

Message from an Alumna

Mei Sugawara (Wendy)
Maruyama 35th Graduating Class



In Tampa, Florida with friends at South Florida University (Wendy is on the left)



Cheering for the football team as part of the dance team in a Texas high school during her time as an exchange student

Why do you study English?

Having started English learning at a very early age at MeySen Kindergarten, I did not really understand the value of English study. I continued attending class through 2nd grade, but I found it hard to sit still as I could not understand what was being taught. In 3rd grade, thanks to my teacher Mr. Bryan, I began to understand more, and I worked hard towards the America Study Trip in 7th grade. However, on the trip I faced a heartbreaking reality. I could not communicate with native speakers in English at all. I have many fun memories from that trip, but it turned out to be a frustrating and painful experience of realizing the limits of my English ability. Why is it important to study English? It was a question I had asked myself often as an elementary school student. It came back to me now, and this trip gave me my answer: I study English so I

can communicate with many more people and express myself.

Realizing this, I studied hard, joined the study abroad program, and went to Texas for one year during high school. I joined the school dance team and performed at football games, and made many other fun memories with my new friends. One year went by quickly, but it was an opportunity for me to grow, both personally and in my English ability.

Through this experience of studying abroad, I became more interested in attending a university in America. I majored in biomedicine and wrote a research piece on, "The Inequality of Glaucoma Treatment Based on Race." It helped me learn a lot about the importance of honoring people from different backgrounds. I graduated from South Florida University in 2020, and I will transfer to a bachelor's program in medicine at a Japanese university this April to continue my research in ophthalmology. I sincerely hope that you students will continue your English study. Being able to communicate in English will open up your world.

Bible verse

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26 (ESV)

聖書



MeySen's Core Values

In this series, we introduce the values and ideas that we share and esteem among all of our staff. In this issue we address the third core value, Servanthood.

Part 3



Principal Daniel Fanger

Servanthood

Giving priority to what benefits others

Servanthood can be simply translated as service, and what that means to us is giving our best service to others without expecting a reward or something extra in return. The opposite of this would be selfishness, which is defined as valuing what benefits oneself without care or concern for others.

We are all born with selfish tendencies. We want to be first, have the best, and be at the top where others serve us. However, these selfish attitudes do not bring joy or satisfaction. Real joy and satisfaction is found when we serve others in a way that brings joy and benefit to them.

Serving the students?

Serving our students does not mean we do whatever they want. It means we pour out our affection on them and teach what will help them find happiness in their future. We walk alongside them, comfort them, encourage them, and interact with them with gentleness and a smile.

At the same time, we teach our students to obey their parents and have a teachable attitude toward their teachers. We believe this will benefit them and lead to a happy life. This is different from being overbearing or forcing our requirements on them. Jesus said the following:

And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Matthew 25:40

This includes not only children, but anyone who is in a weak position. God considers that the way we treat those who are weaker than us is the same attitude we are taking toward him. Children are also made in the image of God. They are loved by God and therefore to be valued. This is what pleases God.

Service to parents

We serve the parents the same way we serve

their children. We impartially offer our best to each one. We thank them for entrusting their children to our care. We endeavor to understand them and think of ways to bring them encouragement and joy. We discover their child's strengths and qualities, and share those discoveries with them. We do so keeping in mind our other core values, such as mercy, which is part of our motto, and compassion, our fifth core value.

Whatever we do, we do it in the way that we would want to be treated if we were in their position.

Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. Romans 15:2

Service to co-workers

Regardless of whether they hold a position above or below us, we serve our colleagues by helping them, bringing them joy, and honoring them. We come alongside them and encourage them when they are feeling down. Those in higher positions are to serve the staff under them without partiality so they feel supported and can do a good job. Those who lead must be willing to do the menial work, to share the credit when there is success, and to take responsibility for mistakes even when they are not their own. Jesus taught us how to treat those under us in the following verses.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave. Matthew 20:26b, 27

People value those with titles and talent, but God looks at the character and heart of a person, and takes joy in our humility, meekness, generosity, and kindness.

