



NEWSLETTER 4

A week in Finland - MONDAY

Välkommen!



71 students and 11 teachers from 6 different countries. 13 Finnish teachers involved in the project. Multinational meetings are always big events!

The morning started with talks on Finland, the city of Vaasa and the school - Vasa övningsskola.

Actually, Finland is a bilingual country. Finnish is of course the main official language, but there are also many people who speak Swedish, including one fourth of the inhabitants of Vaasa.

The pupils and teachers of Vasa övningsskola are Swedish speakers. But many of them are bilingual.

The oldest part of the school was built between 1862 and 1864. In fact, in those days, it was the town hall.

The school year is divided into five periods. At the end of each period, the students have tests.

State schools are free in Finland. Even school lunches are free.

To know more about this week's activities and the school, you can visit our website:

thecityrings.weebly.com

My City Rings

To present their hometowns, the students played a series of soundscapes - the sounds that best define the city where they live.

This morning, trains, rain, wind, bells, chants, a fountain, the sea, resounded through the auditorium!



Creating soundscapes

In the afternoon, the students and their teachers went to the gym and did several activities. They used their voice, hands and feet to create specific sounds and atmospheres. Thanks to these activities, they also got to know one another.

Outdoor activities

The end of the day at school and the evening were dedicated to outdoor activities.

The pupils made ice lanterns and a couple of hours later went to Öjberget in order to go sledging and skiing. Then they sat around a fireplace and had sausages and hot beverages. The atmosphere was joyful and friendly and they definitely all had a great time!



And the winners are . . .

It is now official, *The City Rings* has a logo - created by France - and a jingle - created by Finland. The logo can be seen on this newsletter and, of course, on our website. To listen to the jingle you can visit the following webpage: [clip.it #citysoundprofile](http://clip.it/#citysoundprofile) (go to the bottom of the page and click on *Finland 1*)

A student writes about her experience

A student from Belgium writes about her first weekend in Finland. Very interesting!



Waking up to the sunlight isn't usually my way to wake up but once I looked outside the window my 'I need just 5 more minutes' - thought just melted away (pun intended) because the sight of the landscape outside my window was nothing I've ever woken up to. A white carpet covered everything. Snow makes all the ugly beautiful, that's for sure. But that was only the beginning! This Sunday was full of sporty activities, after brunch of course. We went ice skating and drank hot chocolate milk together outside after a cold snowball fight, the Finnish people sure know how to make things cozy!

But the highlight of my day wasn't the snow nor the hot chocolate...

How long has it been since you have done something for the first time?

I can proudly say that I went from 80 degrees Celsius to zero in five seconds today, three times, for the first time in my life. That's right, I got the opportunity to go ice swimming!

Eek! 'No way!' 'Finns are nuts!' These tend to be the first unenthusiastic reactions of tourists faced with the prospect of a dip in an icy lake. But the first thing that I thought when my host family asked me if I would want to try it was 'you know what, I'm going to do this!'

In the car on our way to the lake however, I kept thinking 'Why on earth would anyone take a plunge in amazingly cold water and then sweat your butt off in a sauna?' Well, maybe because it's an experience that leaves you feeling fantastic and refreshed. Ice swimming contributes to better general well-being. It is said to actually improve blood circulation, make you feel more energetic and brisk, and can alleviate pains from rheumatism and respiratory issues like asthma if you do it on a regular base. That's what the father of my host family told me, he goes ice swimming every other day.

The feeling when you put your clothes back on after being in the sauna and getting in to the freezing water is indescribable. You feel so cozy in your clothes and so at ease. I'm very enthusiastic about the fact that I got to do this, this is a day I won't ever forget.

Together with the whole group we went bowling afterwards and that was so much fun, we are getting to know each other better and better every day and every day gets to be more fantastic than the day before.

I can't wait to fall asleep because tomorrow is also full of stuff that I have been looking forward to!

By Orphée Dewaegemaker