

# Friends

フレンズ

「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。

## Autumn

2023

MeySen  
Newsletter

No. **204**





# Autumn Excitement!

With such a hot and humid summer this year, we couldn't wait for **Autumn** to arrive. The changing of seasons also means the start of the second half of the 2023 school year. This is the season where we can play outside comfortably, talk and laugh a lot with our teachers and friends, and "recharge our batteries" before winter hits!



Jamboree Party



Sweet Potato Roasting



Friends Club 6th & Premier G6 Tokyo Trip



Friends Club 5th Nasu Trip



## The Toddler Class has started!

In September, MeySen Kindergarten welcomed 48 2-year-olds, at the Toddler Opening Ceremony. This ceremony marked the inauguration of the newly created "Toddler Class".

Although most of these children had already visited the kindergarten for one day in August, they were still a little nervous, for their first official day as kindergarten students. After starting the day in their parents' laps and quietly listening to the principal's welcome speech, the children enjoyed singing songs and playing with their new teachers. At the end of the ceremony, some of the children couldn't help but say, "Is it over already?"

The new hats that the little ones will wear for kindergarten, were immediately loved by the children, and they are looking forward to their future in the Toddler Class.



Maruyama Campus  
Momiji Class Homeroom Teacher  
**Emiko Chiba**

Sometimes it takes a while for them to put on their shoes or button up their smocks with their little hands, but when they succeed, they tell us with sparkling eyes and broad smiles exclaiming, "I did it!"

We will do our best to support our newest kindergarten students as they face challenges and rejoice with them over what they accomplish each and every day.



Maruyama Campus  
Keyaki Class Homeroom Teacher  
**Yuki Niwa**

After the entrance ceremony and the acclimation period, the children have spent the month of September learning the daily routines of a kindergarten student. Now they are enjoying eating lunch together! From October, we started English class, expanding the children's world even more.

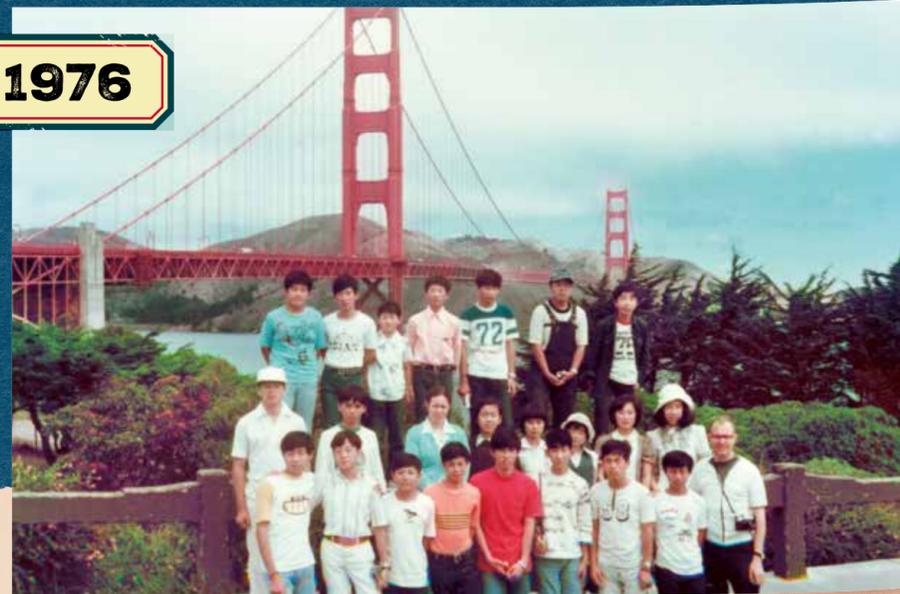


Takamori Campus  
Momiji Class Homeroom Teacher  
**Mina Konno**

As the children's kindergarten life has begun and their environment has expanded beyond just their classrooms, and now includes the play hall and the playgrounds, their smiles have widened. By spending time together with others, their worlds continue to grow, and they've become quite interested in each other, making new friends and learning from one another.

The teachers are excited to enjoy this new program along with the children.

1976



At the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco

American buses have always been huge!



Lots of laughter!



Tears...



Fancy dresses!

