

Alumni

Arisa Sugawara (Allie)
Takamori 36th Graduating Class

When I was in kindergarten, I would run around the campus every day asking my favorite teachers for their signatures. I am surprised and happy when, nowadays, I have students come up to me and say, "Sign, please!" Thanks to my teachers and the environment at MeySen, I was able to continue on to Friends Club and High School. My energetic teachers, while strict at times, were always loving and welcoming, and it was a place I could enjoy learning with my peers.

I had a strong desire to experience English and foreign culture first hand, so I decided to study abroad during high school. Everything was new during my year in America, and as I learned how my American peers



▲With her study abroad high school basketball teammates (second from the left)



Miss Yuyoi



Miss Yukiko

▲At kindergarten graduation with Miss Yukiko Ogawa, her homeroom teacher, and Miss Cindy, the English teacher. Miss Yukiko is the head teacher at Maruyama, and Miss Yuyoi, her homeroom teacher when she was in K4, is the head teacher at Takamori, and now all three of them work together.

thought and felt about things, I experienced a lot of personal growth.

While I work now as a kindergarten English teacher, my university major was actually in economics. Until my second year in university I had never even thought about entering teaching as a profession. But it was a class in my international economic studies that first gave me the idea. When asked about the differences between an economically powerful country and a developing country, the conclusion I came to was *education*. Education should be given equally to all people, but sadly this is not the case in many countries.

Looking back at my own life, I was very much impacted at the way students were central in the classes at the school I attended abroad. I was also fortunate to be surrounded by foreign culture at MeySen

from an early age, through which I learned many things besides English. I realized that I wanted to pass on this wonderful type of learning experience to as many people as I could, which led me to decide to become a teacher at MeySen. It gives me such joy to be part of the students' daily growth and development.

It took time to find a job that I love and could give myself to. Economics was an area of interest to me. However, it was my perseverance in English studies that led me to this path. You never know how beneficial English, or other things that you may currently be involved in, will be in the future. As you continue and don't quit, it may lead to "something." Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could continue to study English for when you encounter that "something" that would make your heart leap!



Three Generations of MeySen Students -The Shoji Family-

The family of Mio Shoji (K5 Shirakaba class) and Mao (K4 Tsubaki class) at MeySen Takamori Kindergarten are third generation MeySen students. Their father, Tomoyuki (Bradley), is a Takamori 30th Class graduate, and their grandmother, Mayumi (Gloria), is a Maruyama 4th Class graduate.

It has been over fifty years since MeySen's founding, and it is our joy to see third generation children come to Kangaroo Club and Kindergarten. The staff of MeySen Academy look forward to the new year with a fresh desire to pour into the students love and nurturing, so MeySen can continue to be a school rooted in the community and surrounded by love.

Achieving a Better Learning Abroad Experience diBec Foreign University Japan Office Seminar

Twice a year, MeySen invites the staff of the diBec Japan office to hold a seminar for Friends Club and Premier School graduates on studying at foreign universities. The diBec Japan team members explain in an easy to understand format details on things such as university studies in America, Taiwan, Europe, and Oceania; education systems and fees; living environment and career development; and thanks to this information, many MeySen graduates have been able to go on to study at universities in other countries since the first seminar of this kind was held.

"I would like to study somewhere that has a strong program in my area of interest."

"I'm not clear on what I want to do in the future, but I would like to study abroad to help find my goal."

These are common starting points for students wanting to study abroad, but just dreaming about it is not going to make it happen. Students need practical information, such as knowing ways they can study abroad, places they can study, possible areas of study, how to live in a foreign country and the costs involved. Then they can better focus their goals.

Moreover, being able to independently manage their own activities and school life, and being able to maintain good communication with their family are both important foundational skills for living abroad in a safe and healthy manner. Students interested in studying abroad should begin to work on these skills now, and try to enroll in MeySen's short term and long term study abroad programs, as well as foreign university study programs.



Bible verse

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 ESV)

聖書

Listen to the Bible from your smartphone app!

We share Bible verses in our Friends newsletter and on the MeySen website, but you can also listen to the Japanese Bible on the smartphone app "Japanese Drama Bible." Created by G&M Foundation Japan, and recorded by famous actors such as Shinya Owada and Shingo Tsurumi, with this app you can experience the world of the Bible. The verses are displayed on the screen so you can follow along as you listen to the lively drama.



