910, shortly after the country began celebrating Mother's Day?

Credit for originating the holiday is generally given to Sonora Smart Dodd of Spokane, Wash., whose father, a Civil War veteran, raised her and her five siblings after their mother died in childbirth. She is said to have had the idea in 1909 while listening to a sermon on Mother's Day, which at the time was becoming established as a holiday.

Local religious leaders supported the idea, and the first Father's Day was celebrated June 19, 1910, the month of the birthday of Dodd's father. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge gave his support to the observance, and in 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson officially proclaimed it a national holiday. Observance on the third Sunday of June was decreed by law in 1972.

Although it was originally largely a religious holiday, Father's Day has been commercialized with the sending of greeting cards and the giving of gifts. Some observe the custom of wearing a red rose to indicate that one's father is living or a white rose to indicate that he is deceased.