Making it our joy to serve others

Rather than trying to be the person ordering others around and being served, let us choose to be the one who serves. This can start with some-

thing small. Help the elderly or those in need, and be proactive in offering help to those who face difficulty. Comfort those who are mourning, and encourage those who are feeling down.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

Jesus himself modeled what it is to serve. On the day before his crucifixion, he took the role of a servant and washed his disciples' dirty feet. The following day, he gave up his life to save all of humanity. The Bible, speaking of Jesus, adds the following words to the verses above:

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:6-8

Serving may mean giving others our time, our physical strength, our heart, and even our money in service to them. At times we may do so and not see any reward. However, it pleases God when we serve others out of love for them. We will receive praise and reward from Him, as well as joy and blessing in this life. I hope you will also live a life of servanthood and find joy in it.



Premier School Alumnus Wins First Place at National English Speech Contest Invited to Speak to MeySen High School Students



Taito Uchigasaki (Wes, Maruyama 43rd Graduating Class), a MeySen Premier School alumnus, won the Foreign Affairs Award at the High School Student English Speech Festival (sponsored by the Japan Association For International Education). It is this festival's highest award, and it was the first time for a high school student from Miyagi to receive this award.

The speech, which summarized class discussions from Sendai Nika High School, appealed to the importance of sustainable international cooperation using the example of challenges faced in the water villages of Cambodia. The faculty and staff of MeySen Academy thought this speech would be highly inspiring for MeySen students, and on November 4 and 5, despite being in the middle of a busy season of preparation for university entrance exams, Wes was invited to give his speech to the High School and Premier High School students.

Wes, speaking on the theme of "International Cooperation and Support," explained the need for building a sustainable support system, as well as providing funding and material to those who live in poor and economically challenging environments. Using a metaphor as a reference, he stated: "It is important to not just give impoverished communities fish and fishing rods, but to teach them better methods of fishing." The students asked many questions after the speech, and it was impressive to see the way Wes answered them in both English and Japanese. All of us at MeySen Academy have high hopes for his future endeavors.

Q&A time with High School & Premier High School Students

—How do you write a good speech?

I watched many presentations by native speakers on Ted Talks and YouTube. The speech festival scoring weighs highly on content, so it is important to share your experiences in a way that is easy for the audience to understand. Different experiences from both within and outside of the classroom make for good speech material, and I also found just writing down my thoughts and impressions each day to be helpful.

—What is your plan for attending a university?

I considered applying for a university abroad, but with complications caused by the pandemic and because of the high cost of American universities, I am going to enroll in a Japanese university for a year or two, then go to America, Europe, or Singapore for further study.

—What would you like to do in the future?

I want to be an entrepreneur. Japan's population is aging and the working population is decreasing, and one solution is found in foreign workers. I want to start a school where foreign workers can hone their working skills, improve their ability to communicate with Japanese people, particularly their employers, and learn Japanese and IT skills so they can earn a better wage and have a higher quality work environment.

Cover: "Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real."

This is a quote by Jules Verne, the French writer who is known for his works such as Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas. For those of you who will be finishing your time at MeySen Academy with the High School graduation ceremony, we hope you will make the most of this winter by setting goals and letting your imagination run free about who you want to be and what you want to accomplish in the next year.