Special Feature

## Junior High 7th Grade U.S. Trip Celebrates its 45<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Originally, 2020 would have been the 45th anniversary of the first study trip to the United States for junior high school students, which started in 1976, but after being forced to cancel it for three years due to the COVID pandemic, we are finally celebrating the 45th anniversary this year. The total number of participants to date is 7,416 students.

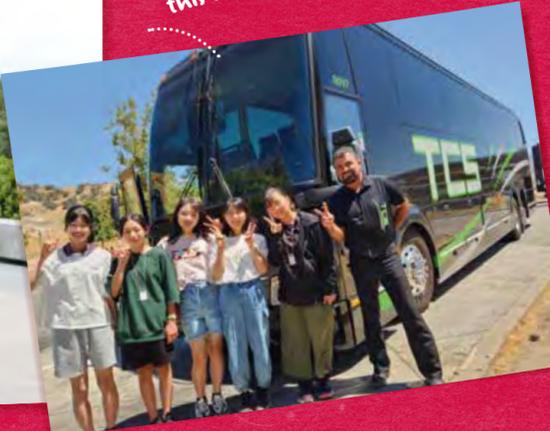
The program, which was developed by our Honorary Chairman, Philip Broman, after extensive preliminary research of the area, is still being conducted almost exactly as it was in 1976, with a summer camp experience, homestay, sightseeing at Yosemite National Park, a trip to Disneyland, and many other unforgettable experiences.

After returning home from this wonderful trip, we often hear junior high school students say that they will study English even harder, to improve their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings, even better than they can now. Because of all the incredible experiences they have on this trip, many of our students even decide to apply for a yearlong study abroad experience in the U.S., when they get to high school. We will continue this amazing trip, which culminates the six years of our students attending Friends Club, and hopefully continue to provide a great motivation to our students, for many years to come.

2023



Check out this summer's trip!



# Making the experience of the study trip in the U.S. a cornerstone for growth and building self-confidence

**John Broman, Chairman of the Board of Trustees**

Starting as a class leader in 1977, then later as an assistant to the trip leader, and finally as the trip leader, I have led more than 30 of these study trips to the United States. I remember our trip in August 1981, finally arriving at the Seattle airport after our initial flight was canceled due to a strike by the American Air Traffic Controllers Union. Over the years, there have been many complications due to the unpredictability of the international flight schedule, and instances where we had to adjust our schedule when students became ill or injured during the trip.



Honorary Chairman, Philip Broman, who created this study trip and also was the leader from the 1st trip to the 30th trip

There was one trip in particular that I will never forget, in which I was the trip leader. It was the morning of the day we were to depart for San Francisco, after the camp and homestay part of the trip had ended without any problems. The host families were gathering at the church with the students who had stayed with them, but when the time came for us to leave, two of our students had not yet arrived. At that exact time, I heard the sirens of ambulances and police cars coming from the main street on the other side of the church. When I ran to the scene, I found that the car in which our last two students and their host family were riding in, had been rear-ended by a large construction vehicle, completely damaging the back of the car, along with the students' suitcases, which had been thrown out of the car and were now on the side of the road.

I had to leave my assistant in charge of the trip's itinerary and accompanied the two students to the hospital, via ambulance. After exam-

ination, it was determined that both students had no significant injuries, other than one student having to receive three stitches, for a small cut to the head. The doctor approved their continuation of the trip, and we hurried off to San Francisco to catch up with the group.

Another year, my group was unable to secure a flight from Hawaii to Narita, and we had to stay overnight in Seoul, South Korea, before returning home. I could tell that the students were exhausted and ready to return to their homes in Japan as soon as possible, and that extending their trip another day, was going to be difficult for them. However, at the hotel restaurant where we were eating dinner, there was an unexpected feeling of excitement and everyone was united by a sense of accomplishment and that this wonderful trip they had experienced was finally coming to an end, even if we were not quite back in Japan. The Korean manager, who had been watching the children's interactions with their MeySen teachers, with the restaurant's waiters, as well as their happy conversations with each other, said to us as we were leaving, how wonderful it had been to see how this large group of junior high school students was able to remain so positive, with conversations filled with laughter and their faces all so full of smiles. I remember with great joy, this incredible group of junior high school students, and how even though things had not gone exactly how we had planned at the end of the trip, their hearts were filled with joy and such a great sense of accomplishment.

