

Message from an Alumna

Sion Saito (Ariel)
Maruyama Premier School G11

In the summer of my first year of high school, I had the great adventure of going to Tanzania all by myself. I was nervous about flying alone to a place where I could not even connect to pocket Wi-Fi, but the English skills I have developed at MeySen helped me get there safely.

In Tanzania, I helped as a medical volunteer, distributing medicine in impoverished areas and providing medical assistance at a local hospital. I also observed a cesarean section and studied about malaria and other diseases. I was the only Japanese person there, but I had no trouble at all with communicating in English and had a great time. Every day was full of surprises, but what shocked me the most was that the local children drank contaminated brown water, which had been used for washing hands. Rather than just handing out medicine, I thought it was more urgent to change their concept of hygiene in the first place. With this in mind, I asked my fellow volunteers to help me educate the Maasai children on sanitation. After returning to Japan, I gave a speech about this experience at the 44th English Speech Contest for high school students and received the Foreign Minister's Prize, which is equivalent to first place in Japan.

You may have thought that I am a proactive person by nature after hearing what I have said so far. In fact, the opposite is true. The reason I started participating in speech contests in the first place was that my mother, who was worried about my introverted personality, signed me up for one to get me used to public speaking. I hated it when I was in elementary school, but as I continued to practice every day, I gradually became able to speak with more and more confidence. After I started competing in the



Teaching hand washing to Maasai children



Along with English, I also won a prize in calligraphy, another long-time passion of mine. The 72nd National Open Kawabiraki Calligraphy Exhibition for Elementary, Junior High and High School Students Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award (1st Prize)



(Left) Measuring blood pressure as a medical volunteer (Right) With my supervising doctor



Fellow volunteers from the hospital

speech contests, I practiced a lot with the help of MeySen's teachers, who corrected my manuscripts and taught me pronunciation and diction. Who would have thought that I, who had a poor command of English and was not very good at speaking up, would win the national championship in the English speech contest? The accumulation of your daily efforts will surely become a great power. Believing this, I will continue to do my best in my future endeavors.

Finally, everywhere I went, I was praised for the English I learned at MeySen, whether in Tanzania, the United States, or Canada, where I went for an exchange program. Thanks to my English skills, I made many friends from non-native English-speaking countries such as Tanzania, Mexico, France, Italy, and Colombia, all of whom I am still in contact with. Thanks to MeySen, my world has truly expanded, and I cannot thank you enough.

Bible verse

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

And, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:9-11,13

聖書

Biblical Teachings to Protect Our Hearts and Minds

3 Every Person Is Worthy

In this series, we are discussing the teachings of the Bible that protect our hearts. For this issue, we will confirm from the Bible the true value of us as human beings. When we are not sure of our purpose in life and of our worth, we lose the power to live and become discouraged by difficulties.

Daniel Fanger, Principal



God's masterpiece

Many people may have doubts about the meaning of their lives and the purpose of their lives. Others may doubt their own worth. The Bible says that the God of heaven created the universe and all plants and animals, and then finally created human beings in His likeness. Humankind is the greatest masterpiece of God's creation. We were created to communicate with God, to praise and worship God, and we were given the role of governing and overseeing the flora and fauna of the earth.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
-Genesis 1:26-27-

The preciousness of life

God created us as male or female and He assigned men and women different but equally valuable roles. There is blessing and happiness when two people love each other and are united through marriage, and experience the birth of their child. Marriage between a man and a woman is also a model for the relationship between God and those who love Him, according to the Bible.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
-Psalm 139:13, 16-

This verse tells us how God creates us. It tells us that a new life begins at conception, that each person is precisely designed by God and given special and unique gifts that are specific to that child, and that God knows a person's life even before their birth.

Human disobedience and God's love

Unfortunately, our first ancestors, who were created to be wonderful, rebelled against God and sinned, and sin entered the entire human race, cursing this once peaceful and joyful world. All of us are born with sin and are at enmity with God. Unless we repent of our sins and make peace with God, we cannot please Him and we cannot experience true happiness.

