

PRESS RELEASE



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ATTENTION: NEWS EDITORS

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U.S. ARTISTRY OF SPICES PROGRAM HELPED CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT THEIR WORLD

Kuala Lumpur, January 3, 2013 – Learning about spices was made easy for children through “The Artistry of Spices” program sponsored by the U.S. Embassy during a workshop for children with U.S. artist Brookie Maxwell at the U.S. Ambassador’s official residence on January 2, 2012. Through the workshop, young guests from the Chow Kit Foundation enjoyed learning about spices from around the world and compared different types of spices to develop sensory and cultural awareness. They had a most aromatic “school” day where they used taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch to explore spices.

The program participants expanded their knowledge by drawing, reading, writing, and researching online to learn about family, culture, geography, and global history – all through spices. They looked on the world map to see the countries of origin of the spices and talked how spices are marketed and the ways spices are transported - everything from donkeys to jet planes. They tasted familiar spices like curry, and new spices like Berber spice from Ethiopia, Juniper from Sweden, Grains of Paradise from Ghana, and File Gumbo from America. In the “Spice it up!” part of the program, children created spice based dances – ending with a bit of Gangnam Style. They chose a favorite spice, and made take home spice jars with their own hand made labels.

Throughout the program, the children and volunteers shared lunch, spicy cupcakes and chai tea created by Catherine Jones, wife of U.S. Ambassador Paul W. Jones. Ambassador Jones also attended and spoke with children and volunteers.

Seven year old Muhammed drew a picture of a broken heart on his paper. He then wrote, “I love you” and the names of the adults who had helped him that morning: volunteers Suk Ling and the U.S. Marine Security Detachment from the Embassy. Touched by his comments, Brookie Maxwell then produced a plaster, and Suk Ling placed it right on the drawing of the broken heart. He beamed from ear to ear, said he was healed, and ran out to play.

At the end of the program each child spoke on camera about the spice each of them had chosen, and where it comes from. They showed off their spice labels with pride. “This is a day of happiness,” said 12 year old Shakila. The children sang a traditional Malaysia goodbye song to us and they were off. Spices and love- and the foods we cook with them - connect us all.