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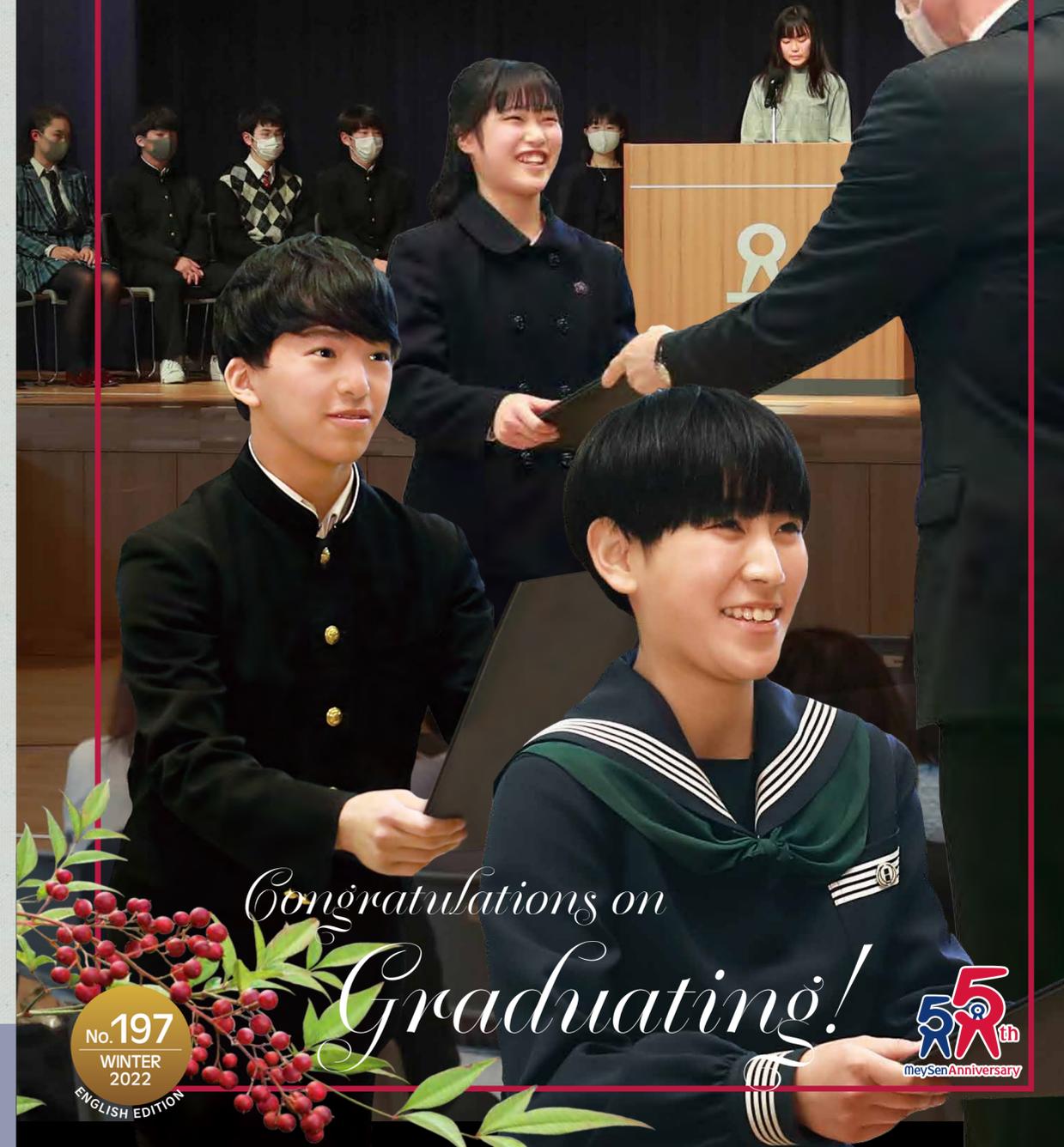
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Friends is the MeySen Academy newsletter and publishes the latest news on everything that is happening at MeySen Academy, from Kangaroo Club to High School and MeySen Alumni. You can read it on our website too.

Friends

MeySen Academy Newsletter フレンズ



Congratulations on Graduating!

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ENGLISH EDITION



2022 has started!

2022 is the Year of the Tiger. Whether it is Covid-19 or some other challenge, let's not be deterred and make 2022 a powerful, buoyant year!



