



# Aux Petits Soins Newsletter

Vol. 2

Issue 1

**WINTER 2016**  
**(JAN 4 – MARCH 26)**



Our goal is to make children fluent in French through immersion teaching. Foreign language immersion works the same way as native language immersion: *Listen. Absorb. Speak.*

At Aux Petits Soins, we only speak French in class. Activities include songs, reading, and engaging in simple activities. Join us, and become an active member of the growing French community in Lansing.

All the team of Aux Petits Soins wishes you:

*Bonne et Heureuse Année 2016*

## INDIEGOGO CAMPAIGN

On October 15, I launched my first fundraiser campaign through Indiegogo, a popular crowdsourcing website. The aim of the campaign was to raise funds to create a social and learning space that would nurture the French culture in mid-Michigan. Thanks to many generous donations, I was able to raise \$2,948.80, which was 21 percent of my goal. I may not have reached my goal, but believe me – every last cent has been maximized to furthering Aux Petits Soins.

So far, this money has been used to buy furnishings for the entrance, the classroom and the nursery, as well as adding 50 books to the library. I was also able to buy a sign for the front of the building, which will enhance my visibility out front, as well as pay for my first advertising campaign and, website which will help me reach out to new families. Our new website, [www.APSFrenchClass.com](http://www.APSFrenchClass.com), will be available on January 15.

Nothing would have been possible without the help of the following people, who contributed money to the campaign: Joe Aung and Yani Chen; Kristen Bieda; Ruby Carrillo; Adam Carter; Jeana Clappitt; Dominic Cochran; John Ciambelli; Lesley and Mike Dehart; Christine Fisk; the Friedrich family; Veronica Gracia-Wing and Luke Pline; Marie Guillot; the Huberts family; Amanda Huff; Jason Lafay; Ellie Marchman; Caitlin Mayer; Stephanie Miller; Fabrice Penture; the Pettit family; Jonathan Pruitt; Michelle and Ed Ross; Kevin Schoen; Amber Shinn; Cori Thackery; the Wallin family; Corey Washington; Sharron and Darius Wells; and Sharon and Bill Yancy.

I am extremely grateful for your donations. *Merci, merci, merci du fond du cœur.* Thanks to each of you, I am one step closer to realizing my dream – a dream that I know I share with many of you. After all, Aux Petits Soins happened because so many of you asked me to share my French culture with you and your children. I am humbled and honored by your choosing me to be your French guide.

I would also like to thank Esther Friedrich. She has been volunteering at Aux Petits Soins since September. Besides helping during the classes, she devoted untold hours to promoting this campaign and Aux Petits Soins. Simply put: I couldn't do it without her.

## A note from Gaëlle

Bonjour,

Welcome to the first Aux Petits Soins Newsletter of 2016! As we enter our second year, I have lots of good news to share with you, as well as a vision for our future.

Each of the three sessions in 2015 saw a growth in student population, and the upcoming January session will be no different. As we enter our fourth session, I'm proud to announce the addition of Travel Bugs III, a new program for children between the ages of 9 and 12. I also hope to finalize a program for adults that I have been working on that will involve a collaboration with local businesses and restaurants. Keep your eyes peeled.

Our new home – located at 1824 E. Michigan Ave. Ste. F in Lansing's Eastside Neighborhood – is coming together slowly but surely. Thank you for your patience and encouragement. Here is my agenda for the year 2016:

- furnish the classroom, the nursery and the entrance before the beginning of the winter session;
- design the reception area and have it complete by the beginning of the spring session;
- gather approximately 600 books for the library.

*The Aux Petits Soins Library will be geared for kids 0-12, and should be complete within a year. If you are aware of any grants, please let me know. I will need about \$7,000 to stock the library – more than we made in our first year. This is an ambitious project, but I believe our community can benefit a lot from it.*

Ideally, I would like Aux Petits Soins to be a space where children can be fully immersed in French culture and where they can learn just by being in the space. Another project I am working on is to have a collection of educational wooden toys made by local artists/craftspeople.

