



Nozomi Sato (Brett)
Takamori 33rd Graduating Class

Message from an Alumnus

Two years ago when I was accepted into the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and I was considering further studies in early childhood education, I was given the opportunity to visit MeySen. I observed a typical day at MeySen. The students practiced for sports day and the Christmas performance, grabbed me by the hand and pulled me to go down the jumbo slide and climb on tree stumps, and even coerced me into joining them during their class time as well. I saw both the English and Japanese teachers put a lot of effort into helping the children adopt good patterns of behavior in a way that was very natural. For example, the students, on their own without a teacher telling them to, lined up with a rhythmic chant of “ton ton pi,” helped each other whenever one of them was struggling, and stayed inside the white boundary line marking their

challenges faced by schools. Now, I hope to one day contribute to the realization of a society where each child can experience the joy of learning and can grow by continuing to learn, even after they have finished school and in the years that follow. I would like to apply what I felt and thought through my recent visit to MeySen Kindergarten in my daily work so that I can make use of it in the future.

I entered MEXT last April, and my current work involves preserving cultural assets in the Cultural Properties Division of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. As of last December, I am also working with the Cabinet Secretariat's Future of Education Creation Council. What led me to my current job was my study of philosophy at graduate school, where I learned the depth and joy of learning, and it gave me a desire to see things that are important and yet not visible to the eye, like the concepts of philosophy, brought to reality in the social system. Through my educational training, I also saw the appeal of the role of a teacher and the



On the day of the entrance ceremony. At the time there was an Old English Sheepdog named Candy at Takamori.

New Building Construction Begins at Maruyama Campus

It has been two years since the completion of the Friends Square at the Maruyama campus, and in 2022, MeySen began phase 2 of its construction plan. The initial plan was to build the new structure as part of the Friends Square, but the plans were adjusted for construction of a separate facility in order to improve stability against earthquakes. Work is already underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2023.

In recent years the number of students using MeySen's Daycare program has increased at both campuses, and MeySen has made effort to both strengthen the faculty and create more space for students. This has been difficult, especially at Maruyama, where of the five classrooms being used for Daycare in the Autumn Building, three have to be free by 5:00PM for use by Friends Club EX classes.

With the completion of this new building, the child care environment at Maruyama Daycare is expected to improve greatly. The new building will have six classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and a Daycare faculty office, and students will be able to move between rooms on rainy days without getting wet. The faculty, admin, and child care teachers offices are all within easy reach of each other, making communication between departments much more efficient. In addition to Daycare, a variety of other uses are being planned for the building. Construction for Maruyama's new building is finally underway!

A big home
where young children can come
and feel as safe as they would at
their own — it is a concept that
we hold dear in all of MeySen's
design and construction.



Bible verse

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

聖書

MeySen Maruyama Kindergarten has started its 56th year. MeySen Takamori Kindergarten opened eleven years after, making this its 45th year.

Looking back at the history of MeySen Academy, it may seem like it was smooth sailing at times. However, each phase has had its challenges and hardships. During my own time as principal, we experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake eleven years ago, and the Covid crisis for the last two years. Each year has had its own challenges, some of which made us very concerned.

I am sure that you have had to fight some anxious and fearful moments during the pandemic in the last two years. Each of us faces struggles and sadness, worries and anxiety. We face moments where we do not know who to turn to, or where to ask for help.

There is one thing I would very much like you to know, especially in this difficult time. That is this, no matter what situation you are facing, it is possible to have peace in your heart—even in the midst of a storm. The Bible gives us the answer.

Peace and Hope in Our Hearts



Greetings at the Start of the New School Year

Principal Daniel Fanger

The Bible is our Guide and Source of Comfort

Since its founding over half a century ago, the foundation, guideline, and heart of MeySen Academy has been the Bible. The Bible is our standard for teaching our students right and wrong, and when faced with difficult decisions, we have prayed to God in heaven and sought answers in the Bible, the word of God.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
(Psalm 119:105)

The words of the Bible are also our source of comfort and peace in our hearts in times of trouble and hardship. This is based on placing our absolute and complete trust in God. The true, living God who is the creator of all things knows our past, present, and future all the way into eternity, and is moving all things in his perfect plan. Even those events that make us ask, “Why,” do not happen without God's knowledge and permission. Political situations, the rise and fall of nations and peoples, are all under God's control.

trust Him 100%, we can have peace in our hearts and hope in any situation. There is a verse that I often think about when faced with difficulties or hardships.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7)

We tend to fall into fear and anxiety very easily, but there are always things we can thank God for regardless of the circumstance we are facing. While we offer him our thanks we can also tell him our requests and desires. God allows challenges to come at us for his purposes. They may turn our hearts toward him, and they may keep us humble. Even when we don't understand why, we can yield it all to him with thanksgiving, and we will experience that peace that, “surpasses all understanding.”