Valentine's Day

Sledding

Learning in High School / Premier High School

The picture on the front cover is from the Premier High School graduation ceremony. From the time they entered junior high on through the second year of high school, Premier School students continued their high level English learning twice a week with late night classes. Now, after all those years of effort and dedication,



they are launching into their future with an expression of satisfaction on their faces.

Classes utilized National Geographic Learning and other material from abroad, with an emphasis on learning in English, acquiring communication skills, improving reading ability, as well as developing presentation skills and familiarity with English expressions. Normally, High School students go on the Europe Study Trip (11th Grade), and the Premier High School students go on the Australia Short-term Study Trip (G8 and G9), and they work hard every day in preparation for these trips. But due to factors caused by Covid-19, MeySen has not been able to host these trips for the last two years.



▲ The plant on the top and bottom of the front page is Heavenly Bamboo. It is considered lucky, since its name in Japanese, *nanten*, associates it with the saying, "Turn misfortune into opportunity" (*nan wa tenjite fuku to nasu*). We pray that all of the students who are graduating from MeySen this March will continue to press forward with confidence and overcome every obstacle.

Miss Takahashi of Maruyama Premier G7 Wins First Prize at Takasaki City English Speech Contest

Nanaka Takahashi (Jenny) of Maruyama Premier High School G7 won first prize in the junior high and high school section at the 71st Takasaki City English Speech Contest (sponsored by the Takasaki University of Economics English Research Department), held in Gunma prefecture last November.

Since last year, Nanaka has also been working as a kids reporter for Scholastic Kids Press in America, publishing written articles and video reports of the Tokyo Olympics. Her articles and videos are fun, and show off her creativity and the English ability she gained at Premier School. You can see them for yourself using the QR code below.



10 video reports by Nanaka can be found here.
Scholastic Kids Press
<https://kpcnotebook.scholastic.com/user/371>



Major news outlets such as TV Asahi, Tokyo Newspaper, and CNN have also featured her reporting.

National Junior High English Speech Contest MeySen students place 1st and 2nd at Miyagi Preliminary

Two MeySen students were selected for the H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy All Japan Inter-Middle School English Oratorical Contest. At the Miyagi preliminaries, which were held last September, Nowa Nagata (Gina) of Maruyama Premier High School G9 placed first, and Mika Inoue (Melinda) of Takamori High School 9th Grade placed second.

Normally, the top three students of the Miyagi preliminary proceed to the next stage, but to avoid the possible spread of Covid-19, only the first prize winners went on to the finals. Though Miss Nagata did not place at the finals, she was able to show the fruit of her hard work through competing with so many top students at one of the highest level English speech competitions in Japan.



Miss Nagata



Miss Inoue



Where Do All of the Big Pumpkins at Jamboree Come From?

In October, large orange pumpkins were found all over the MeySen campuses. In the past, the big orange variety of pumpkins, different from the kind generally sold in Japan, could be purchased from Marumori and other places in the prefecture, but there were many incidents of wild boars eating them, and there are not many farmers left who grow them any more. Teachers searched high and low for the pumpkins—without them it just would not be Jamboree! In recent years, Chieko Akaishizawa and Masumi Takahashi who run a farm in Soma City, Fukushima, have been providing MeySen with pumpkins.

MeySen was also able to get pumpkins of different sizes thanks to Ms. Allie's (Takamori Kindergarten English teacher) father, who provided some introductions to businesses that supply pumpkins to hotels and restaurants.

Pumpkins are rich in nutrients and vitamins such as potassium. The custom of eating pumpkin in winter in Japan is a bit of wisdom handed down from past generations so we can strengthen our bodies during the winter season.



first and third from left: Mr. and Mrs. Akaishizawa
second from left: Mrs. Takahashi, pumpkin farmer

Hello! from London

Here is a message from some former Premier School students currently attending school in London and their mother!