God sent His only begotten Son into the world to rescue us from our miserable condition. God's Son was born as a human baby to the virgin Mary, grew to adulthood, taught people, performed many miracles, was betrayed, and then crucified on the cross, where He died for our sins. The sinless Son of God, became human, bore all of our sins, and paid the price for them as our substitute.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
-John 3:16-17-

Those who confess their sins to God, repent, and accept the salvation of the cross of Jesus are considered forgiven and are given eternal life. What a wonderful love God has for us!

Human standards and God's standards

As you may have experienced, people often compare themselves with others and have a sense of superiority or inferiority. However, before God, all humans are equally valuable. God's standard of evaluation is completely different from our human standards. Even if we are praised and highly valued in human terms, it is meaningless to God. God looks at the heart rather than the outward appearance of a person and is pleased with a humble and meek heart.

In Jesus' time, a Bible scholar asked Jesus what the most important of God's commandments was. Jesus answered and said that the most important of God's commandments is to love God with your entire being.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
-Matthew 22:37-40-

Jesus said that if we keep these two edicts, loving God with all our heart and loving those around us as ourselves, we will keep all of God's commandments. To "love God with all your heart" begins with recognizing your own sinfulness and understanding how much God has loved you. The more we love God, the more we will be able to love others.

Please recognize that you are a wonderful and precious life created in God's image, acknowledge your sins against God, repent, and rely on God's love and salvation. Do not be self-deprecating or boastful, but rely on God's love and mercy, and walk the path of life with peace and joy in your hearts, confident that you will eventually enter heaven.

MeySen Through British Eyes

It is always a pleasure to return a favor. Since 2002, MeySen has taken small groups of high school students on the MeySen Europe Trip, visiting England, France, and Germany. The backbone of the trip is the network of families in Woking, England and Weinstadt, Germany, who volunteer to host our students.

The Isenmans in Guildford are one such family. In 2022, a MeySen student stayed in their home while attending the local St. Peter's Catholic School.

Although the British and German families enjoy the experience of looking after a Japanese student and learning a little about Japan's culture, MeySen is unable to offer a reciprocal program. Occasionally however, things line up.

Harry Isenman—host brother to one of our students—is now 18, and almost ready for university. In addition to his studies, he is a participant in the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) program.

DoE began in 1956 as an alternative to the established Boy Scouts organization. DoE demands that participants excel in: Volunteering, Physical Activity, Skill Development, Expedition, and, for the Gold Award, Residential Programs of their own making.

For Harry's Residential Gold Award, he asked if he could stay with a MeySen family, and volunteer at our school for a week. Travelling across the globe alone and staying with a foreign family was deemed to be a challenge suitable for a Gold Award.

Sid Kensuke Endo of Takamori Premier High School immediately responded to our request for a home, and his family helped draw up a program for the week. During the day, Harry helped at the Premier School Kindergarten for both campuses, as well as at the Maruyama Kindergarten. While he was only here for a week, he was a great help to MeySen, and also was able to experience a lot of Japanese culture thanks to the Endo family.



Study Abroad Program Director Peter Harrison

From Woking to Working

Message from Harry

In this article I will be talking about my experience at MeySen and with the Endo family, with whom I stayed. I arrived in Sendai on Sunday, October 26th and my first experience with them was eating at an *Okonomiyaki* restaurant with not only the Endo family, but also with the son's friends. The food was amazing, and everyone was so nice to me. I went out to eat most nights but also had amazing meals at the Endo house. My experience at MeySen was something that I will never forget. The staff and students were wonderful, and I loved being welcomed with open arms. I enjoyed taking part in two "Spider Day" events and being part of the bonfire and sweet potato roast. It was an experience which I will never forget and will cherish these memories forever.

Harry Isenman



We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for the effort, care, and generosity you showed Harry during his incredible residential experience in Japan.

This opportunity was an essential part of his Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and it was nothing short of transformative. From the outset, it was clear how much thought you had put into ensuring that this experience would not only meet the award's criteria but would also give Harry an amazing opportunity to explore and understand Japanese culture and traditions. Your kindness made this experience truly unforgettable for him.