*I am actively looking for people who would like to be part of this project. Please share this newsletter – hopefully it will fall in the hand of the right person!*

As always, I would like to thank each member of the Aux Petits Soins family. Our success is only

possible thanks to the support of each of you. Your enthusiasm and comforting words are my best encouragement. It's magical every time I watch a student pick up the songs, words, and body movements to the things we do in class. It's even more magical when I hear stories about how students use what we learn in class in their everyday life.

**One example that warmed my heart recently: Ellie told me how her 20-month-old daughter, Holly, said "Au revoir" ("goodbye") to her dad during their bedtime routine.**

The theme for the upcoming session at Aux Petits Soins will be "Bonjour Mr L'Hiver!" ("Hello Mr. Winter!") In addition to new songs and games I'll be teaching, I'll be adding new vocabulary words that will teach students the names of their family members and pets, winter vehicles, and anything related to snow and the French holidays occurring during winter. Of course, I'll still rotate in things we learned in the past sessions to keep them fresh in everyone's minds.

## Culture lesson

Three major French holidays occur during the upcoming session. And they happen to also be three of my favorites as well! As with most French holidays, they all involve lots of food and drinks. Please see the

## WE NEED YOUR HELP...

**We are looking for volunteers that could assist during the Explorers classes (age 0-2, 2-4, and 4-6).** If you are in high school or in college and would like more opportunities to be fully immersed in French culture while speaking in French, please contact Gaëlle.

**We are looking for artists/craftspeople to create a collection of educational French wooden toys.** If you make toys and would like a venue to share your work, please contact Gaëlle.

**We are looking for fundings to finance a French library for kids ages 0-12.** If you are aware of any grant or funding opportunities, please contact Gaëlle at [gaelle@apsfrenchclass.com](mailto:gaelle@apsfrenchclass.com) or (517) 643-8059.

Merci!

schedule of events at the bottom of this page and make your free registration today to be part of the fun!

**On the first Sunday of January, the French celebrate “Epiphanie”** (Epiphany). On this occasion, we share a cake named “galette des rois” (Kings’ Cake), a pastry that has small charms baked inside. This pastry is also filled with frangipane, a cream made from sweet almonds, butter, eggs and sugar.

The tradition of eating “galette des rois” dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, where it originally celebrated the arrival of the Three Wise Men in Bethlehem. However, the religious meaning has been lost over the years. You will now find “galettes des rois” in every bakery in France, with pastry chefs devising original creations to add their own twists to the tradition.

As for those charms, there’s a fun tradition tied to them. When cutting the cake, the youngest child present has to hide under the table and tell whoever is cutting the cake who should get which piece. Then whoever finds the charm, known as a “fève,” becomes the king or queen, and gets to pick their partner. They get to wear the crown and boss the rest of the family around for the rest of the day.

I can’t wait to share this tradition with the members of Aux Petits Soins family. You will have to be kind because I will use local ingredients, therefore it will taste a little different. Nothing can replace the taste of real French butter!

For **la Chandeleur, celebrated on February 2**, we eat sweet and savory crêpes and drink hard cider. This holiday marks the end of the Christmas period, arriving 40 days after Christmas. (It’s also known as Candlemas on the Catholic calendar). This commemorates the presentation of the infant Jesus at the temple.

There are many superstitions surrounding Chandeleur, nearly all of which have to do with weather. This dates back to when France was primarily an agricultural land and the weather played a vital part in everybody’s prosperity and welfare. (You may recognize the date as Groundhog Day, which has a similar weather-related tradition in the U.S.). Researching this holiday, I came across numerous proverbs warning of the consequences of specific weather: “Soleil de la Chandeleur, annonce hiver et

malheur.” (“If it’s sunny at Chandeleur, winter will continue bringing bad luck.”) Others warned of “40 days lost if snow was still on the ground” (“Chandeleur couverte, quarante jours de perte”), and even the exact opposite of the first heralding in good news if the day was fine.

Once again, the religious meaning has been lost over the years. Today, la Chandeleur is one more excuse to eat crêpes for dinner.

Contrary to the two previous celebrations, **Mardi Gras (“Fat Tuesday”)** is very well known in the U.S. but what you may not know is that there are also big Mardi Gras celebrations in some cities in France, such as Nice, and in the French West Indies.