Shinichiro Arikura (age 13), Yuka (age 9)



▲ Visiting Edinburgh with family



For High School students, please read the following articles in English. It would be good to read it to your family and tell them what it says!



You can access the entire English letter and with the translation in Japanese here.



▲ Lord Mayor's Show Parade

Message from Yuka (Patricia)

Hello, I will talk about the differences between Japanese school and English school. First of all, we use English, and there are a lot of people from many countries. There are two snack times each day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. There are private lessons for music. There are some showcases. There are ensembles too. We play a lot of sports at school such as netball, cricket, fencing, and tennis.

Message from Shinichiro (John)

There are quite a few things that I really think are different in the UK compared to Japan. The biggest difference is the culture. In this country there are a lot of ethnicities. It is interesting to hear a lot of different languages when walking in the city. Another big difference is the buildings. Many buildings are over 100 years old and from different periods of history. My school is called St. Edmund's College and Prep School. It is about 500 years old and it is England's oldest Catholic school. The area of the school is 38 times larger than the Tokyo Dome.

Another thing that is different from Japan is that we are able to pick which language we want to learn. The choices are Spanish, German, French, and Latin. I take Spanish. Every student has his/her own timetable, so we always need to pay attention to our timetable.

School starts at 8:40 and ends at 3:30. After school we are able to do some activities like football, rugby, polo, and more. We are able to pick a different activity every day. It is very fun.



In front of the school ▶

Message from the mother

My children attended Premier School until March 2021, when due to our work situation we had to move to London. The children have attended English school since our arrival. I am grateful that they had attended MeySen. They interact without hesitation with their non-Japanese classmates. They also have had experience learning science, social studies, and about cultures and different values in English. Of course, their English communication and writing

ability allowed them to be accepted into English schools, but it was their foundation of learning in English and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds at MeySen that helped them make a smooth transition into school life here.

I sincerely hope that all of the students at MeySen Academy will continue their studies in that environment, and that they will cultivate skills that allow them to thrive in the future.

What kind of work do the teachers do? Part 6

Introducing MeySen's Photographer

MeySen has many events throughout the year from Kindergarten and Kangaroo Club to Friends Club and Premier School. But the big events are not the only times you can see how students enjoy their time at MeySen. This newsletter along with MeySen's website features photos and videos even from the activities and events parents do not attend.

In this winter issue, we would like to introduce to you MeySen's photographer, our staff member responsible for taking photos and recording video, as well as creating content for social media and making photos available for parents to view and purchase online.

My daughters also went to Kindergarten and Friends Club, participating in all the different events. I have captured those moments with the camera, and I try and keep that perspective as a parent when I take photos of the students. It makes me happy to think that one of the photos I took of your child could play a part in creating a precious memory.

Taking pictures



I accompany students on off-campus events and trips to take pictures such as the Special Days (at Nasu Animal Kingdom with Premier G5).

Design



Mr. Sato designs stage backgrounds for performances as well as posters for different events.

Check out photos and videos on MeySen's Instagram account!



Mr. Sadahiro Sato



Kangaroo Club for One-year-olds Looking forward to meeting new friends!

MeySen Kangaroo Club holds five-class courses for one-year-olds every June, September, and November. Parents and children can explore the campus and play with the English teachers and PE teachers. Sometimes these one-year-olds will talk to the kindergarten students around the campus. It is amazing to watch these little ones, hesitating to even enter the room at first, adjust to being in a group with other children of similar age, and develop their unique personalities.

MeySen is accepting applications via the official Line account for 2022. Be sure and share information about the MeySen Line account with any families with preschool children that you know.



The Line account for registration.



Maruyama's New Plaza New Canopy for Rotary

Last summer, a new canopy was constructed covering the area from the main hall to the Autumn building at the Maruyama campus. This big white canopy has windows for taking in light so that the area underneath remains well lit. Now everyone can walk between the buses and classrooms without getting wet in the rain.