Happiness for the Children, Hope for the Future

I always tell the students that when we become children of God, we receive heaven and eternal life, and even when our life on this earth comes to an end, we will be given a new body and enter God's kingdom, heaven. In that place there is no sin or strife, no sickness or hardship, no death, but we receive life and joy forever.

Our life on this earth is about 100 years at the most, and we do not know when it will end. It is shorter than the blink of an eye in comparison to heaven. When we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life, it makes the worries and struggles we experience on this earth seem small.

Aspirations for the New Year

For young children, the experience of each day has a tremendous impact on their life. It wouldn't be exaggerating to say that one month in a young child's life is the equivalent of one year as an adult. Although the effects of Covid are expected to continue, we will make every effort to prevent the spread of infection at MeySen and provide the students with a normal education experience and as many events as possible in the new school year.

Children are precious lives given by God, more precious than anything else in the world. In order to live up to the expectations of those who trust MeySen Academy and that have entrusted us with their most valuable treasures, all of our teachers and staff will continue to love each and every child with all our hearts and strive to provide the best education possible this school year. I would like to thank you all for your understanding and cooperation, and ask for your continued understanding and support.



Friends

MeySen Academy Newsletter フレンズ

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ENGLISH EDITION

While waiting for the arrival of spring, many new friends came to visit MeySen for the “A Day at Kindergarten” event in March.

Welcome to MeySen, everyone!

Let's play together and have lots of fun!

Nice to meet ewe!



Cover: At the beginning of March, students who were preparing to enter kindergarten came to the campuses with their mothers and fathers for the Day at Kindergarten practice day. By the time this newsletter is published, they will already be coming to kindergarten with their name badges on their chest and their bags on their shoulders. All of our teachers will do their best to help you have a fun and enjoyable school life!

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Friends is the MeySen Academy newsletter and publishes the latest news on everything that is happening at MeySen Academy, from Kangaroo Club to High School and MeySen Alumni. You can read it on our website too.



A Word from our New Head Teachers



Maruyama

Megumi Sato
Daycare Department
Head Teacher

I hope that I can help the children feel happy and at ease while they are waiting for their parents to pick them up. I will do my best to always keep a smile on my face.



Takamori

Mizue Haga
Daycare Department
Head Teacher

My daughter had a wonderful experience during her three years in Daycare. Now I am the one who can support the children and their parents, and with the support of my fellow teachers I hope to create a fun Daycare environment.



Takamori

Patricia Bermudez
Premier School Head
Teacher

My name is Patricia, and I have worked as a K5 teacher at Maruyama Premier Kindergarten for nine years. This year, I have been made the head teacher of Takamori Premier School, and I hope to use my experience to actively engage in building meaningful relationships with the students and their families.



どうして
英語の名前は
つけるの？
Why assign
an English name?

From MeySen

Students are given their English name at the time of entry into MeySen, and are still called by that same name years later by their former classmates and teachers when they visit MeySen as an adult. Many alumni enjoy their English name as their second name for life.

In order to avoid teaching incorrect pronunciation, Japanese teachers do not call students by their English name. Only the English teachers call students by their English names.

We hope that each student feels proud of their English name, both as a reward and a badge of honor for choosing the hard and fruitful path of becoming bilingual.

often are not able to pronounce correctly. 3. When a Japanese name is inserted into an English sentence, the English rhythm gets lost. Children enjoy having more names, and they even feel proud of it. It also helps to naturally cultivate an international way of thinking.

When you go on the America Study Trip, the local staff will be able to remember your English name right away, and it will also make getting to know new friends much easier. You will be using your English name for a long time during your time at MeySen, so enjoy it.

(*1) The principal at the time of this interview was Philip Broman, who now serves as Honorary Chairman of the Board. Pictured on the front page is the very popular MeySen mascot Cookie, an Old English Sheepdog who lived on campus.

(*2) MeySen is currently updating its name list, removing names that are too old and including names that are currently popular in America as baby names such as "Charlotte" and "Levi."



Congratulations!

Friends Club 3rd Grader Wins Again! Ota Nakazawa wins first prize at the National Abacus Competition for "2nd Grade and Under" division.

At the end of last year, Maruyama Friends Club Third Grade student Ota Nakazawa (Jay) entered the National Abacus Competition, where he placed first in all of Japan in the individual all-around and mental arithmetic proficiency categories in the "2nd Grade and Under" division.

In the Friends Newsletter Summer 2020 edition, we featured his amazing achievement of being the youngest person ever to pass Level 10 of the Mental Arithmetic Exam, and this is yet another remarkable accomplishment.

In this year's competition there was also a division for English Oral Calculation*, in which Ota took fourth place. "He was able to understand words such as billion and million that he had never heard before,

and he completed the calculations on the abacus without having to mentally translate words into Japanese. I am so impressed with his grasp of English," his mother commented.

It is such an encouragement to our English teaching staff to hear examples of how the English that students have acquired through fun and learning since kindergarten is affecting areas of study not necessarily related to English in such a positive way. We look forward to seeing what else Ota will do.

