

Message from an Alumna

Kayo Fujiwara (Janice)
Maruyama 16th Graduating Class

Graduation at
Eastern Washington University ▶



People often describe me as being "cosmopolitan." I studied abroad for a short term in the United States as the representative of my high school, attended a college in Australia, and then, at the age of 20, enrolled in Eastern Washington University, majoring in Communication Studies. I was a dorm leader and worked in the dormitory office, which was uncommon for a foreign student, and I was even asked by one of the English professors to volunteer to tutor American students in basic level English classes who were struggling to gain credits. As someone who had grown

up being pampered at home, learning true independence through sharing work and life with American friends at the dormitory was a valuable experience, even more than my actual studies at school.

I graduated among the top of my class, obtained a visa, and eventually a green card as well. I joined the marketing department of the United States Army, communicating daily with major American companies wanting to advertise to soldiers and their families, and learned many things in business. At the time, none of my colleagues saw me as Japanese. Later on, I worked as an import/export manager in Japan, which was very fulfilling, but upon visiting Italy for the first time, I felt a sense of destiny that "this is the place to live," and decided to migrate. Two years ago, I started a school called High Five! which utilizes GrapeSEED curriculum.

The advantage of using GrapeSEED is that students learn through the same process (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as that of native speakers. It is important that children hear English from an early age, and GrapeSEED enables them to naturally gain accurate pronunciation and expression. When students attend the class consistently and work on the REP material at home, their brain begins to build a secondary language realm to that of their native language where it

stores English vocabulary and expressions. Consequently, new words that are seen or heard in a sentence are matched to that secondary language realm, allowing the students to gain more understanding of the pronunciation and meaning.

There are many advantages of a bilingual education, but from my own experience, learning gets much easier once you get into a third language. If you can expose a child to a different language before age 12, it allows them to gain a bilingual brain function which will make it much easier for them to speak other languages later, as they will have broken out of a monolingual brain function. I have not come across another method as good as GrapeSEED. In Japanese society where "everyone should be the same," bilingual children stand out. Being different from others is not a bad thing, but it is easy to want to correct and conform, or for parents to be hard on the children about it. Maybe my parents were too soft on me, but my mother especially taught me that it is ok for "Kayo to be Kayo," which I believe made me the person that I am now. I am grateful for my parents and the MeySen teachers who have helped me become cosmopolitan so that I can thrive wherever I go.



▲ I love traveling and have been to about 50 countries so far. Here is a photo of me with a friend from Prague in the Czech Republic.

First School to Incorporate GrapeSEED in the EU

At High Five!, teachers from Scotland, England, Canada, and Zambia teach English using GrapeSEED. Currently, 50 out of the 60 total students study English with GrapeSEED. Italians are not accustomed to attending an English language school several times a week, so it is still at a starting point. Many of the Italian children tend to be more fidgety than what would be expected in a typical Japanese classroom, but many love to talk, and so their progress can be clearly seen. GrapeSEED has naturally become an intercultural lesson, which makes it an interesting method for Italians.

New courses are being introduced this year for learning soft skills* and coaching, giving them opportunity

to gain social skills which are as important as language. The vision is to become a school that raises global citizens. In this day and age where things are uncertain wherever people live, it is essential that students become global citizens who are able to survive anywhere. Students are also encouraged to have personal goals, because when students have goals that they are happy about, it increases their excitement and the goals are more easily attained.

*soft skills = skills such as communication and leadership



HIGH FIVE!
ENGLISH SCHOOL FOR KIDS

We provide consultation for people who want to succeed in studying or working abroad and become a true global citizen. If you are interested in the global world, including those of you who would like to live abroad long term, contact us at info@highfive-english.it. In the future, we would like to organize opportunities for your children to come to Italy and learn English with Italian children.

Bible
verse

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Romans 3:22-24 (ESV)

聖書
さいしよ

Welcoming the New School Year

Daniel Fanger
Principal



MeySen Academy has begun its 54th year, welcoming 400 new little kindergarten students. Children are made in the image of God, and each one is a precious gift from Him. We think it is a privilege to be able to spend each day working with these children. We will continue to seek guidance and protection from our Heavenly Father, and the whole faculty and staff will endeavor to work in a way that is pleasing to him and also to all of the parents.

The Importance of Early Childhood Education/ MeySen's Founding Principles

I always tell our staff that out of all the various lines of professions, early childhood education is certainly one of the most important. Early childhood education builds a foundation for life for children, out of which forms their future. Those that founded MeySen Kindergarten did so with the dream and ideal of providing children with the best possible education. Our three guiding principles, Truth, Nature, and Language, were born out of this dream and ideal. We envisioned raising children to have strong hearts, providing them with an abundance of nature where they can gain valuable experience in their childhood, and to pour our strength into educating them in language, which is essential in all education.

