

Hello! My name is Kurando Takahashi (Stuart) and I was a part of Takamori's 23rd graduating class (1996). I currently work in management at Miyax Corporation based in Teraoka, Sendai, managing sales and other business operations.

When my son was born I revisited MeySen for the first time in 20 years and met Ms. Judith. She immediately recognized me and was happy to see me again, saying, "Are you the Stuart who was always such a rascal?" As a child I used to play pranks in class and would often get in trouble, but time passed, and as a senior in high school I was able to take part in the Friends Club Study Abroad Program and spent one year at a high school



in Texas. I then went on to study Finance at Washington State University, and upon graduation, worked at a foreign consulting company in Tokyo.

My current company, Miyax Corporation, was founded by my grandfather, and we recently celebrated our 70th anniversary. We make swings and slides in our own factory in Kurihara-city, do the installation of the playground equipment in schools and parks, and provide maintenance and upkeep. We don't do any business internationally, and I never use English at work. Some may think it is a shame since I went all the way to study abroad, but the benefits of studying abroad are not limited to language ability. American university classes have a lot of discussion, and you are expected to proactively express your opinion. Being among students who are very assertive, and on top of that, having to constantly use English, my brain was working overtime. Being able to think independently, make decisions objectively, and knowing the importance of continuing to study and grow even after becoming an adult are all things that I learned through my experience studying abroad.

Needless to say, such experiences are a strength for me in managing a company. Of course my language ability allows me to communicate both nationally and internationally without any stress, as



well as broaden my connections. I am lucky to have had all these experiences, starting with attending a kindergarten close to my home, gaining the language ability, and studying abroad.

Miyax actively participates in MeySen Academy's "A Way We Learn" Study Abroad Support Program. I strongly encourage all of you students still studying at MeySen to take up the challenge of studying abroad if you have the opportunity. You will experience something wonderful beyond learning the language!

Premier School Graduate Training Hard in the Home of Hockey



Daisuke Egusa (Ethan), a Premier Elementary graduate, became interested in ice hockey when he was in elementary school, and was part of an ice hockey club. But when he decided he wanted to train in a country where hockey is popular and is played at a higher level in order to improve his own ability, he received his parents' support to go to Canada as a 7th grader. He currently attends a local high school in Canada and is training hard every day.

On July 12 and 13, Daisuke came to speak to Premier School students on both campuses, sharing his experiences and his goals.

It was impressive to hear that the English ability he gained from Premier School has enabled him to adapt smoothly to life in Canada, as well as in his classes and studies. This summer he was invited to play in the

North American National Hockey League* as its youngest player. His dream is to become a professional hockey player in the NHL and he aims to attend an American university with a strong hockey team.

It is important to discover what you enjoy doing, as well as to have a dream for your future. For the Premier School students who attended Daisuke's presentation, hearing that his English ability widened the horizons of his dream made a deep impression on them.

*The National Hockey League (NHL) is a professional ice hockey league in North America and is considered to be the premier professional ice hockey league in the world.



For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 (ESV)

Part 16

Real Love

The Bible tells of an account of a teacher of the law who tested Jesus asking him, "Teacher, what is the most important commandment?" In response, Jesus answered the following:

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

If we love God from our heart and turn our attention toward him, we will desire to please him. If we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, we will not do anything to bring them harm. The Apostle Paul refers to this in one of his letters:

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

(Romans 13:8-10)

Jesus spoke much about love to his disciples the night before he was crucified:

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

(John 15:12-13)

Moral Lessons from the Bible

Daniel Fanger, Principal



After he spoke these words, he was taken away the same night, and the following day was hung on the cross and killed. Jesus' death on the cross is an expression of ultimate love. Jesus, the creator of the world, gave up his life to cleanse the sins of the human race, who were only created beings, saving us from eternal destruction (hell). As you see, love doesn't mean "I like something," but it is thinking of others more than ourselves and expressing it with action, and often involves sacrifice.

When we recognize our sinfulness and understand just how much Jesus really loves us, we naturally respond by loving God in return, and in so doing are changed into people that "love our neighbor." I want to introduce to you the following passage of scripture that is often read at weddings:

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

This love that God has demonstrated for us is what real love looks like. It is not for one's own gain, but it is living to bring joy to others. Our natural human nature is the opposite of this, but the more we know his love, the more we will be changed.

We know the sacrificial love of Christ. Let's stop thinking about ourselves all the time and start thinking about how we can live for our friends and those around us. Those who love God, and love and help the people around them will have joy that lasts eternally.

Premier High School Students Score High on TOEFL Jr. Exam

High School and Premier High School students are able to take the TOEFL Jr. exam, which is held nationally twice a year, at MeySen Academy. In recent years, some MeySen students have scored more than 850, putting them in the top percentile of exam participants worldwide, and many more MeySen students have scored over 800.*

TOEFL Jr. is an exam used to evaluate English reading and listening ability for junior high and high school students. It has proven to be a great tool for motivation and goal setting in MeySen's high school programs, which focus on improving communication skills.

*A TOEFL Jr. score of 800 is equivalent to Eiken Grade 2, and 850 is equivalent to Eiken Grade Pre-1. These tests provide a great first step for students who will later be taking the TOEFL IBT and TOEFL ITP exams, where high scores give students a tremendous advantage as a measure of their English ability for when they apply to universities.



Students that score higher than 850 receive a Certificate of Achievement



You can purchase the MeySen Bus Character stamps here!



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Cover: Autumn brings the familiar fragrance of osmanthus blossoms. The blue fall sky and the turning of the leaves on the trees all provide a colorful backdrop to the many events held on campus during the season.

Friends is the MeySen Academy newsletter and publishes the latest news and event announcements for all members of our community, including students, alumni, teachers, and interested friends of MeySen.

