Dear Charter Oak Families:

 We have had an exciting beginning of November that shows the strength of our program and the important contribution the World Language Department plays in supporting our mission to help develop internationally minded children.

 As you can see in this issue of our newsletter our fifth graders enjoyed a fantastic visit to the United Nations in New York City where, with the support of our teachers, parent-chaperones, and the leadership of Montse Rich, our Spanish teacher, students were able to inquire and learn the role this international organization plays in creating a better and more peaceful world. Our sincere appreciation to the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools for supporting this trip through a generous grant and to the Charter Oak PTO for their equally critical contribution.

 During our visit to the UN we received the news that Mrs. Jingjing Wu, our Chinese teacher, was this year’s recipient of the Yao Memorial Award for Outstanding New Teacher. This award is given by CLASS, the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools. The Yao Memorial Award for the Outstanding New Teacher “recognizes an individual of the Chinese teaching profession who has been teaching in K-12 public or independent schools for less than five years and is currently in a full time position. The applicants must demonstrate excellence and passion in teaching the Chinese language and culture.”

 Congratulations to Mrs. Wu for this truly extraordinary accomplishment that makes us all very proud and realize, once again, how fortunate we are at Charter Oak for having a program, unique in West Hartford that gives our students such an incredible opportunity to explore new cultures, practices, and perspectives.

 Another unique feature of our IB school is the student-led conferences. They are starting this coming Tuesday, November 14th. I hope you find this experience informative and rewarding. I often say that if you are new to our school you will be impressed with the process. Our teachers and your children have been getting ready for their conferences with great focus and excitement and I am confident that they will demonstrate to you their best reflective skills as IB learners. Please don’t hesitate to let us know your opinion about student-led conferences. We are always looking for ways to improve! Please make sure that you mark conference days on your calendar since dismissal time changes during Conference Week.

 One final thought. With the imminent arrival of colder weather, please remember that more traffic congestion is likely to happen at drop-off and dismissal. In cold weather conditions more students are driven to school so please plan to take extra time to come to school. It is particularly important to be extra cautious at dismissal when parking can be a challenge and many parents and students need to cross streets in less than ideal circumstances. Also, with cold weather it is very important that our students come to school with appropriate attire. Our students spend time outdoors during recess. Warm clothes, gloves, hats, and boots are required during winter months. Also, with temperatures going down it is extremely important that students are not dropped at school before the time doors open, at 8:20 for everybody and at 8:05 for students eating breakfast in the cafeteria. Only students with pre-arranged and supervised activities can enter the building before those times.

 I look forward to seeing all of you next week for conferences and on behalf of the entire Charter Oak staff I would like to wish our families a wonderful Thanksgiving break.

 Peace,

Juan Meliàn

Principal