



Dear Pilots class,

We are very happy that Sandy, Nyna and Caroline are allowing us to share a very important holiday for our family with our son's classmates. March 20<sup>th</sup> this year is the Persian New Year which is called NOROOZ in Farsi. Norooz is an ancient holiday in Iran, but in Iran the New Year is on the first day of spring every year. Norooz is the biggest holiday of the year similar to Christmas here in America and is celebrated by all Iranians regardless of their religion.

On NOROOZ people say to each other "NOROOZ MUBARAK!" which means "HAPPY NEW YEAR!" in Farsi.

For the Persian New Year families set up a table called a "SOFREH HAFT-SEEN" with items on it that starts with letter "sin" in Farsi which is similar to the letter "s" in English – each item on the table symbolizes an important theme of the Persian New Year:

- Sabzeh (Lentil Sprouts) symbolizes REBIRTH
- Samanu (Pudding) symbolizes AFFLUENCE
- Seeb (Apple) symbolizes BEAUTY
- Senjid (Dried Fruit) symbolizes LOVE
- Sir (Garlic) symbolizes HEALTH
- Somac (A Spice) symbolizes the COLOR OF THE SUN RISE
- Serkeh (Vinegar) symbolizes OLD AGE and PATIENCE
- Sekeh (Gold Coin) symbolizing WEALTH and PROSPERITY
- Sonbol (Hyacinth Flower) symbolizes SPRING

Other things that are put on the table are a Mirror to symbolize REFLECTION OF LIFE, candles to represent HAPPINESS, painted eggs (just like Easter eggs) to symbolize FERTILITY, a religious holy book, and goldfish to represent LIFE. **Children watch the goldfish who is supposed to stand still in his bowl of water at the exact moment of the New Year. This year that is at 7:21 p.m. on March 20th.**

On the night before the last Wednesday of the year, people in Iran celebrate CHAHAR SHANBEH-SURI (Wednesday Festival). People make small bon-fires and jump over them to symbolize leaving bad things from the previous year behind. Children dress up in disguises and go to the neighbors' houses banging pots with spoons. The neighbors give them treats similar to Halloween here.

Everyone goes shopping before the Persian New Year for new clothes. On the Persian New Year the whole family gets together to eat a traditional dish of rice and salmon called SABZI POLO MAHI. Later they go to visit their older relatives and wish them a Happy New Year. When they are visited, the older relatives give a gift of money called EIDE to each younger person. 110 is considered a lucky number and usually EIDE is given in some form of that number.

The thirteenth day of the New Year is considered bad luck so to avoid this bad luck, families travel away from their homes for a picnic outside where everyone eats, listens to music and dances. This tradition is called SIZDAH BEDAR or “passing the bad luck of the thirteenth day.”

We are happy to share our holiday with you and hope you enjoyed learning about it.

Norooz Mubarak!

The Maki Family... Ebi, Audria and Gio



# Planting Lentil Seeds for NOROOZ



Zoe puts a wet paper towel  
in her bag.



James looks at the lentil  
seeds.



Gio plants his seeds  
inside his paper towel



William zips up his bag.



Megan tapes her bag to  
the door to grow to get  
warmth and sunshine.