Giving Students the Most Valuable Treasure!

Every parent wants to give their child the best. Needless to say, the effect that a child's education has on their future makes it of utmost importance. At MeySen, we continue to pursue the dream and ideal on which it was founded, always remembering and endeavoring to give our students the kind of education we want for our own children. Namely, language knowledge, healthy bodies, and a rich experience in every way.

One thing that has not changed since MeySen's opening is our value for the education of the heart based on Biblical principles. It is what we value more than anything. Our education policy states that each student

"...may grow to be a healthy and whole person who reveres God, loves others, and pursues truth and righteousness." We believe that happiness for self and family can only be gained by becoming such people. Personally, I sincerely hope and pray for the students that come to MeySen to gain a hope of heaven. I believe that is the most valuable treasure.

Vision— a Picture of Our Students' Future

Among the many facets of education, shouldn't the primary focus be that students gain personal independence and happiness, along with the skills they need to thrive in society in the future? Until recently, education tended to emphasize academic ability, but more and more the focus is shifting to soft skills, resourcefulness, and life experience. In other words, rather than intellectual knowledge that is measured by academic testing, the focus is on heart attitude and humanity, which MeySen Kindergarten has valued from the start.

While MeySen Academy's educational goals and basic policies have not changed, we would like to more clearly define our vision for our students' future, so that the staff and parents can see what MeySen is working towards through its education program, and utilize each day by focusing on that vision (the picture of what we want to accomplish in the future).

We are constantly brainstorming on the things we would like to see in our students when they grow up, and what skills and qualities will be important for them to have 15 and 20 years from now. While there are different

opinions on what qualities will be needed, I personally think the following are important:

- 1 Truth & Integrity**
Living right before God
- 2 Love & Compassion**
Compassion from the heart, loving our neighbors
- 3 Language & Expression**
Communicative ability, expression, writing ability
- 4 Initiative & Self-Motivation**
To think for themselves, to take action
- 5 Mental strength & Perseverance**
Resilience to withstand hardship, patience, grit
- 6 Hope & Peace**
Knowing that they are loved by God, having the hope of Heaven

By the time our students have grown and become adult members of society, AI will have permeated every area of life and society, making half of our current jobs unnecessary. However, those who have been raised with the qualities listed above will be able to flexibly adapt no matter how society or working conditions change, and they will be valued in both the workplace and society. We will continue to deepen our discussion on what MeySen should strive for in the vision of our students' future, and offer a clear picture of that vision to you.

We will pour our heart and soul into making this year a fulfilling year for the children and meeting the expectations of all of you parents. As always, we ask for your understanding and cooperation.

Friends

MeySen Academy Newsletter フレンズ

No. 190
SPRING
2020

ENGLISH EDITION

A Day of Celebration in the New Hall

Thanks to your support, Friends' Square is finally finished. Graduation ceremonies were held in March, and the new hall was filled with the smiles of the students and their families.



From the editors: The spring edition of our newsletter is issued around April 15 every year, but due to the changes and restrictions for the prevention of the spread of the coronavirus, we revised some of the content, thus delaying this issue. We apologize for the delay.

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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.

"All In This Together"

Let's Overcome This Crisis Together

We are at the beginning of another school year, when usually MeySen Academy would be buzzing with various spring events, but due to the restrictions because of COVID19 we have canceled most of these activities. However, a time will come when the spread of infections comes to a stop. For now, let us think of ways to take care of ourselves and prevent the spread of the virus as we work on exercising and studying as much as possible. There certainly are things that, despite our efforts, are beyond our control. Worry will not lead to any solutions. The important thing is to trust God in whatever situation we find ourselves in, to not get anxious, do what we can, and focus on the things needed most. Let us value this time as we live every day.

Dear parents, not only MeySen, but the whole of Japan and the world is facing an unprecedented crisis. For the students, even this time is precious and should not be wasted, so even though the risk of infection remains, the principal, vice principal, and all of MeySen's faculty and staff are working daily towards finding ways to provide educational activities as best as we can in this changing environment.

We would like to ask for the cooperation of all of the parents with additional changes to the classes and childcare. Please make sure to check the announcements regularly as we continue to update you.

We are considering the best ways to support the children's physical and emotional wellbeing while at the same time weighing the risk of infection, and seeking God's wisdom as we unify our hearts in this effort. We ask for your continued understanding and cooperation.



John Broman
Chairman of MeySen Academy
Board of Regents

Start of Online Classes



In order to prevent the further spread of the coronavirus, all classes from Kindergarten through High School have been canceled. In order to provide the students with some live voices from the teachers and the campus, as well as providing some exposure to English, MeySen has started online classes from April using pre-recorded videos.

