



# Notícias do Jardim

Play · Imagine · Discover · Learn

## Editorial

As autumn fades into the shadows of the approaching winter, our students, your children, grow up under our watchful gaze, which longs for a new horizon to rise on Earth for all humanity.



In the name of this horizon, I would like to make a few appeals that will help us maintain this guiding focus, free from impurities that could cloud our thinking, feeling, and actions.

The horizon of today's world surrounds us daily with various noises that interfere with what we should be able to see, hear and touch within the Being of each Child. These are noises that come from the world and resonate in the lives of families and in school life, obstructing our purpose and weakening the mutual trust that should nourish our educational community.

The key word for the first appeal I would like to make to you is HARMONISE.

Harmonise the lives of your families with school life in the hearts of our students, your children! This harmonisation requires varying degrees of attention.

- In each of our lives, do not allow the noise of the world to penetrate our thinking, preventing us from listening to ourselves, free from external constraints, so that this liberation nourishes the truth of our feelings and, consequently, leads us to act in accordance with what we think and feel.
- In school life, let us do the same, remaining faithful to the foundations that underpin our/your home, preventing the noise from outside, devoid of grounding, from contaminating our ground, erasing the footprints that each child leaves on it.

Wars do not only take place between nations, peoples, and groups; wars also take place within each of us when we think, feel, and act as if we were three different people, shattering our true identity.

Let us therefore harmonise, in our inner life, the totality of who we truly are! Let us listen to Master Eckart, who, already in the Middle Ages, pointed out where the source of PEACE lies: within ourselves, balancing the heart, the head and the hands in everything we do, day by day.



And because we urgently need help to find Peace within ourselves, I propose as the key word of my second appeal: SIMPLICITY!

Let us strip ourselves of our "adornments" and learn to welcome the simplicity of the message that Nature sends us every day about the essence of Life on Earth for all its beings: Truth, Goodness, Beauty! Contrary to the noise of the world, Nature speaks to us in silence, in stillness, in the fullness of surrender. Let us learn to offer our Being to the revelation of the Truth, Goodness and Beauty of Life, which our children, in their still immense simplicity, know how to offer every day to Nature, which welcomes us at HARPA.

"The edifying role of Nature in the education of human beings" has thus become the core of our work, so that "peace may grow for Man and Nature".

Today, the Earth asks us for the warmth of our gestures!

Today, Heaven asks us for harmony among ourselves!

*Leonor Malik*



## Start of the school year

### Starting the school year with nature: Welcoming parents and children



The first day of school is always a very significant moment for both children and their families.

Considering the

importance of this moment, the teachers organized a very special reception, facilitating a gathering for everyone in the school's natural space in a serene and welcoming atmosphere.

During this reception, each teacher led their group of parents and students to one of the school's many beautiful spaces. This initiative, which was mainly aimed at bringing students, parents, and teachers together, was a welcoming moment where some guided activities were carried out that were appropriate for the age groups and characteristics of each group. Thus, various activities were facilitated,

such as presentation dynamics, rhythmic games, singing, poetry recitation, inspiring words were offered, and wishes for the future were shared, setting the welcoming tone for the day.

Taking into account the intention that currently guides our educational project - The edifying role of Nature in Education - this first meeting was a celebration of the partnership between family, school, and nature that left good memories for all participants.

We closed this first meeting with the certainty that, throughout the school year, experiencing things and knowledge in direct contact with life and its manifestations will lead children to engage their whole being in understanding the world around them, rooting in them a connection of respect and love for Life.

*Alexandra Gonçalves*

## Reception ceremony for first-year students

With great joy and excitement, our school welcomed the children who began their journey in 1st grade. This reception ceremony marked a special moment of transition, celebrating the move from kindergarten to a new stage of learning, full of discoveries, challenges, and growth.

In an atmosphere of beauty and simplicity, the children were welcomed with a story, a song, and symbolic gestures: such as giving a flower to the teacher and passing through an arch, which honor this important step.

Every detail of the ceremony sought to create a safe and enchanting space, where each child could feel seen, welcomed, and confident to start this new journey.

Parents, educators, teachers, and other students at the school came together as a community, reinforcing their shared commitment to accompany the children with care, presence, and love. May this beginning be the seed of a school journey full of light,



imagination, courage, curiosity, and the joy of learning.

*Nicole Marques*

# Reunions at the start of the school year at Harpa

**The return to school is always a moment eagerly awaited by every child, when they feel at home. The joy, security, anticipation of what is to come, and desire to learn more and more become visible in their eyes, their gestures... their words.**

It is wonderful to observe each child on this day! The conversations that catch up, the shared games, the dreams that multiply.