Download the app
<https://graceandmercy.or.jp/app/>



You can watch the making-of video on YouTube. Use this QR code, or try searching "Grace and Mercy Japanese Drama Bible" to find it.
<https://www.youtube.com/>

In this series, we will look at what the Bible teaches about the meaning of our life. In the previous article, "The Origin of Life," I explained how God made all things, how wonderful God made man to be, and the special relationship between God and man. In this issue, we will look at how this wonderful relationship was broken, and how evil, sadness, and suffering entered into this world.

Part 2 What is Sin?

The first people created in the image of God, Adam and Eve, had a relationship with God and lived in a paradise called "the garden of Eden." They walked with God and lived a happy life. At the time, there was no sin, no sadness or suffering, no sickness or death. Man ruled over all the animals, and the world was filled with peace and joy.

Man's rebellion

However, Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan, and they ate from the one tree that God had told them not to eat from, of which God had said that if they ate the fruit they would surely die, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." This was the moment when sin entered man's pure spirit, which until then had not known sin. Darkness entered man's heart, and Adam and Eve felt shame for being naked. God showed mercy toward them and made them coverings from the

skin of a lamb so they could hide their nakedness. This death of the lamb was the first death recorded in the Bible. A sinless, meek lamb sacrificed for the sin of man.

The curse of sin

Adam and Eve gave in to Satan's temptation and rebelled against God. They were cast out of the garden of Eden, and work became accompanied by suffering. The peace and joy that had filled the world was broken, and the world became full of sadness and pain.

Our first ancestors rebelled against God, and sin entered into all of mankind, so everyone after this was born with a sinful nature. Without being taught by anyone, people have evil thoughts in their hearts, doing wrong even though they know it is wrong. Jealousy, hatred, strife, pride, lies and deceit, covetousness: we all know that these things are not good, but people still do them. The beautiful connection of man and woman in marriage that God ordained has been spoiled, and people commit all kinds of sin that is contrary to God's wonderful plan. They do not stop to consider how much God hates and is saddened by these things. Sin is a selfish lifestyle, one that takes no thought of God, is not thankful towards him, and neither honors nor fears him.

The foolishness of man

This is how man's heart became separated from God, rebelling against Him, becoming foolish.

What the Bible Teaches about The Meaning of Life

Daniel Fanger
Principal



The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

(Psalms 14:1-3)

Fearing and honoring God

Turning back to God, fearing and honoring Him, thinking about what would please Him, resisting evil, doing good in life. The Bible teaches us that this is wisdom, and a happy life.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

(Proverbs 1:7)

Cover: In the Chinese calendar, 2020 is the Year of the Mouse. The mouse is the first of the twelve animals in the Chinese calendar, representing a year of new beginnings, a year of prosperity. Let's start this year focused on graduation and going on to the next grade!

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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.



Sledding



Only a little time left to spend with your current class, teachers, and classmates before going on to the next grade. Let's enjoy each day at MeySen!

WINTER FUN!!

A New Ally in Infection Prevention in the Classroom

MeySen is constantly endeavoring to improve practices for preventing the spread of contagious infections such as influenza and gastroenteritis, especially through the many events in Kindergarten, Premier School, and Friends Club from November to March. This year Towa Medical Supplies Miyagi, a donor to the new Maruyama hall and participant in MeySen's study abroad support project "A Way We Learn," donated sixty-eight disinfection sprayers for use at both campuses. By spraying a special hypochlorous acid solution into the air, these sprayers neutralize various viruses.

Sprayers have been placed in each classroom as of the end of December last year, and we hope that this will help maintain health for the students.



Company President Naoki Saito is also a Maruyama 11th Class graduate and a father of two MeySen students.



Volunteering in Areas Devastated by Typhoon 19

Typhoon 19 brought record-breaking amounts of rain to east Japan, and areas in Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures were severely affected. One disaster area was Marumori-cho, and as of the end of December, about 150 people are still in shelters. Homes and roads still have a long way to go for recovery.

On October 20, a week after the disaster, parents and students responded to the request from MeySen for volunteers and participated in relief work. Unfortunately, the work scheduled for parent volunteers on the 22nd had to be canceled due to rain, but eight teachers volunteered to distribute food to families.

Some areas have recovered well and therefore stopped or are limiting the number of volunteers, but if you are interested in helping, please refer to the link below:

Volunteer Information Website for Typhoon 19 Disaster Relief
<https://typhoon201919.shienp.net/>

Report from Volunteer Work Participant -Mr. Christopher-

Marumori-cho is a basin surrounded by numerous mountains, and the Abukuma river and its branches flow into it from Fukushima prefecture. In addition to the flooding of Abukuma river, the area faced difficulty with water drainage and mud slides, causing a complicated disaster situation.

