



multiculturalism

matters



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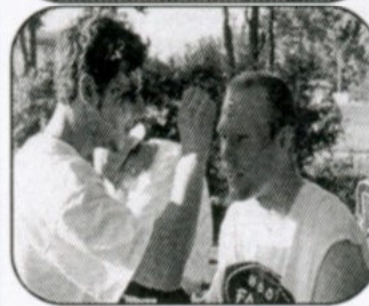
Takraw, Culture, Food & Face Painting

It was not Mosaic but surely the spirit of Mosaic would be proud. Over the course of this summer, Asian Sport, Education & Culture International (ASEC) took the initiative to incorporate cultural presentations into their busy summer schedule of Takraw (no hands-volleyball). While committed to offering Takraw on four different occasions at three different places, five Sundays throughout summer were designated as **Takraw, Culture, Food & Face Painting** days. The goal was to go beyond playing sports and to give the participants a cross cultural experience that could open their eyes to a world beyond home.

"Although the planned route was to notify and invite all of the cultural associations to participate at one point or another throughout the summer, we definitely had to take the road less traveled." Says Michael Towle, the summer program coordinator for ASEC. "We were contacting the associations at the end of Mosaic but most were too tired to participate. That's when we decided to go right to the heart of the foreign experience and invite people to share with us who had little or no experience in presenting their culture, but who now or at one time had been new to Canada."

The program was a success. The presenters were: Ching presenting China; Yuhan and Chihan presenting Korea; Mrs. Linantud presenting the Philippines; Hiromy presenting Japan and the Vaquerano family presenting El Salvador. The turnout was exactly 100 over the five days, and over 700 for the whole summer.

While each presenter, except for one, was doing this for the



CROSS CULTURAL EXPERIENCE - a high kick, different cultures, sushi food and face painting.

first time, each of them had their unique area of culture to present. On June 17, Ching brought her musical talent with her to play and teach the Pipa. The pipa, although similar in feature to the western guitar, differed mainly in the use of all five fingers to play it. The sound was very beautiful, and it encouraged all of the young kids in attendance to learn how to

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play.

July 8th was the next day for **Takraw, Culture, Food and Face Painting**, and this time it was Yuhun and Chihan's turn.

As two Korean students in Canada to study English, they tried very hard to teach and explain things about their culture by use of pictures on a lap-top computer, but unfortunately the batteries did not last as needed. For July 22nd, as well as the food being very good, Flordeliza Linantud talked a lot about the culture in the Philippines and people kept

asking her questions, which was a pretty good sign of interest. On August 12th, Hiromy came to show people the Japanese culture.

One thing that everyone learned was that the Japanese food "sushi" does not have to be raw fish. That came as a surprise. And finally August 19th, time for the last day of **Takraw, Food and Face Painting**. The Vaquerano family in full El Salvadorian clothes came prepared with food and pride in their culture.

When asked to summarize the program, Rick Engel the Executive Director of ASEC simply said: "Sport is a great way to bring cultures together. When you look at the Olympics and how it brings the world together to compete in one place, all of the cultures are allowed to contrast in ways that create an amazing experience for those at the event. What we tried to do this summer was provide those who came for the Takraw with a cross cultural experience. Takraw is a sport with cultural roots,

and culture can easily be brought into sport, and that is what we were doing."

Through everything, ASEC'S summer program was successful because of the partnership between ASEC and Street Culture Kidz, as well as the crucial participation of each individual presenter. It was partly the influence of Street Culture Kidz that broadened the vision of ASEC to include not just "Canadian youth", but youth-at-risk. And through strategic location of the events, relationships with those youth were being built on a



consistent basis. "We would like

to thank the sponsors of our summer program for this year, because the contribution was very vital to its success," said Engel. SaskTel, Engelheim Charter, Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, and the Centennial Summer Student Employment Program, all helped us out very much.

Sometimes when you help others, you are helping yourself. So not only were the presenters helping others to understand their culture, but others were helping them to feel good about where they came from, and welcomed in the country of Canada. It is this kind of cooperation, which ASEC International and all their partners and sponsors hope to encourage, that must prevail in Canadian society to help Canada grow and become strong in the future. And with programs like these, they will.

by Mike Towle ASEC Summer Program Coordinator