Harry has returned home brimming with stories of the people he met, the skills he developed, and the adventures he had. The chance to immerse himself in such a vibrant and unique environment has left a lasting impression on him, broadening his horizons and giving him memories that will stay with him for a lifetime. **Harry's mother, Naomi Isenman**

Alumni Supporting Events

The "Leaders In Training" internship program began in April 2023. Over the past two years, a total of 60 junior and senior high school students have volunteered to support the school's events. Some of our alumni who have volunteered at MeySen in the past, are now university students and continue to come to our school's events, as LIT Trainers, helping teach and guide the younger LITs, as they work together in preparation for and support during MeySen's events and trips.

We sincerely hope that our LIT members will someday become trainers, to support the next generation of LITs after they graduate from MeySen, passing on the baton of leadership to the next generation.



Two alumni volunteers (left) with two LIT members (right) helping at a Friends Club Christmas Party



The LIT members of 2024

Friends フレンズ
「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。

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.

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Friends フレンズ

Winter 2025

「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。

MeySen Newsletter
No. 209



MeySen

A NEW YEAR TO SHINE & GROW!

This title, "A New Year to Shine & Grow," means that now is a good time to further hone what you are good at, to try something new for the first time, or to aim to improve in an area that you may struggle in. Let's spend our time this year in a way that we can look back on 2025 this time next year and say, "It was a great year!" May you all make the most of this new year!



Kangaroo Club One-Year-Old Class will soon Complete its Graduation Ceremony

You have worked very hard this year!



The Kangaroo Club one-year-old class started in May last year. Some of the children started the year with tears in their eyes, but as each class went by, they really began to bloom! They learned to greet and talk to their teachers and classmates, took on a variety of new challenges, and can now complete all class activities with confidence. The Kangaroo Club teachers and the rest of the MeySen staff are looking forward to welcoming the new 1- and 2-year-olds in April. Thank you for all your hard work over the past year, and we look forward to welcoming the new Kangaroo Club students soon!



- There are so many fun activities!**
(Excerpts from the 2024 curriculum)
- ★ Playtime in English with a native English-speaking teacher (3 times a year)
 - ★ Parent-child gymnastics with PE teachers (twice a year)
 - ★ Kindergarten campus tour
 - ★ School bus rides
 - ★ Tanabata craft
 - ★ Water play
 - ★ Sports Day
 - ★ Animal experience
 - ★ Enjoying picture books
 - ★ Christmas craft
 - ★ Playing musical instruments
 - ★ Hinamatsuri craft (Doll's Festival)

Let's Play at the Kindergarten Event

Last November, we welcomed the pre-kindergarten children and their parents to our "Let's Play at the Kindergarten" event, which was held at the Takamori campus. For the first time, we held the event in the Toddler House, which has 2- and 3-year-old classes, to give these future MeySen parents and children a chance to imagine kindergarten life together, and to spend some time both in the classroom and outside on the playground. The Toddler House area has a variety of playground equipment as well as a sandbox. The 2- and 3-year-old students who went outside to play with their homeroom teachers during playtime were quite curious about these cute little visitors, and even shared their toys with them! One of the parents who participated in the event commented, "I was so happy to see so many kindergarten students showing interest in my child and me, by talking with us. It was such a heartwarming experience." We will announce the 2025 event date on MeySen's LINE account and other media when the date gets close, so please invite your friends and family to join us. We look forward to seeing you there!

Preschool Child Event
Scan for more information.



What kind of work do the teachers do? Part 7

Work at MeySen—Introducing MeySen's General Affairs Department

MeySen receives many visitors throughout the year, including families looking for a kindergarten and school administrators from Japan and overseas who come to observe the English education at Friends Club and Premier School. Risa Kubo, a staff member in the General Affairs Department, is responsible for meeting families who are considering enrolling their children in the school and explaining MeySen's educational policies and childcare to them. She answers questions while giving a tour of the school's buildings and grounds, which gives her the opportunity to provide parents with detailed information about the school.



Ms. Risa Kubo, General Affairs Department

MeySen Kindergarten accepts applications for admission all year round.

Please come see for yourself, how the teachers and students spend their time at MeySen. The school's grounds, which change with the seasons, and the animals, with whom you can interact with every day, are also major features of the kindergarten. We look forward to seeing you at MeySen.

Scan to make a reservation for a tour.