*English Oral Calculation: Contestants listen to numbers read out loud by a native English speaker and then perform the calculation on their abacus. This requires an understanding of English vocabulary for units such as "hundred" and "million." For those who are interested there are videos featuring these kind of competitions on YouTube.

Four Premier School Students Awarded at Programming Competition



From the left: Miss Nozaki, Miss Nakamura, Mr. Saito, and Mr. Kagawa. Students are currently in G3.

Last November, four students from Takamori Premier G2 won the top award at the Miyagi Prefectural Programming Competition for Elementary Students, and went on to compete in the national competition in 2021.

Out of the 388 groups competing in the prefectural competition, only 37 were allowed to go on to the nationals. Mio Nakamura (Denise), who was the youngest contestant, Sorato Kagawa (Dale), Suzuka Nozaki (Carol), and Kazutoyo Saito (Daniel)

spent two months creating and programming "AI Robot Bakery" and presented it online. Their entry received high scores for both the idea and the presentation quality, and was awarded the Everyone's Future Award.

You can view information about the national competition here (Japanese only).

<https://zsik.jp/news/2609/>

Maruyama Premier Student Wins at English Competition

Maruyama Premier G3 student Yuma Nakamura (Tom) took the "grand prize" (which in this competition was the second highest prize), at the 32nd Kid's English Competition (a national competition). This competition is held annually with the purpose of giving children who are learning

English an opportunity to show the results of their hard work and to encourage their further motivation for study.

Mr. Nakamura entered the English Recitation category for younger grades, reciting a two-minute piece called "Gloria," and passed the first stage. At the national competition held on March 20 in Kyoto, he presented his piece as one of 100 children who had been selected. Being graded on the criteria of pronunciation, intonation, and expression, Yuma demonstrated the English ability he acquired at Premier School. Congratulations!

From Ms. Katie, Maruyama Premier Head Teacher

We are so proud of you!



Premier K4, K5 Japanese Curriculum

Every day at Premier School Kindergarten, students have a 40-minute Japanese activity time where they experience a variety of activities related to Japanese culture, such as singing seasonal folk songs, learning about traditional events, or reading haiku poetry.

As well as utilizing MeySen's original picture books to study vocabulary, K4 students learn Japanese proverbs such as, "A journey of a thou-

sand miles begins with a single step," and "Fortune comes in by a merry gate." K5 children play Prefecture Cards, and learn geography and characteristics of the different regions in Japan. In class, they have fun making (and eating) traditional Japanese foods like plum syrup, zunda (sweetened mashed green soybeans), and dried persimmons.



Firewood Purchase Supports Employment Assistance

The common area with the fireplace is a popular space for students seeking warmth during the cold winter season. The wood used for the fireplace is purchased from Eco-farm Motosawa, a community welfare corporation known as a Type A business, which provides employment support in Yamagata City.

In March, teachers from the Grounds and Facilities department drove a large truck to the facility to pick up more firewood. The firewood is in fairly large-sized logs that have been well dried, which are used in the many fireplaces throughout both campuses. A large number of the facility

staff helped the teachers load the firewood on the day of the pick up.

A "continuous employment support business" such as this is a place where people with disabilities or chronic illnesses can receive job assistance and support. We wanted to support this work by purchasing wood from them, and plan to continue to do so.



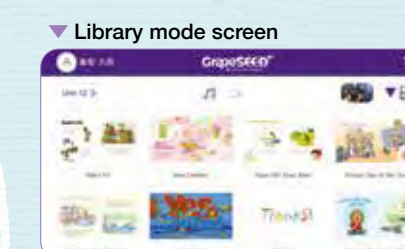
Firewood for Sale
Eco-farm Motosawa

<https://www.y-aisenkai.com/info/maki>



REP study via GrapeSEED App

From this year, GrapeSEED curriculum's REP study can only be done by using the GrapeSEED App. With the app, you can follow along with the text while listening to the audio, just like with the CD. Please make the most of this app to review and practice what you learn with your teacher.



Library mode

- 1 Start the app
- 2 Click on the book icon in the top right corner
- 3 A list of contents will be displayed
- 4 Tap on the audio you would like to listen to
- 5 Follow along in the text while you listen to the audio

*you can also select the option of not showing the screen so your child is not distracted looking at it

Online play

The audio on the GrapeSEED app can be listened to offline as well. (Note-this feature does not work with computers.)

- 1 When connected to Wi-Fi, download the content to the app
- 2 You can then play the audio offline, when you are in your car or outdoors

*each unit's content ranges from 30MB-250MB in size



Parents, you can check your child's REP study history at this website.
<https://parents.grapeseed.com>

Spring is here!

The 2022 school year has started with new students entering Kindergarten. This year is sure to have fun times as well as moments we will need to press through, but, "Every day is a new day!"* Let's enjoy each day with our friends and teachers, laughing and cheering each other on.

*Quote by Nobel Prize-winning author Earnest Hemingway.