In our school, for many, it is also a return to nature. To the nature that has been “waiting” for the children to arrive. Everything is revealed at that moment. The touch, the hug, the warmth, and the tranquility that Harpa's nature offers.

It is also wonderful to see all this happening with the families of this house at this reunion, so beautifully captured by father António Barbot.

Gratitude!

*Helena Monteiro*



# Discover the stream



**In September, the 4th grade class went to explore our school's stream.**

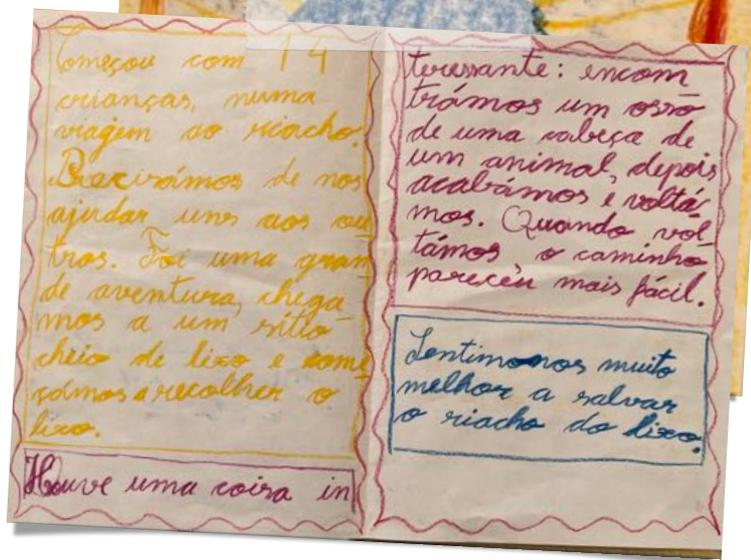
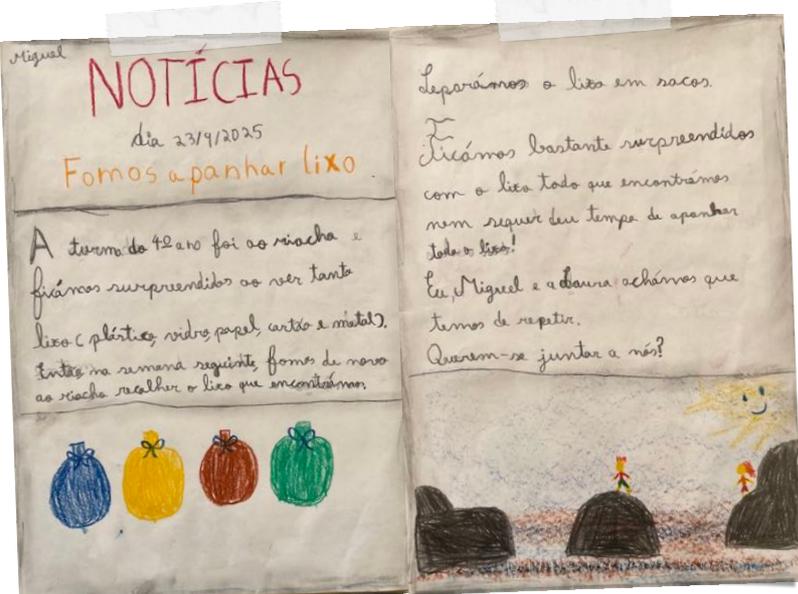
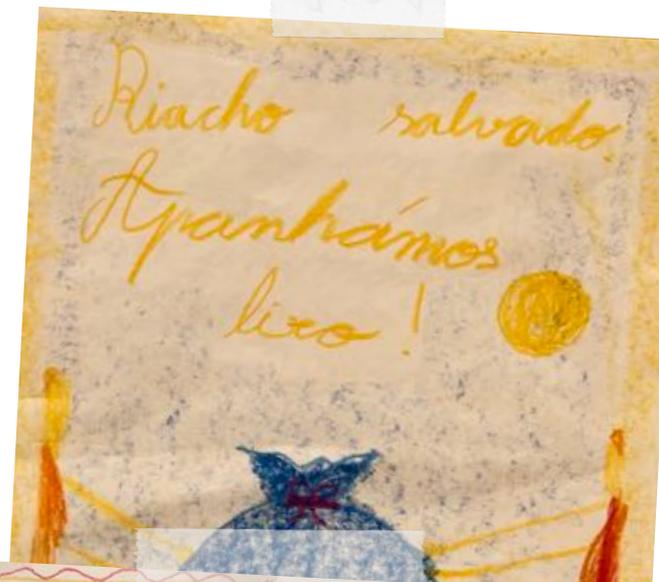
It was a great adventure, venturing into the vegetation, climbing up the stream, jumping from rock to rock as they discovered new paths and helped each other on this “odyssey.”

