

MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE AT AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL of BUDAPEST

By: Renée Bélec

Budapest, December 6, 2010 — “Have you ever wished upon a shooting star?” asked Cédric, Middle School Student Council Co-President to a crowd of over 200 peers during a school assembly last Monday. “Today, YOU are the shooting stars — making wishes come true for very special children.”

Six years ago, the American International School of Budapest entered into a relationship with Csodalámpa Alapítvány (the Wonderlamp Wish Fulfilling Foundation) whose mission is to grant a wish to any 3-16 year-old child who suffers from a life-threatening illness and whose family cannot afford to fulfill such a wish. By granting these wishes, the Foundation aims to make the life of these children a little happier. Their hope is that the children will be able to forget, even for a while, about the hospital, the treatments, the isolation and be able to enjoy the simple pleasures of being children.

On October 15, 2010, over 650 students, parents, teachers and friends participated in the 6th edition of “Walk the Wish,” an event held annually at AISB in support of Csodalámpa. Participants walked 5 km in the colorful wooded paths of Nagykovácsi together as a community and raised funds for this very worthwhile cause. This year, for the first time, the walk extended beyond the AISB community with a team of 100 students from the Eötvös József Gimnázium.

“This school-wide event is a powerful hands-on experience for our students and teaches them about what it means to be a responsible global citizen,” says Marc Lavoie, Student Life Coordinator. “This initiative is first and foremost about education that will have a life-long impact.”

As part of the project, the Foundation provides medical experts who talk to students about the illnesses and their physical and psychological effects on the “Csodalámpa” kids. “For me it has always been touching to see how devoted the students, teachers and parents are — how they listen to what we try to explain,” says Éva Patzauer, Csodalámpa Director. “Our main aim apart from the realization of our children’s’ dreams is to teach others what help and caring really mean.”

Throughout the project, students also learn about choices, setting criteria and making difficult decisions. They are the ones who chose the wishes that would be fulfilled from the money collected. This year, the Walk raised 931,000 forints. Thanks to these funds, Virág was able to travel to London and marvel at the beautiful sights she had only dreamed of. Seven-year-old video game lover Robi can now play on his brand new PSP and Zsolt will be able to capture unforgettable moments with a camera that can also shoot videos! In total, seven wishes will be fulfilled, seven pairs of eyes will be filled with happiness, not counting the hundreds from all those young “wish fulfillers”.

For more information about Csodalámpa and how you can help, visit: www.csodalampa.hu