

## My experience at MeySen was a great help

~To all my juniors who are working hard at learning English~

**Hinano Sato** (Kim) Maruyama Friends Club, 41th Graduating Class

Hello, I'm Hinano Sato and I'm a pianist. I started playing piano at age 3, and now I'm studying music in graduate school while organizing and performing in concerts and teaching younger students. I've been familiar with English since childhood, and the foundation of that is thanks to MeySen.

My time at MeySen was always enjoyable. The teachers were kind and warmly supported not only my English learning but also my musical activities. In junior high, I gave a speech titled "Can a pianist influence the world?" at the Takamado Cup All-Japan Junior High School English Oratorical Contest. While researching hunger and educational inequality in South Sudan, I asked myself, "What can I do as a pianist?" and connected



Hinano is in the center of the photo.

Lunch time of MeySen Day



Concert with string artists



music with global issues. Thanks to the teachers who helped revise my script and practiced with me, I passed the preliminary round, which gave me great confidence.

Because I learned English at MeySen, not just as a subject but as a tool for communication, I gained the ability to express my thoughts through words and music.

In high school, I studied abroad at the Chopin University of Music in Poland. All lessons were in English, and I was able to understand the teachers' musical intentions and reflect them in my performance immediately—thanks to the English skills I developed at MeySen. I could also handle daily life abroad, like shopping and ordering food, without difficulty, allowing me to focus on music and broaden my career options.

Now, I perform solo and collaborate with classical musicians, playing a wide range of music at shopping centers and senior homes. I choose songs based on the audience — cheerful songs for children, nostalgic tunes for seniors — hoping to brighten their day through music.

The 15 years I spent at MeySen are an irreplaceable treasure and a major support for me as a musician. To those studying English now: even if you feel uncertain about the future, the "power to believe" and the "power to express" that you gain at MeySen will surely help you one day.

## Short-Term Study Abroad

in AUSTRALIA

This summer, five junior high students from Premier School spent about three weeks, and five high school students from Friends Club spent about one month studying abroad in Australia. Immersed in an English environment, they experienced the local culture and lifestyle firsthand. Here are their reflections:

**Yuri Yamamoto** (Takamori Premier School G8, Marcia)

While talking with friends in English at school, I felt joy and confidence in being able to communicate. However, when I tried to translate Japanese thoughts into English, the sentences often sounded unnatural and didn't convey my meaning.

I realized I need to improve my communication and vocabulary skills to speak naturally and effectively.



**Ms. Ruth** (Maruyama Premier Elementary & High School Program Director)



At age 15, I traveled abroad for the first time on a school trip to Europe. Seeing different cultures and lifestyles changed how I view the world and my own life. It also deepened my gratitude toward my parents and country.

As a chaperone for this Australia program, I was impressed by how the students adapted, built friendships, and broadened their perspectives. I hope more MeySen students will take the courageous step to join our overseas programs. Only by challenging yourself can you truly discover your potential.



**Suzuna Mizuno** (Maruyama High School, Grade 10, Cindy)

I learned a lot from the local lifestyle. People value time with family and friends and try to enjoy every moment. Unlike Japan, where multifunctional gadgets are common, in Australia, people use specific tools for each situation. Yet no one seemed inconvenienced. I admired their creativity in using what they had to enrich their lives.

## Bible verse

"What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet."

Psalms 8:4-6

聖書  
せいしよ

## Biblical Teachings That Protect Our Hearts and Minds

### 4 The Meaning of Our Existence

This series explores biblical teachings that protect our hearts. In this issue, we reflect on the meaning of our existence and identity from a biblical perspective.



Principal, Daniel Fanger

#### Why Do I Exist?

Have you ever wondered why you exist or what meaning your life holds?

According to the Bible, humans were created in the image of God:

"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, 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

#### Every Human Has Value

The following words from Psalms show that from the moment of conception, God knows each person deeply and sees them as valuable:

"For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 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 139:13,14,16

We all desire to be meaningful to someone, and we long to find purpose and joy in life. These desires are fulfilled more deeply when we understand our God-given value and role. The Bible teaches that humans are not just meant to live, but to be loved, to have relationships, and to fulfill their roles

through the gifts given to them. It is within a relationship with God that we discover the meaning of our existence and find true peace and joy.

#### The Fall of Man and God's Salvation

The first humans, Adam and Eve, were created without sin. They lived in joy and happiness, speaking directly with God.

However, they were tempted by the devil and disobeyed God. Through this, sin and death entered the world.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."

—Romans 5:12

As a result, the world became filled with injustice, conflict, and separation from God. Humanity lost sight of its purpose and meaning.

The Bible teaches that every person is destined to die once and then face judgment.