After crossing the river to the other side, they discovered new places and landscapes.

Surprisingly and sadly, they found that this place was littered with trash thrown from the road. They immediately set out to collect it to “clean up our farm, clean up our stream!” A week later, we returned, this time prepared with bags to collect as much as possible.

When they returned to the classroom, we immediately took advantage of this experience to create a news article, and the result was wonderful!

Helena Monteiro



# Where is autumn?

## Group activity for 4th grade and middle school students

This was the challenge presented to the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classes on November 18, an event that sought to invite our students to connect even more with the surrounding nature and its beauty, based on the question: "Where is autumn?"

Autumn, the season of transition between the heat of summer and the cold of winter, presents us with a unique spectacle. The leaves on the trees are transformed into a palette of vibrant colors, ranging from golden yellow to intense red, passing through orange and deep brown. It is a season of harmony and beauty, where Nature prepares for rest and introspection.

In fact, autumn on our school farm is a time of incredible opportunities: the soft, golden sunlight characteristic of this season creates the perfect setting for observing images full of emotion and poetry. The colorful leaves, bare tree branches, and bucolic landscapes are transformed into objects of natural art. With this in mind, the teachers challenged and helped the students to awaken their senses by sharing some poems, as well as historical and scientific curiosities that allowed them to feel and see the changes that take place in nature during this season. Then, groups were created among the children and each group had to search for and collect elements of nature along the

*IF THIS AUTUMN*

*If this autumn a leaf,*

*just one, fell*

*from her red hair,*

*sleepy,*

*and on it a hand*

*wrote with the blue of the air*

*a name, just one name,*

*it would be the most ethereal*

*of all those on earth,*

*the warm earth so stingy*

*with joy.*

*Eugénio de Andrade, in POESIA (Modo de Ler, 2011)*

path through the farm so that, at the end of this activity, they could carry out a joint artistic work, in which each one depended on all the others to create a landscape with the elements (leaves, sticks, moss, berries, earth, etc.) they had collected.

This type of activity and experience provided to our students is extremely educational, essentially seeking to create an environment of respect, admiration, and veneration for nature and human beings.

Alexandra Gonçalves e Sofia Soares



# Celebrations at our school

## Saint Michael

29th of September is St Michael's Day, but in Waldorf schools this date is celebrated as a season, covering the following four Sundays and ending at the end of October. Teachers and children therefore have a long period in which to enjoy musical moments, recitations, dramatisations and small celebrations to welcome Michael into their hearts.



In Waldorf education, the season of St. Michael is fundamental, giving children the impetus to strengthen their courage to do good, each child's courage for life and action, through different symbolic moments. Control and balance, through intelligence and the heart, these are the teachings of Michael. One of the most special moments of this season is the Trials of Saint Michael for the 1st and 2nd cycles, focused on developing courage, inner strength and self-confidence in students, inspired by the figure of the Archangel Michael, who fights the "dragon" (selfishness and

challenges) through trials of air, fire, water and earth, which are obviously carried out in direct contact with nature, taking advantage of the unique physical characteristics of our school.

*Catarina Dinis*

## All Saints' Day

Even under the light rain, the children walked the streets with smiles and courage, celebrating the ancient tradition of Pão por Deus. From door to door, they carried out the simple gesture of asking and giving thanks, reminding us that every loaf of bread, every offering, is an invitation to share and care.

In Portuguese tradition, this day is more than just sweets and fruit: it is an opportunity to appreciate the abundance of life and the joy of giving and receiving. Between raindrops and small steps, our children taught us to see the miracle in everyday life — in friendship, in generous gestures, and in the magic of a tradition that unites us.

*Helena Monteiro*



## WE CELEBRATE THE LANTERN FESTIVAL WITH ANOTHER WALK OF LIGHT

In Waldorf education, celebrations follow the rhythms of nature and help us understand the connection between life on Earth and the cosmos. In autumn, when nature retreats, the human soul awakens: it is time to look inward and honor our inner light, without ever forgetting the light of others who walk beside us.