It is very rare for Japanese junior high school students to travel to the U.S. for three weeks, and to enjoy such a wide variety of experiences, and it is not something that is planned by any other school or travel agency that I know of. I strongly believe that these trips to the U.S. would not be possible without God's protection for each and every student and I am so thankful that God allows us to return home safely every year, with unforgettable experiences and precious memories, for all our students.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with the Honorary Chairman, Philip about these study trips to the United States. Our hope is that the future generations of students who will follow in our footsteps will also have experiences on this trip that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Although I no longer lead this trip, every year I pray earnestly for the trip to be successful, and for all of our students and staff to return home safely.



John with his camera, capturing the students as they made lasting memories.

The first study trip to the United States. Honorary Chairman is third from the right (1976)



Dining in San Francisco

Many Premier School students joined this year's trip!

## First trip to the U.S. in three years!

To be honest, communicating in English was very difficult. However, the camp made me realize that there are many ways to convey thoughts and feelings other than words, such as gestures, expressions, tone of voice, nodding, etc., and by using these methods, I could communicate with the people I met.

Sana Tomizuka (Shannon)



Camp

## Homestay



At homestay, I was able to get to know my host family from the beginning, by showing them pictures of me and my family and by asking them many questions of my own. I would like to continue to keep in touch with them over the phone and through writing letters.

Kota Suzuki (Randy)

## Yosemite



## Golden Gate Bridge



I was able to find many differences between Japan and the U.S. from the size of the country and the richness of its nature, to tourist facilities such as hotels and theme parks, to the fact that people clearly express their opinions and are energetic. I thought it was important to find the good points of each country and enjoy the differences.

Minori Chiba (Bonnie)

When people in the U.S. did something for one another, whether it was a friend or family member, they expressed their gratitude to each other. I have learned that having something done for you is not something to be taken for granted, but something to be grateful for, and from now on I will try to express my gratitude out loud.

Nina Suzuki (Carla)

## Sea World



## Disneyland

There were many memorable experiences...

## Memories of the group leaders

### Daniel Fanger, Principal

Trip Leader 16 times between 1989-2023

The biggest crisis that I've faced as a trip leader was in the summer of 2016, when the airline we were using, experienced a system failure. On the morning of the first group's departure for Hawaii, where we were to spend the last three days of our trip, we arrived at the Los Angeles airport and lined up at the airline's counter as usual. We were told that it would take some time to fix the problem, but after three additional hours of waiting, we were informed that we could not fly out on the same day, and that in fact it would take at least three days for the system to be restored! The last three days of my children's itinerary, which they were looking forward to, were lost, and I wondered if we would have to just return to Japan.

So, I searched and searched on my phone, until I found that there were seats available on a different airline, Hawaiian Airlines, connecting to Oahu through Maui. The Hawaiian Airlines counter was at the far end of one of the many terminals, and there were only a few minutes before the check in counter closed. I told the other leaders to bring the children to the counter as quickly as possible, and I ran ahead of them to get there as quickly as I could. The staff at the counter was just about to close the boarding when the last passengers finished checking in, but thankfully they were quick to see the desperate situation we were in, and allowed us to check in, just in time to catch our flight. We had

dinner at Maui Airport, our connecting point, and told the students that they were the only ones in the history



As the trip progresses, the children become more confident and expressive.



The principal taking pictures of children enjoying a cool swim in a river in Yosemite National Park.

of this 7th grade study trip, to get to travel to Maui, and we all made a celebratory toast.

### Tadashi Takenami, Vice-Principal

Trip History: 2006-2007, 2010-Present

In the same summer that Daniel's group experienced flight trouble, our second group of 14 students and their teachers were stranded in Seattle when their flight from Seattle to San Francisco the next day was cancelled due to that same system failure. We finally managed to secure a flight to Sacramento, about a two-hour drive from San Francisco, because the flight would have been cancelled if we did not arrive on the same day.

I was able to arrive at the hotel late at night to reassure the students, but since my suitcase was sent to the San Francisco airport, I had to take a cab all the way to the airport, pick up my suitcase, and return to the hotel at 4:00am the next morning.

It was one of the longest days I've had in many years, but fortunately we all made it to our next stop, Yosemite National Park.



Pictured with wranglers, who care for and train horses at Miracle Ranch Camp (2023).



See more...