But God, in His love, sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. Jesus took responsibility for our sins and died on the cross in our place.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

—Romans 6:23

#### The Love of the Cross and the Path to Restoration

Satan seeks to destroy the relationship between mankind and God, leading people toward the same ruin he faces.

But God prepared a way of salvation:

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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.



# Friends フレンズ

「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。 Autumn 2025

MeySen Newsletter  
No. 212



Good Times! Big Smiles!!



MeySen

# Let's Celebrate the Colors of Fall!

In recent years, Japan's hot summers have extended longer, shortening the period during which we can enjoy the country's beautiful autumn scenery. What will it be like five or ten years from now?  
The high, clear blue skies...  
The trees changing color and shedding their leaves as they prepare for winter...  
The sudden, gentle smell of fragrant olive flowers (kinmokusei) in the air...  
Take a moment to turn your heart toward this fleeting autumn that can only be experienced for an instant.



Sweet Potato Digging



Potato Roast Bonfire



Jamboree Party



Fathers' Open House



Friends Club 4th Grade Trip

## High School Students from Partner School Visit Sendai Hosted by MeySen Families

In July, 14 high school students from Kings Schools in Seattle, which has welcomed MeySen students for school experiences since 2012, visited Sendai. They stayed with MeySen families for a 4-day, 3-night homestay. Here are reflections from two of the visiting students:

### Homestay Was the Best Experience

My trip to Japan was a trip of a lifetime and being able to do a homestay with a Japanese family was the best experience out of the whole trip. I got to experience Japanese culture for myself, and I was able to practice speaking Japanese, something I've been studying for the last 2 years. I was really excited to reconnect with Randy, one of the MeySen students that my family hosted in March. During my homestay I was also able to reconnect with Max, the second MeySen student my family hosted. My host family made me feel right at home; and went out of their way to get to know me. They took me to many different restaurants where I was able to try Japanese foods that I can't get in America. My mom and my host mom both stayed in contact and exchanged pictures throughout homestay. I was able to visit my host siblings' Junior High school and got to experience school life in Japan. I toured both MeySen campuses and experienced some of

the biggest slides I've ever seen in my life. I loved the atmosphere and the way each of the teachers taught all the students. I learned so much about being tidy and how everyone pitched in to clean their classrooms. It was really fun hanging out with MeySen students from all the different grade levels. One of the things that never fails to make me laugh was how many times I was asked how tall I am. For the record I'm 190cm and still growing. I found it very hard to buy pants long enough for me in Japan. My sister is going to take Japanese next year, and I hope that King's will do this trip to Japan again so my little sister can experience this awesome trip for herself. Thank you so much to the Suzuki family for hosting me. I had so much fun and I hope to see you guys again.

Jack Hoskinson

### Discoveries Beyond Language

My time in Sendai was incredible, and I loved every part of it. Initially, I was nervous arriving because I had never stayed with a host family before, I wouldn't have any friends with me, and my Japanese was not the best (it still isn't, haha). However, my host family—Riona, Saori, Ririka, and Manabu—were all super loving and patient. Even though my host parents didn't know a lot of English, we conversed well non-verbally and I will never forget the laughter we shared together. This universal form of love through actions really inspired

me during my time in Japan. Even if I cannot listen to their daily musings or understand their classes, I can still understand so many other aspects of a person just by sitting next to them. In the end, we are all uniquely different, but never too different to understand. This trip helped me understand the importance of intercultural exchange; I fully appreciate and respect what MeySen is doing in Japan, and I hope more people follow their example to spread different cultures to different parts of the world—whether through schools, stores, restaurants, etc.—and to facilitate international sharing. While in Sendai, I got to see a huge mall, temples, different islands, unique stores, and experience a normal school day in Japan. These specific experiences I will never get to go through anywhere else, and it opened the idea to me of how many other places I have never been that also hold these special opportunities.

Sophia Liao



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## Korean Students Join Bandai Camp Cross-Cultural Friendship Through English

In the 4th grade Friend Club's Bandai Camp, nine students from Korea who are studying English through the GrapeSEED program, participated. They engaged in activities while conversing in English with MeySen students. Here are reflections from both a Korean student and her Japanese buddy:

### Message from Ellie Kim / Unforgettable Camp Memories

Hello! I'm Ellie Kim. I go to Pangyo Elementary School, in South Korea. I would like to talk about my wonderful Bandai camp story. First, I could experience many Japanese things, such as sushi and tatami. I made happy memories sleeping in a tatami room with two kind MeySen friends, Karen (my buddy) and Melanie, and all the food was very delicious.  
Second, I had an exciting playtime with my MeySen teacher, Mr. Jazz, and the other teachers. My friends and I canoed at Onogawa Lake and I rowed the canoe together with four friends. It was my first time in a canoe. I'll also never forget roasting marshmallows and singing songs together with my friends at the campfire.