I spent part of my childhood in Guadeloupe, a French department in the Caribbean. I absolutely loved celebrating Mardi Gras, and am looking forward to sharing this authentic celebration with you. Besides, it will be a great opportunity to recycle your Halloween costumes for Carnival.

Mardi Gras refers to events of the Carnival celebrations, beginning on or after the Christian feasts of the Epiphany and culminating on the day before Ash Wednesday. **This year, Mardi Gras will be on February 9.** Traditionally, on Mardi Gras we eat rich, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of Lent.

Carnival typically involves a public parade during which people wear masks and costumes surrounding King Val, a giant mannequin that is the king of Carnival. He is introduced at the beginning of the festival and dies on Ash Wednesday, to be reborn like the phoenix in the following year. The food associated with his holiday is another French staple: the beignet, a fried pastry made with sugar, flour and eggs. What’s a French holiday without rich food?

## ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Galette des rois	January 16	2-4pm
Chandeleur	February 6	2-4pm
Carnival	March 5	2-4pm

Events are free. Registration required.

Food and drink to purchase when supplies last.

## 2016 CALENDAR

Winter Session	demo week	Jan 4-9	* I am taking three weeks off in February to have my second child, so this will be a shorter session.
	classes	Jan 11- March 27* (8 weeks)	
Spring Session	demo week	March 29- April 2	
	classes	April 4- June 18 (11 weeks)	
Summer Session	demo week	June 20- 25	
	classes	June 27- Aug 20 (8 weeks)	
Fall Session	demo week	Sept 5- 10	
	classes	Sept 12- Dec 10* (12 weeks)	* There will be no class the week of Thanksgiving

## WINTER SCHEDULE

Explorers I	(age 0-2)	Tue 5:15 pm, Fri 10:30 am and Sat 9:30 am
Explorers II	(age 2-4)	Wed 5:15 pm and Fri 9:30 am
Explorers III	(age 4-6)	Wed 9:30 am and Fri 5:15pm
Travel Bugs II	(age 6-9)	Wed 6:15 pm
Travel Bugs III	(age 9-12)	Fri 6:15 pm

## IN THE FRENCH COMMUNITY...

**FRENCH CLUB** - 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month @ 7:00 pm

Practice listening and speaking in French. All skill levels welcome.

For more information, contact the East Lansing Public Library at (517) 351-2420.

*\* This program is sponsored by East Lansing Public Library.*

**BOOK CLUB (NEW FORMAT!)** - Jan. 27, Feb. 24 & March 30 @ 7:30 pm

We will read and discuss a short story in French (max. 10 pages). This club is designated for beginner to intermediate readers, but all skill levels are welcome.

For more information, including meeting location, contact Gaëlle at (517)643-8059 or email at [bookclub@apsfrenchclass.com](mailto:bookclub@apsfrenchclass.com).

*\* This program is sponsored by Aux Petits Soins.*

**LANGUAGE IMMERSION AFTERNOONS** - March 27 @ 2 pm

Gaëlle from Aux Petits Soins and Bridgette from Las Lengüitas will guide French and Spanish immersion classes respectively for kids between the ages of 0 and 12. Several age groups will be available (full calendar TBA). Activities include songs, reading and engaging in simple activities. This will be a great opportunity to discover the language immersion programs available in Lansing.

For more information, contact Gaëlle at (517) 643-8059 or [gaelle@apsfrenchclass.com](mailto:gaelle@apsfrenchclass.com), Bridgette at (231) 679-1621 or Nicole at (248) 561-7986, or [nicole@willowtreefamily.com](mailto:nicole@willowtreefamily.com).

*\* This program is sponsored by Aux Petits Soins, Las Lengüitas and Willow Tree Family Center. Dates and times subject to change.*

To submit an event happening between April-June 2016 in the Aux Petits Soins Spring newsletter, email [newsletter@apsfrenchclass.com](mailto:newsletter@apsfrenchclass.com) by March. 15. I will also be happy to share on our Facebook page and website any event.

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