For some of the teachers, it was their first time to film and edit videos, but everyone has quickly adapted and the teachers are working hard in their creation with the hope that these will bring a smile to the students' faces. We hope you enjoy them.



New Faculty Greetings



Mr. Jonathan
English Department
Vice Principal

Hello! This April marks my 17th year working at MeySen as an English teacher and Premier School Program Director. This year, I have been appointed as the vice principal of the English department. I will do my best to make 2020 a year full of opportunities and new experiences for the students, for their English study as well as their character development. Please say "hi" if you see me on campus.



Ms. Tasha
Takamori Premier School
Program Director

I started my career in education fourteen years ago, and I became an English teacher at MeySen Academy four years ago. Last year, I worked as a trainer, adding new skills to my career. This year, I have been appointed as the program director of Takamori Premier School to lead further development of education, and I hope to enjoy this time with the students and parents.

I am returning to Takamori since I left 9 years ago, and I hope to make this a safe and fun place for all of our students to come. In 2020, we have seen the spread of the coronavirus worldwide, and the Olympic games that were to be held in Tokyo this year have been postponed for the first time in history, making the year's beginning a little disappointing. But I hope to make this a year full of fun memories for everyone with all of your friends and teachers at MeySen.



Mr. Philip
Takamori English Department
Program Director

Welcoming MeySen's own PE Teacher

MeySen has developed an original PE curriculum in order for the children to properly develop in walking, running, and jumping in their early years—the foundation of their future physical ability. Until now, MeySen has enjoyed the cooperation of Kawaii Athletics Classes, but to take the program even further, MeySen is welcoming its very own MeySen PE teachers, one for each campus.

Mr. Sho Suzuki will mainly be at the Maruyama campus, and Ms. Mizue Yoshida at the Takamori campus, instructing and providing the children with effective physical activities in line with MeySen's program goals. This includes the Challenge Courses, the daily 10-minute PE curriculum, and the extracurricular PE classes. So be looking forward to those!



Mr. Sho Suzuki

To the students:

Hello everyone! I am your new PE teacher, Mr. Sho! Let's try our hardest with a big smile and lots of energy!

To the parents:

My name is Sho Suzuki, and I will be responsible for PE in 2020. I will encourage the students to first move with their hearts so they can move their bodies, supporting them so they grow healthy and strong.



My name is Mizue Yoshida, and I joined MeySen as a PE teacher in February of this year. Previously I worked as an instructor at a sports club, teaching infants to adults. I hope to utilize this experience to instruct all of the children in a way that they can enjoy PE. I will do my best so that MeySen Kindergarten will also have a good reputation for its PE program.



Ms. Mizue Yoshida



Baby Animals

In March and April, the goats and sheep on campus had babies! They are growing healthy under the care of their mothers.



lambs



kids

Students' Future is Community's Future

On January 24, MeySen invited local companies to our annual community get-together. These companies support MeySen's study abroad programs, or provide equipment and resources for educational activities and environmental maintenance.

This event has been held annually since 2015, making this the fifth year. Supporters were each presented with a plaque of gratitude, and listened to a presentation from Haruka Iwatsuki (Colleen, Takamori 40th Graduating Class) who recently returned after completing her long-term study abroad program in America. It was also an opportunity for the guests to get to know each other, meeting people from areas of business different than their own.

Our students' future is our community's future. Together with everyone in our community, we will continue to develop a "MeySen community" that is full of hope and vitality.



5th Annual Community Get-together



MeySen Heart & Hands 2019 Volunteering Activities Report Event Held



On February 27, MeySen invited those who had volunteered in either more than five events or for more than ten hours since April 2019 to January 2020, to a report event on MeySen's volunteer work.

A total of 780 people from both campuses participated in volunteer work in 2019, for a total of 2100 hours of volunteer work. Again, thank you to all of the parents for working at events and helping with preparation for Kindergarten, Premier School, and Friends Club.

With the start of another new year, we ask for your continued support in the students' education and life at MeySen.



Maruyama's New Hall Friends Square Completed

Since the decision to rebuild the hall at Maruyama campus in 2018, Friends Newsletter has been bringing you news and updates on everything from its design concept to the progress of the construction. The hall was finally completed in February, and in March, despite the fear of the spread of the coronavirus, graduation ceremonies for Maruyama K5, Premier School K5, Friends Club, and High School were all held at the new hall. We want to thank all of the parents for your support, and also all of the companies and individuals that have generously donated towards this project.

With its greatly expanded capacity, upgraded safety levels, and vastly improved sound and lighting effects, MeySen hopes to better support the students' growth and development along with their parents and the local community.



hall



lounge