In November, it is time to celebrate the Lantern Festival, where each lantern symbolizes our inner light that continues to shine, even on the shortest and darkest days, reminding us of the courage, hope, and warmth we can share with others.

So, on November 21, we welcome the entire school community to our school to celebrate this important moment for humanity together.



## International Day of Peace



**We were starting the school year when we received an invitation from UNESCO's network of associated schools to celebrate International Peace Day on 21st September.**

Included in this invitation was the phrase 'When the heart, head and hands work in harmony, peace

grows for people and nature,' which we immediately saw as a reflection of the principles that guide the educational work we do at Escola Jardim do Monte.

As a result, the phrase became the backdrop for the reception of students and their families, bringing the experience of International Peace Day to other days. Not just any day, but the first day of school, the day that sets the tone for everything we do for the





development of children, the day on which we reaffirm our intention to accompany the growth of the children entrusted to us, providing them with learning experiences that leave seeds in their hearts to become individuals capable of feeling with their souls, thinking critically and acting in harmony to make the world a better place.

A few days later, on 25 September, we gathered all the children in a circle at Recreio das Amoreiras and sang for world peace in several languages.

After that, we continued, day after day, with our task of teaching and learning to look at others, asking them 'Who are you?' in order to get to know and respect them, teaching and learning to know nature and love it so that we can protect it.

*Dulce Augusto*

"Peace is having a place with lots of quiet!"

"Peace is quiet!"

"It's when I'm breathing deeply, playing and having fun."

"It's when everything is calm, we're relaxed and everyone is together with kindness and lots of love in their hearts."

"Peace is when one person is curious about another person."

"It's when the fighting stops and people are calm."

"It's when everyone is friends."

"Peace means friendship."

"It's when everyone is happy."

"Peace is everyone living in harmony and sharing what they have."

*4th year class*

# Study Visits

## Varino Boat Tour

On 22 October, Year 4 invited Year 5 to go on a boat trip on the River Tagus.



We took the bus to the marina in Vila Franca de Xira. There, we boarded the colourful Varino

Liberdade boat,

which had several tables and benches for us to sit on.

Our guide, Joana, explained that this boat was formerly used to transport goods between the two banks. She also told us that this boat was built 80 years ago and today serves to show how people used to work on the boat and on the Tagus River. Joana also told us that this boat fell into disuse after the

bridges were built. As a result, the boat was abandoned and eventually sank. Later, the mayor decided to rebuild it because he discovered that there were only five varino boats in the whole world!

When we were on the boat, we saw Monchão de Alhandra to the south and the banks of the city of Vila Franca de Xira, Alhandra and Alverca to the north, with some hills behind the houses.

This trip taught us about the Tagus River, the boat and our region.

We loved having our snack on the boat and seeing the whole landscape!

It was a wonderful and very enjoyable trip!

*Collaborative text  
by the 4th grade  
class*



## The 3rd year visit

On 3 December 2025, the 3rd year class went on a field trip to the Agricultural Centre of the Benavente Municipal Museum.

We were warmly welcomed by Raquel, Suzel and Telmo. At the museum, we saw and learned about agricultural tools, animals, costumes and customs from the past that were used in agriculture.

We learned about some tools, such as:

- the 'Grade de bicos' (plough), a horse-drawn tool on which children sat on top to add weight and thus 'break up the soil';
- the 'Carro Lezirão' (ox cart), which was used to transport grain;
- the 'fly wing plough', used to plough the land;
- hoes and rakes.

We also did a blindfolded activity, where we could touch and feel the tools we had seen before with our hands. At the end, we drew what we liked to feel the most and painted its surroundings.

We had lunch at the museum (in a very beautiful outdoor area), played and then enjoyed the Benavente Christmas Market, where we went on some rides and took a ride on the Christmas train!

It was a full day!

*Ana Passos*



## A Visit Full of Discoveries

### 2nd Cycle at the Mira de Aire Caves and the Constância Butterfly Garden

On 27 November, the 5th and 6th year classes went on a very special school trip, full of enthusiasm and joy, to the Mira de Aire Caves and the Constância Butterfly Garden.