Lively Kindergarten Birthday Parties

In November, birthday parties at both campuses' kindergartens were celebrated with the beautiful sound of handbells. The performers are members of the handbell club of Seiko Gakuin High School (Date City, Fukushima Prefecture). Eleven musicians, ranging from a student who waved a large bell, larger than we had never seen before, to another student who held four high-pitched bells in both hands and rang them simultaneously, lined up side-by-side and played five songs including a "Christmas Carol Medley," "My Neighbor Totoro," and even our very own "MeySen Kindergarten Song," with wonderful bell tones. The children all enjoyed themselves, singing along with the bells. In addition to the handbell club, many other performers were invited to this year's birthday parties. In October, a magician who goes by the name "Mr. Hamster," entertained the children with a magic show at Maruyama. At Takamori, the mascot "Nebaarukun" came and taught the children natto exercises and different ways to enjoy natto (fermented soybeans), with the hopes that everyone would become a natto lover. Even children who did not normally like natto, seemed to enjoy it, when mixed with ice cream!



Magic Show



Handbell club members



"Nebaarukun"

Tasks of Class Mothers

Every year, two parents from each class are chosen to be class mothers for the Japanese Kindergarten and the Premier School Kindergarten, to help communicate information between the school and parents and to assist with seasonal events. When multiple grades participate in an event together, it is difficult for the teachers and staff alone to handle all the preparations, so having the class mothers is extremely helpful. The class mothers' children are happy to see their own mothers supporting and enjoying the events at the kindergarten. We select class mothers every year in April, so please try it out for yourself!

We asked two class mothers about their experience:



Maruyama Thanksgiving Day

I became a class mother because I had heard from friends who were formerly class mothers that it was enjoyable, and I wanted to have the opportunity to join these events that only class mothers can. It's so much fun helping with the events, and I am filled with joy when the children thank me at the end of each activity. During the events, I was also able to see children in a different way than usual, something you can only see in a kindergarten environment.

At the Thanksgiving Day event, we cooked curry in a large pot, using the vegetables that the children had rinsed in advance. When the children came to observe us as we cooked, it was so cute hearing their kind words, encouraging us to "Please make yummy curry." "When we served the curry, the children exclaimed, "This is delicious!" I was filled with happiness as I served them. Even my own child, who usually does not ask for seconds, had another helping of curry.

I am glad that I was able to participate in the Thanksgiving Day event, where I saw so many smiling faces, thanks to the hard work of so many people. Thank you very much.

Ms. Mieko Horibe, class mother of Maruyama Ume class



Takamori Thanksgiving Day

While the class mother activities are hard work, they are so much fun and provide an opportunity to see the children's joy, smiles, and growth up close. At MeySen Day, I worked behind the scenes to inflate balloons the day before and on the day of the event, I worked alongside the kindergarten staff, with the same feeling as the teachers, to make MeySen Day a success for the children! Thanksgiving Day was also a lot of fun, rinsing and cutting vegetables while chatting amicably with the other mothers. In particular, for this event we worked with mothers from all grades, and we were able to exchange a lot of information, such as hearing how things are going at Premier School from the Premier School class mothers, with whom we had no previous contact. We heard from the older grade's mothers about what to expect next year, and conversely, I was able to tell the younger grade's class mothers what they could expect in the future. We have become friends with each other over the school year, and now we can exchange greetings when we see each other at the Open House days. Some of you may be reluctant to volunteer to be a class mother, worried about whether or not you can do it, but I encourage you to try!

Ms. Rie Matono, Class Mother of Takamori Tsubaki class

MeySen Students Did Their Best!

H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy
76th All Japan Inter-Middle School
English Oratorical Contest
4th Prize
Sylvia, Maruyama HS 8th Grade

English Recitation Contest
at Miyagi Gakuin
Junior & Senior High School
Winner
Ai Miyazawa (Patricia), Takamori Premier G5

German Embassy Tokyo - The 17th Painting Contest 2024

"My Germany"

"Die deutsche Musikern ermutigen mich immer!"
(German musicians always inspire me!)
2nd Prize
Elementary School Bracket
Hirotto Ota (Judah),
Maruyama FC 2nd Grade

"The cheerful music band"
3rd Prize
Elementary School Bracket
Akifumi Takahashi (Andy),
Maruyama Premier G4

You can see other award-winning works on the German Embassy Tokyo website.
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