



Vol. 2  
Issue 4

## AUX PETITS SOINS NEWSLETTER

# BONNE RENTREE

FALL SESSION  
Sept 12- Dec 11



At Aux Petits Soins, children learn French the same way they learned English – through a three-step immersion process we refer to as **LISTEN. ABSORB. SPEAK.** Our goal: for all kids to speak accent-free French while connecting with authentic French culture. Aux Petits Soins is more than a language program – it’s a cultural education that prepares children for a life as a world citizen.

### *A note from Gaëlle*



It’s great to be back for the new semester. As you probably know, I spent two weeks in France last month for a family wedding with my husband and sons. It was such a rewarding trip, but much too short – of course, I always say that. But I came back with a lot of great ideas, as well as some new books, music and toys.

It made me so incredibly happy to be able to introduce my sons to the city I was born in. I know they won’t remember this trip, but being immersed in the French language for two straight weeks and watching their little eyes light up again and again seeing these cultural touchstones – the Eiffel Tower, the Paris Opera, Notre Dame – I know something much deeper than memory was sinking in to their little brains. They were absorbing my culture.

It was also so nourishing being able to spend that much time with my extended family. I don’t get to see them often enough, but what person living halfway around the world from her parents and sisters wouldn’t say that? Their unconditional love and support is the reason why I know I can live anywhere in the world. And that’s my goal with Aux Petits Soins – to be able to give all my students “cultural passports” to another country where they’ll feel confident of their own success, knowing they have a strong support system back here in Lansing.



### Happy anniversary to us!

Exactly one year ago this week, Aux Petits Soins moved into its home on Michigan Avenue. When I signed the lease in October 2015, all I had were a few teaching supplies and a head full of ideas. One year later we have a working classroom with a drawer system, wall decorations, and

“seasonal” area carpets; a bustling activity center with custom-made shelving units, tables and chairs, as well as hundreds of books, toys and games imported from France; and in the main room, there’s now a nursery, a reception desk, and a snack area for the children.

I’m happy with the progress we’ve made, and I can’t wait to finish it off by adding more books to the library, building a café/boutique area, and giving the interior a Parisian design scheme. However, there’s more in store for Aux Petits Soins than cosmetic refinements. We’re currently built around teaching children how to speak French, but immersion learning doesn’t end with language – and it doesn’t have to end with children, either.

My mission is to to grow Aux Petits Soins into an all-ages French cultural center within the next year. The space will complement the learning of our students by having everything they can touch, hear, and see be faithful to the French culture. I envision it becoming a place where anyone can spend time relaxing in an authentic French atmosphere – I want everyone will feel like they’re stepping into Paris when they step into Aux Petits Soins.



*from left: Gaëlle, Malahni, Maya and Luke*

Of course, nothing would have been possible without the support, ideas and help of our dedicated volunteer team, Maya Giaquinta, Malahni Ngalle, Luke Schroeder, Mark Sullivan and all of you hardworking parents. As always, I would like to thank you for being part of this great adventure. My own ideas can only go so far before I need your help to realize them. Thank you for helping me get this far, and I guarantee

you’re going to love where we’re headed.



### More new programs

New Aux Petits Soins programs have been regularly added since we opened last year, keeping up with all the requests for more immersion opportunities and new classroom programs. This month, I’m taking the leap to begin offering programs that aren’t based on classroom learning, but take a more open-door approach.

Next Tuesday, October 11, Aux Petits Soins will launch **French Playtime**, a new program that will be free for current Aux Petits Soins students age 6 and under. Children with an adult caregiver will have access to all Aux Petits Soins toys and books, and there will be someone on-site to read stories and play with them exclusively in French. This will enable students to practice what they’ve learned in class and continue their French immersion. French Playtime will be held 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and 9-11:30 a.m. on Saturdays.

## FALL SCHEDULE

**Day Trippers** (0-6 mos)

Sat at 9 am

**Explorers I** (6 mos-2 yrs)

Tue at 5:15pm, Fri at 10:30 am, Sat at 9:45 am

**Explorers II** (2-4 yrs)

Wed at 5:15 pm, Fri at 9:30 am, Sat at 10:45 am

**Explorers III** (4-6 yrs)

Wed at 9:30 am, Fri at 5:15 pm

**Travel Bugs II** (6-9 yrs)

Wed at 6:15 pm

**Travel Bugs III** (9-12 yrs)

Fri at 6:15 pm



Not currently a student? Not a problem. This month we're also launching the new **APS Membership Program** to give parents and children the opportunity to sample some of our services without committing to a weekly curriculum. And because our aim has always been to be part of the community, admission to French Playtime will always be free on the first Friday of each month.

The next step is creating new opportunities for elementary school-aged children. For the kids aged 6-12, Aux Petits Soins will soon launch the **APS French Club**, an interactive group designed to give kids a chance to use the French they've already learned in a dynamic social setting. APS French Club members will be split into small groups based on age, skill level, and interest. They will then be given something to do, such as a board game or a special hands-on activity that will be conducted entirely in French and led by an APS employee or volunteer. APS French Club will meet for two hours on Saturday afternoons. Stay tuned for more details.

### French for grownups

And finally – finally! – after over a year of getting requests, Aux Petits Soins has reached the stage where we can start to offer programs for grownups. Starting this winter, we plan to start a series of classes that will be led by a native French speaker with the help of a non-native speaker “assistant.” Of course, as with everything else with Aux Petits Soins, all classes

will be conducted entirely in French. Proposed activities include instructional cooking and painting seminars, with future ideas including movie nights and special guest speakers. If you know any native French speakers who might be interested in leading one of these classes, please connect them with us.

And before you start worrying that a class in French will be too difficult for you, I have no doubt that everyone will be able to understand, given the unique way I intend to have it structured. Learning a foreign language is like getting a passport to immerse yourself in a foreign culture, and I hope that the native speaker will bring some authenticity by using a rich repertoire of vocabulary and expressions. The non-native speakers will facilitate this by finding bridges to understanding. Your desire to connect with the French culture is the reason why you will want to be able to communicate in French. In other words, your enthusiasm is the key of your success. It is more challenging, but still quite possible, to pick up or improve foreign languages as an adult, with studies showing that active and enthusiastic learners are more successful.

### We want to hear from you

We want everybody to feel welcome at Aux Petits Soins, and we want all your needs to be met. If there's anything you would like APS to offer, please drop a comment in our idea box or email us at [info@apsfrenchclass.com](mailto:info@apsfrenchclass.com).

## GET IN TOUCH, STAY IN TOUCH



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