Even now, collapsed houses and buildings and mud are still seen everywhere in the area. It will take several years to recover, and there are concerns that some areas may never fully recover.

On October 20, parents and sixth grade students from my class participated in volunteer work. Our main work consisted of shoveling mud and carrying out damaged furniture, and everyone was covered in mud as they worked hard. I want to thank you all for your time and effort.



Music Concert 2019

MeySen's annual music concert for Friends Club and Premier Elementary students was held on November 21 and 22 in the Takamori campus hall. This year, we invited Sae Tahara for a spectacular piano performance. On her entry, she played Chopin's waltz *Grande Valse Brillante* in E Flat Major. The hall was immediately filled with the resplendent sound of the piano. Midway into the concert, Masao Ito, a professional piano tuner, came on stage. He introduced to the students how the structure of the piano produces sound. Following this was a selection of Mozart, Beethoven, and Burgmüller, which many of the children learning the piano practice themselves. The students' voices filled the hall as they sang *Paprika*. Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride* made us feel like Christmas, and Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improvisation* concluded the concert. The full forty minutes passed quickly, giving everyone a deeper understanding of the piano.



Party →

MeySen Students' Outstanding Showing at Two English Competitions

At the annual Miyagi H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy All Japan Inter-Middle School English Oratorical Contest, MeySen students have been making quite an impact in recent years. On September 26, Asako Ito (Christine) from Maruyama Premier G9 won first place in the contest preliminary, making it the third year in a row* for a Premier School student to place first in the Miyagi preliminary round (becoming one of 151 semi-finalists in a competition of over 100,000 participants).

She also placed first at the 67th Tohoku Six-Prefecture Regional Junior High Speech Competition on November 15, wowing the audience with her beautiful pronunciation and smooth recitation.

At the 71st Miyagi Prefectural Junior High Speech Competition, Jotaro Sakai (Jake, Maruyama Premier School 44th Graduating Class) took second place, going on to compete in the nationals held on November 29. Unfortunately, he lost in the preliminary for the finals, but we trust he will utilize this experience for further growth in the future.

2018: Taito Uchigasaki (Wes, Maruyama Premier School) Prefectural Competition, First Place
 2017: Haruna Numata (Krista, Takamori Premier School) Prefectural Competition, Tohoku Competition First Place

Other results from this year:
Recital Competition:
 Second Place, Yui Atsumi (Michelle, Maruyama Friends Club 44th Graduating Class);
 Fourth Place, one student each from Takamori Premier and Takamori High School
Speech Competition:
 Fourth Place, one student from Maruyama High School; Honorable Mention, three students from Takamori Premier School



▲ Asako Ito (Christine) with her trophy from the prefectural competition, and a plaque and certificate from the Tohoku competition



▲ Jotaro Sakai (Jake) with his certificate from the national competition, and a plaque and certificate from the prefectural competition



Christmas Party for MeySen's Littlest Friends

Kangaroo Club holds a Christmas party every year in December. Last year, on December 7 at Takamori and December 14 at Maruyama, parties were held for all the Kangaroo classes. After singing some Christmas carols and a talk from the principal, children performed a dance with their parents, received a gift from Santa, and enjoyed an early Christmas full of smiles.

The children have been developing remarkably since they first started coming once a week in May. Many of them will be graduating to K3 in April, and everyone at MeySen is looking forward to welcoming many more families to Kangaroo Club with the start of the new school year.



Delivering toys and stationery to city-run temporary housing and children's cafeterias

It has been almost nine years since the Great East Japan Earthquake, but many in the most affected areas are still living in very different conditions from what they were before the disaster.

MeySen prepares toys and stationery for the annual Jamboree event and Christmas parties. Unused gift supplies from these events are being donated to children who have lost homes and families in the tsunami and that are living in city-run temporary housing, and also to children coming to the children's cafeterias (children's cafeterias, *kodomo shokudo*, are government-initiated volunteer meal centers that offer free meals to children of families who live below the poverty line in Japan). The toys and stationery are distributed at events such as summer festivals and Christmas parties.

The children, as well as the administration staff, love the gifts, and we hope to continue more of these types of donations.



Children receiving presents at a summer festival held at the city-run temporary housing in Kesennuma city. Over 200 families live here.



Valentine's Party