## U.S. Study Trip Incidents

- ★ The Yosemite National Park was closed due to fire, and the tour destination and lodging had to be changed at the last minute (1990 & 2018).
- ★ The Golden Gate Bridge tour was cancelled, due to the delay of the flight to San Francisco because of bad weather. Unfortunately, the same thing happened to the Takamori Girls Group this year (2007 & 2023).
- ★ The kitchen staff of Yosemite National Park went on strike and could not prepare our meals, but thankfully other staff filled in and prepared them for us (2010).
- ★ The Hawaii to Narita flight was cancelled on the day of our departure, and all 80 of our students, along with their teachers were quickly transferred to a direct flight back to Sendai (2013).

## Mother and daughter experiencing the trip!

### Daughter

**Akari Ishiyama (Judith)**  
Maruyama High School 7th Grade

During the camp and homestay, I lived in a way that I could relate to more people while paying attention to American culture and customs. I came to realize that it's a waste to have an opinion and not express it because it's embarrassing, and that I need to push myself to communicate my thoughts openly. Through learning to express my opinions, I feel that I have grown a lot in terms of my positive attitude.

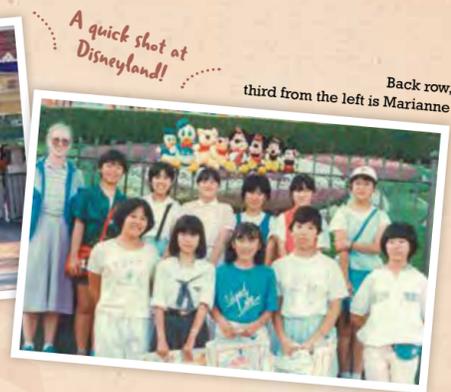
It was very difficult to move around and spend every day with such a large tour group, but in return, I learned that I could notice viewpoints that I did not have, and I decided to listen carefully and take responsibility for my own actions.

In order to improve my English skills in the future, I would like to make an effort to always look up the meaning of words I don't know or when I don't understand what the other person is saying, and not to leave things unclear.

During the trip, I made an effort to always show a sense of gratitude. I had a lot of fun memories and throughout the trip, I think I have grown both mentally and in other abilities.



Back row, center is Judith



A quick shot at Disneyland!  
Back row, third from the left is Marianne

### Mother

**Asami Ishiyama (Marianne, maiden name: Iwatsuki)**  
Maruyama Friends Club Alumni

My daughter was a little nervous at first, but everyone was very kind and helpful. For about two and a half weeks, she was exposed to a different culture and environment that she had never experienced before, and the interactions with her foreign friends and host family were a valuable experience that she will treasure. My daughter came back home more grown up and realizing that there is such a different world out there.

She said that everything in the U.S. is grand and magnificent in scale, and that the American friends she made on the trip, have their own opinions and seem so mature.

I am filled with gratitude that the first study trip to the U.S. after the COVID pandemic was a safe experience for my daughter. It was a little disappointing that the trip was shorter than usual, and we were not able to go to Hawaii, but I would like to thank the school for their meticulous planning and for the various care you provided during the trip, even with some students getting sick.

I am also a Friends Club alumna who experienced the study trip in the U.S. when I was a teenager. I still remember it fondly as a fun and meaningful trip with a lot of learning, and I had always hoped that my daughter would be able to participate and experience it as I had. We are very grateful for this wonderful opportunity. Thank you very much.

## What kind of tree is a Giant Sequoia?

Giant sequoias, native to the western Sierra Nevada Mountains, which includes Yosemite National Park, are said to be the largest and oldest living organisms in the world. The "Grizzly Giant" (64 meters tall), a giant tree that grows in Yosemite, is estimated to be approximately 2,995 years old!

The parents of students who participated in the first trip to the U.S. planted a Giant Sequoia tree in the "Yoiko no Garden (Garden for Good Children)" at the Maruyama Campus in 1976, which was a 3-meter seedling imported from California. It grew quickly, reaching about 8 meters in 1985 and 30 meters in August of this year. It is a strong and long-lived tree, and we hope it will continue to watch over our students' growth, for many years to come.



In front of a fallen sequoia tree. The cross-section is huge!

### MeySen Encyclopedia

Because the sequoias at MeySen are so large and surrounded by other trees, the height cannot be measured by the school's staff, so a specialist uses a drone to measure the height. The drone lifts off vertically from near the base of the sequoias, and then flies upward to the same height as the tip of the sequoias, to measure their height.



