

# Suburban Life

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## Introducing Easter

### It was a strange and wondrous happening

The Easter Bunny paid a visit to students who are learning English as a second language in Ten Mile Community School last Thursday. They found the tall rabbit to be a silly creature, a strange one, awesome, overwhelming or combinations of any and all reactions to the unusual.

Weeks of preparation in class and on worksheets that showed pictures of lilies and eggs went into the educational process that introduced the foreign-born to an American holiday most had never heard of before, much less celebrated.

Several students, which run the age gamut from pre-schooler to grand-

parent, were taking their first egg-dyeing and making Easter-grass-nest lessons only a few weeks after their arrival to this country.

"It's all part of the educational process, the Americanization, the getting acquainted," said Rose Govig, coordinator of adult education for Clarenceville Schools who heads up the operations at Ten Mile School.

"These people are so surrounded by the commercials, the advertising that lead up to the holidays, it is important that they are prepared for Easter, or Halloween, or Valentine's Day. We make just as big an effort to prepare them for Memorial Day or St. Patrick's

Day or any other holiday in the year the rest of us take for granted," she said.

THE EASTER Bunny took a great amount of time and a good deal of effort in putting some of the younger students at ease, was able to coax a few onto his lap, and answered a plethora of questions while adding jelly beans to the baskets they had created for themselves.

"The students learn from one another through the questions that are asked from those of different cultures, and the teachers learn most of all," Govig said.

"The teachers are all well-prepared

and well versed on anything that might come up that could be touchy, run counter to another culture, but there still are surprises. This year we found a family whose religion forbids them to eat eggs, a new one for us.

"The food taboos are something we are generally pretty well aware of. We find those out early on in our units on food and cooking classes from the ones who are very concerned about unfamiliar ingredients in a recipe."

As for the holidays, Govig said the most common questions center around their symbols.

"It is a difficult thing for them to figure out why we can get so excited over a jelly bean or an egg," she said.



Youngsters' questions to the Easter Bunny ran from the amusing to the profound. Misato Yamaguchi, born in Japan, asked "Are you a real rabbit?" Misato attends the child care center in Ten Mile Community School while her mother is in classes.



Awe and skepticism mix in Kyoko Hura's eyes, which tell the story of how the youngster is receiving his first lesson on how Americans observe Easter.



Eighteen-month-old Yoko Tohumo (at left) tentatively samples a jelly bean while Sue Jean Wang, a grandmother, follows instructions on how to color Easter



eggs when the foreign-born of all ages were brought together to learn the legends and traditions of Easter in their newly adopted country.



Meera Pardanani, dressed in her party clothes, celebrated her 3rd birthday the same day she met the Easter Bunny. Meera is a native of India and a resident of Farmington Hills. Her classmates come from many different countries as well as many surrounding communities.

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Rick Smith

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