Friends

MeySen Academy Newsletter フレンズ

No. 184
AUTUMN
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A TASTE OF AUTUMN

K5 Sweet Potato Digging

FC5 Bandai Trip

Jamboree

K4 and K5 Art Activities

Fathers Open House

Interns in Premier School for first Trimester

Joining the America Study Trip Again After 20 Years

Ms. Beth Maruyama Premier School

I decided to come to MeySen as an intern when I was in college. I was excited for the chance because I was studying Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and I had always wanted to travel to Japan. I knew it would be a great way for me to gain experience teaching and I thought it would also be fun to live in Japan for a summer.

I really enjoyed my time as an intern because the teachers and the students were so kind to me and fun to work with. I found MeySen to be a positive and encouraging environment, so I wanted to be a part of it again. Of course, there is also the fact that I love Japan and enjoy learning about and experiencing Japanese culture. However, the most important factor that really brought me back to Sendai is that I truly felt that I wanted to be a part of this community to share God's love with the people in Japan.

I am just starting out as a teacher and I still have a lot to learn but I want to give my best for my students each day. They are very bright and hardworking children. I am grateful for my fellow teachers and trainers who give me the advice and encouragement that I need to become a better teacher. I am truly grateful that God brought me to this place.

K4 and K5 Art Activities

Art activities are held throughout the year at MeySen Kindergarten. At MeySen, art is considered a means of expression, a way to encourage each student to grow in their own imagination, determination, and expression.

In K4 art activities such as paper-dyeing, students were allowed complete freedom of expression, giving them a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. This year K5 had its own art activity program for the first time, and the students enjoyed the opportunity for even broader self-expression, feeling confident in what they created and wanting to show others what they had made.

When students were given markers to use on a white umbrella, each student thought up their own unique design, and showed off their finished umbrellas as they went for a walk outside.

During second semester, K4 students made things using clay and recycled items, and K5 enjoyed a project using stained glass. The teachers work hard to create an environment where students can enjoy expressing themselves in their playtime as well as during the daily class activities.

You can find more information on these and future activities on the MeySen blog "Persona Journal." (Japanese Only)

Joining the America Study Trip Again After 20 Years

This summer, for the first time since 1997, I took the Maruyama student group on the America Study Trip.* Our itinerary was changed due to a flight cancellation because of a typhoon and the wild fire around Yosemite National Park, but otherwise it was the exact same route that we used 20 years ago, which brought back many memories. I was surprised to meet people who actually remembered me from 20 years ago, such as the life guards on the beach in Hawaii and staff from the catering company.

More than anything, the fact that the trip went smoothly and according to plan was wonderful. Students experienced some of the best sightseeing in America, visiting San Francisco, Disneyland, Sea World, and Hawaii. I realized again how this trip is planned around places that can truly make once-in-a-lifetime memories.

The students spent every day with bright smiles on their faces and continuous excitement in their voices, almost as if they were in a dream the whole time. Of course, they were extremely thankful to their parents and grandparents for making this trip possible for them.

Over the many years we have organized this trip, one thing has changed dramatically: the English ability of the students. 20 years ago, the students could only string together single words in an effort to make conversation, but now they are able to form full sentences with beautiful pronunciation. This is a fruit of using GrapeSEED curriculum, and in addition, the result of the students' daily effort in their classes, as well as doing REP at home.

Throughout the trip, I observed their eagerness to communicate in English with confidence and their desire to learn more so that they can overcome their shortcomings. Moreover, some talked about returning to America to study, which made me very glad.

The demands of the changing environment in which Japanese junior high students find themselves and the rising cost of travel due to the high price of fuel are issues to be overcome, but I really hope that more students will be able to participate in this trip as the grand finale to their study at Friends Club. It is an opportunity to be immersed in an environment requiring English communication and a chance to learn to act independently as well as how to be a part of a group.

Nathan Broman
English Department Vice Principal

*At the time of departure from Japan, I took the Takamori group on a shortened course.

Training for the Kindergarten Staff

MeySen invited Mr. Kenji Mizokami, a Specialized Instructor from the Japan Business Education Center, to hold a three-day training session in April for the staff of MeySen Kindergarten and Premier School Kindergarten.

Mr. Mizokami lectured using actual case examples, creating an opportunity not only for teachers to think of better ways to provide a safe environment for the students, but to remind them of the responsibility of their role in being an example of the school's core values in daily education.

Instructors from Kawai were also on hand to provide training for staff for the 10-minute classroom exercise time before the start of the new semester. In August, Mr. Kengo Iwanaga, who teaches P.E. at Takamori, also provided training. The staff of MeySen Kindergarten and Premier School Kindergarten intend to make the most of this training so that students will have plenty of physical activity in the 10-minute classroom exercise time during the second semester.

Kindergarten Staff Volunteer Work

At the end of August, volunteers from Maruyama Kindergarten's teaching staff went to sing to the residents of the elderly home, "Gallery Mori no Ne." The presentation started with a clarinet performance by Mr. Yoshimura and was followed by singing from the rest of the volunteers. The teachers sang "Hello, Hello," a song they usually sing with their students, as well as songs known to the residents, such as, "Memories of Summer" and "Furusato." For an encore, everyone sang "Sukiyaki."

The request of the residents to "please come again," and the warmth of their hands as they clasped those of the teachers in appreciation, will not be forgotten. The MeySen Academy faculty and staff will continue this volunteer endeavor to bring joy to even more people.

Volunteer Work at American Festa Event

MeySen's Mechanical Bull a Hit!

An event called American Festa was held at Koutoudai Park on July 7 and 8. Nine teachers from MeySen volunteered to work in the event so that participants could experience the feel of a being a rodeo bull rider.

Delivering Music and Song!