You can also watch a video of the drone measurement. Please check out the QR code here!

Let's Go!!

- 1 Drone is ready
- 2 Flight starts
- 3 Maneuvering the drone upward
- 4 Checking the altitude of the drone when it reaches the tip of the sequoia

## Reunion of the Founding Teachers and the Honorary Chairman of the Board of Trustees



MeySen Kindergarten opened in 1967 with one class each, for the 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds\*, and on July 14, the first English homeroom teacher, Honorary Chairman, Philip Broman, and the founding kindergarten teachers, Yuko Honma, Mutsuko Yamagishi, and Masako Takahashi, were reunited for the first time in 57 years.

These founding teachers reminisced with the Honorary Chairman, about how anxious they were to open a kindergarten in Sendai, which aimed to teach English to young children, but thankfully MeySen's education was well received, and by the second year of its opening, over 100 children had enrolled in the kindergarten. Back then, the teachers wore many hats, and even did janitorial and maintenance tasks. "It's a wonder how we were able to do all of that in addition to teaching," one of the founding teachers exclaimed, "Everyone worked so very hard to make the kindergarten a success." The memories were vivid and the stories endless.

\*Currently called Nenchu and Nencho, respectively.



Honorary Chairman Philip and Ms. Barbara, who passed away last year, created MeySen's English curriculum, and made all of their materials from scratch, learning as they went along.



From left to right: Ms. Honma, Honorary Chairman Philip Broman, Ms. Takahashi (Ms. Kameyama after marriage), Ms. Yamagishi (Ms. Sato after marriage)



Back row, from left: Ms. Takahashi, Ms. Barbara, Mr. Phillip  
Front row, from left: Ms. Honma, Ms. Ogawa, Ms. Yamagishi

## Christmas trees and air hockey were donated.

This spring, Taihei Denki K.K. and 77 Bank donated one Christmas tree (made in Scandinavia, 3m tall) and two electric air hockey tables.

In May, Mr. Katsuhiko Sasaki, President and Representative Director of The 77 Bank, Ltd. and Mr. Shuichi Ibuka, Executive Director of The 77 Bank, Ltd. joined us for a presentation ceremony. We wish to thank everyone at The 77 Bank, Ltd. for their donation to support our school and our students' activities.

This donation was made possible through the 77SDGs Private Placement Bonds (which is a donation style / social contribution program), in which The 77 Bank donates the issue fees of corporate bonds issued by its corporate clients to the fields of education and welfare, and Taihei Denki Corporation designated MeySen Academy as its donation recipient.

Mr. Katsuhiko Sasaki on the left and Mr. Shuichi Ibuka on the right



The air hockey tables we received are being used by the Friends Club students at the Maruyama Campus. We will decorate the Christmas tree and use it at the Maruyama campus in December!



## Message from an Alumnus

**Toui Sato (Keith)**  
Takamori Premier School  
41st Graduating Class

One of my fondest memories of attending Premier School was the trip to Seattle, Washington when I was in the fourth grade of elementary school. I was able to speak English with the locals and even live with an American family in a homestay experience, because I was a Premier School student. Many of the Americans I met were very warm, and everything I experienced was something I would not have been able to experience in Japan. All of these memories are so precious to me.

I started wrestling as soon as I entered high school. I became interested in it after watching mixed martial arts and professional wrestling on TV, and joined the wrestling club in high school. The club had morning, noon, and after-school practices, and the sport was tougher than I could have ever imagined. However, as a result of my hard work and practice every day, I was able to win 5th place at the National Athletic Meet in my junior year of high school. In my first year of college, when my matches were cancelled due to Corona, I started learning Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu in Sendai. Then, in July 2023, I placed 3rd in the purple belt class\* at the Asian Championships.

In Jiu-Jitsu matches, I often fight against foreign athletes, and when I fight, I feel the difference in physique and power. Therefore, I'm conscious of not relying on strength alone, but

to use my head and my own style of fighting from my daily practice.

Since I started participating in international tournaments, I have more opportunities to speak English with foreign athletes. The English skills I have cultivated at MeySen since I was a child are now being put to use in this way, and I realize once again that I was blessed to be in such a wonderful environment.