Although I only knew just one song, I could still enjoy it. In addition to camp, we participated in other activities. I had so much fun swimming at the water park, and I learned a lot of things at the science museum. But my favorite experience was canoeing.  
Finally, I want to thank the teachers for giving me this opportunity. Through this camp, I learned the spirit of endeavoring and had many special experiences. I really miss camp and want to go again next year. I hope that more GrapeSEED friends from South Korea will get the chance to go to the Bandai Camp!



Note: Ellie has been studying in the GrapeSEED program for about five years and currently attends an official online class operated by GrapeSEED Korea. Due to her enthusiastic participation and achievement of REP learning goals, she was recommended by her homeroom teacher to join the camp.



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### Message from Rei Yoshikawa (Karen), Takamori Friends Club 4th Grade

Going to Bandai Camp was a great experience. Especially doing activities with Ellie from Korea, I had more chances to speak English and felt that my English improved.  
On the first day at canoeing, it was difficult to control, and we couldn't move forward well, but we had fun and took a photo together. At night, we roasted marshmallows and sang camp songs.  
On the second day, we played at Lake Inawashiro. The

lake was so big—it surprised me! I paired up with Ellie and we borrowed a dolphin-shaped float and we took turns playing with it.  
Ellie gave me a Korean snack that tasted like Japanese pickled plums on the bus. On this trip, I became friends with her and learned more about Korea. I'm really glad I joined this camp.

## I'm Summer and I was born on July 30th!

This spring, a pony named Mittens came to the Maruyama Campus. During the summer break, she gave birth to a female foal—the first pony birth at MeySen in over ten years! By the end of August, when the photo was taken, the foal had already grown to nearly the same size as her mother, which was quite surprising. She was born large and has been growing quickly—a healthy and strong baby!



### Friends Club 6th Grade & Premier G6 Tokyo Trip

## MeySen Students Shine at the 14th Ursula Eichi English Contest

- MeySen students once again demonstrated their talents this year at the 14th Ursula Eichi English Contest. Here are the outstanding results:
- ★ Grand Prize Ursula Eichi Award (Show & Tell Division) Arisa Chiba (Allie) Maruyama FC 3rd Grade
  - ★ Recitation Division A Top Prize Kanata Sato (Jordan) Maruyama Kindergarten Nencho
  - ★ Recitation Division A Excellence Award Saho Igarashi (Karen) Maruyama Kindergarten Nencho

## Premier G9 Student Wins Prestigious Speech Awards

- Haruki Konno (Harry) Maruyama Premier G9
- ★ Sendai City Preliminary Round Top Prize Sendai City Superintendent's Award
  - ★ Miyagi Prefecture Preliminary Round Top Prize Miyagi Prefecture Superintendent's Award Yomiuri Newspaper Award
- We sincerely wish Harry the best of luck in the final qualifying tournament to be held in Tokyo on November 26-27!

## A Unique Magician Performs at the July Birthday Party Mr. "Polly Ujiié"

At the July birthday party, for the Maruyama kindergarten students, a very special guest—a former police officer—performed magic!  
Mr. Tsuyoshi Ujiié, also known as "Polly Ujiié," worked for over 40 years with the Miyagi Prefectural Police Department and taught himself magic. His nickname "Polly" comes from "Police." Even after retirement, he continues to use magic to promote traffic safety and crime prevention.  
He is also scheduled to perform at the January birthday party for the Takamori kindergarten students—something to look forward to!  
Children learn many things, including social skills, by interacting with adults outside of their families and teachers. It's truly wonderful when members of the community share their experiences and talents with the children.

We were amazed when a real dove appeared!



子どもたちから大歓声が上がっていました

## MeySen is our second home Participating in the 2nd Grade Father-Child Camp

By: Takayuki Takahashi Father of Mau (Brooke), Maruyama FC 2nd Grade

This was my second time participating in the 2nd grade father-child camp, and each time brings new discoveries and emotions. I was able to truly enjoy the experience with my daughter. Before the camp, my daughter often sang the English songs for the campfire, showing her excitement and how familiar English has become to her. Watching her made me feel deeply happy and affectionate.  
On the day of the camp, the children enthusiastically participated in water play (with more water than expected), tie-dyeing t-shirts, and an enormous campfire. The children's smiles radiated enjoyment. Thanks to the teachers and to the class mothers, who gave their all to liven up the event, the entire camp was filled with smiles and energy.  
For my daughter, this was a "special summer experience" she could enjoy safely in an international environment surrounded by her favorite teachers. I truly feel it was a happy time. I am sincerely grateful for this opportunity.  
If I were to express this feeling in one phrase, it's: "MeySen is our second home."



Mr. Takahashi and Brooke pictured on the right