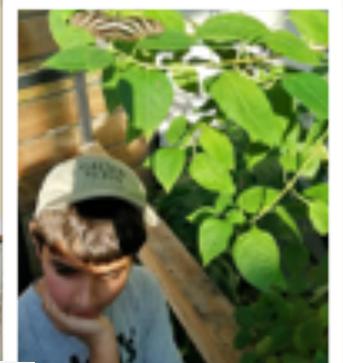
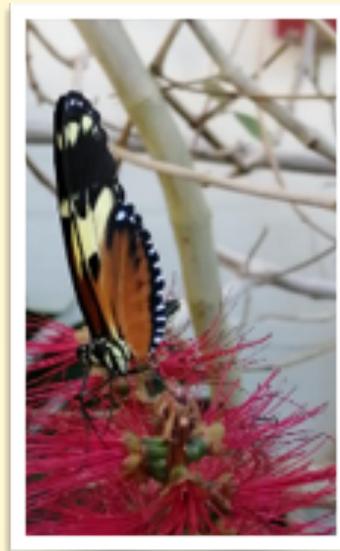
The first stop was at the Mira de Aire Caves, one of the most important natural sites in the country. Accompanied by a friendly guide, the students listened attentively to all the explanations and showed great interest. They learned that the caves are 11 km long, although only 600 metres can be visited, that they were discovered in 1947 and opened to the public in 1974. They also learned that the Mira de Aire Caves were classified as one of the 7 Natural Wonders of Portugal in 2010. They observed the stalactite and stalagmite formations and learned about the Rio Negro, a water table created by groundwater. They were also curious to discover that some bottles of local wine are stored in the caves due to the ideal temperature.

The students were amazed by the grandeur of the space and observed the natural processes that occur there with great attention.

After lunch, the group went to the Constância Butterfly Garden, a space that enchants visitors with its diversity of species and the beauty of the butterfly life cycle. The students were fascinated to observe these delicate creatures up close, identifying colours,

patterns, behaviours and different stages of metamorphosis. The colours, movement and delicacy of these insects aroused everyone's curiosity and enchantment.

It was a very lively, fun visit that provided unforgettable moments for everyone, creating



memories that fuel the true pleasure of learning.

*Alexandra Gonçalves e Sofia Soares*

# Remembering the kindergarten end-of-year party

On 24 June, the Kindergarten held its St. John's Day celebration. As is now tradition, the families prepared and presented a short play. This year, the story chosen was 'The Children of the Roots'. It was a beautiful and entertaining moment for both the children and adults who attended!



## Small miracles at Harpa's farm

**“If we are vigilant, not a single day will pass without a miracle happening in our lives.”**

**Rudolf Steiner**

Among trees, leaves and familiar paths, life unfolds silently and steadily. Miracles reveal themselves every day, when we learn to look closely: a seed breaking through the earth, colours revealed after a stormy day, the song of a bird accompanying the morning, creatures that appear and catch our eye.

Rudolf Steiner reminded us that what is essential is not only what happens, but how we observe it. In the nature that surrounds our school, every detail teaches patience, care and respect for the rhythms of life.

May these images invite us to slow down, breathe and recognise that, when we are present, no day passes without something alive speaking to us in silence.

*Helena Monteiro*



# Upcoming events

## Vegetarian Cooking Workshops with Chef Bruno Ferraz

The Jardim do Monte School (Harpa) will host a series of vegetarian cooking workshops led by me, Bruno Ferraz, chef, dedicated to adults and children who want to learn new recipes and discover tasty and healthy alternatives for everyday life.

The aim of these workshops is to teach parents to cook together with their children, promoting sharing and learning while exploring simple, nutritious vegetarian recipes adapted to the family routine. It will be an opportunity to reinforce balanced eating habits and bring more creativity to meals at home.

Each session will last 3 hours and will always include a picnic-style tasting in nature and a special surprise prepared for participants.

Come learn, cook and savour with us!



**21st of February, 10:00 a.m.:** Healthy Snacks and Sweets Workshop

*Cost: €35 per adult with tasting & surprise*

**14th March, 10 a.m.:** Workshop de Refeições Saudáveis

*Cost: €35 per adult with tasting and surprise*

**16th May, 10 a.m.:** Cooking Workshop for Parents & Children with a Picnic in Nature

*Cost €40 1 Adult + 1 Child with Tasting & Surprise*

**20th June, 10 a.m.:** Parents & Children Cooking Workshop with a Picnic in Nature (Special Edition dedicated to Italian Cuisine)

*Cost €40 1 Adult + 1 Child with Tasting & Surprise*

## Dinner of kings

Come along to this gastronomic and social gathering that is the Kings' Dinner! May it bring us moments of closeness and joy as an incentive for the collaboration that the work we want to carry out throughout 2026 requires from each one of us.

*Registration until 7 January, indicating the number of people.*