Currently, I wrestle for my university and practice jiu-jitsu at night. I will never forget my gratitude to all the people who have helped me grow to this point in my life, especially my parents, and I will strive to repay them with more success in the future.



3rd place purple belt at the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Asia Championships in Nagoya, Japan in July



Keith is pictured, fifth from the right.

\*Colors of belts are recognized based on experience, ability, and skill, and purple belts are two ranks away from the highest rank of black belt.



## MeySen's Educational Vision

The ideal image we aim for

At MeySen, we have established a clear vision of education with the primary goals of “independence” and “future happiness” for our children, and have summarized specific educational content in the six pillars on the left, the first two of which are “Truth & Integrity” and “Language & Expression”.



Daniel Fanger,  
Principal

### Truth & Integrity

The first pillar is “Truth & Integrity”. It is the foundation of MeySen’s education, and we believe it is essential for the future happiness of our students’ lives.

#### ● Fear and reverence of God, and to love those around you

These words are included in the educational principles of MeySen Academy. We want children to always say and do things that please God, to benefit others rather than being self-centered or egotistic, and to have a heart to help and serve others.

#### ● Respect and obedience to parents

There is a command from God for children, accompanied by a promise. It says that if they follow these commands, they will be happy and live long lives. Parents love their children with all their hearts, and children will be truly happy if they respect their parents with all their hearts and obey them.

#### ● Love good and hate evil

We believe that this also applies to the pursuit of justice as stated in the educational principles of the school, “Seek truth and justice.” We believe that daily teaching and training are necessary so that students will be able to judge what is right and what is wrong, learn to love good, and to hate evil.

#### ● Do not lie or cheat

Do not lie even when it could benefit you, and tell the truth at all times. We want to teach our students to pursue truth and fairness.

We have covered two pillars in this issue, but the first, “truth and integrity” in particular, is the foundation of MeySen Academy’s education, so we will explain its meaning in more depth.

In MeySen Academy’s educational principles, there are words such as “justice” and “truth,” but what is the standard? They are set by God, the Creator of the universe and all things. Animals do not have the concept of “justice” or “truth,” but human beings are created in God’s image, and God’s standards of right and wrong and truth are implanted in our hearts. If each of us lived according to God’s standards, there would be peace in this world, people would love one another, and a world that is pleasing to God would be built.

Unfortunately, the world we live in is not like that. People are always sacrificing others for their own benefit and changing the standards of right and wrong as they see fit. They think that as long as it benefits them, they can take advantage of those who are weak. Not only individuals, but society as a whole is infested with injustice, and the weak and helpless are sacrificed.

Whether actively, passively, or unconsciously, all humans are unjust and

### Language & Expression

The second pillar is “Language & Expression”, which is the ability to write and to communicate with others.

#### ● Language is the foundation for all learning

Language is the foundation for all learning, including school education. We aim to develop a rich linguistic environment from early-childhood, and to help our students develop a love of language.

#### ● Expression and communication skills

The ability to communicate and express oneself is an important tool for building good working relationships. Many companies place a high priority on these skills in their hiring process.

#### ● Communication in English

English is a valuable tool as a global lingua franca. Even in an environment where English is not used on a daily basis, the ability to communicate in English is always of value.

#### ● Cross-cultural understanding and global mindset

Through the study of English, students will naturally acquire a sense of internationalism and cross-cultural understanding. If you have an understanding of other cultures and a global mindset, you will be able to relate more effectively with people around the world, both professionally and personally.

unrighteous. All of us are sinners, in the eyes of God. Only Jesus has the power to cleanse and forgive our sins. And in order for us to come to love and pursue truth and justice, we must let God change our hearts.

*He has shown you, O man, what is good.*

*And what does the Lord require of you?*

*To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.*

*(Micah 6:8)*

Let us all, children and adults, protect and help the weak, be haters of injustice and unrighteousness, and live lives that are pleasing to God by doing what is just, by loving integrity, and by being humble.

Looking at the state of the world today, I feel that the second coming of Jesus, prophesied in the Bible is near. Please accept Jesus’ salvation, receive forgiveness of sins, gain eternal life, and stand before God with the assurance of salvation.

## Friends Club and Premier School Elementary will change starting in the 2024 school year.

While our Friends Club students have been attending class three days a week (M/W/F or T/Th/S) and the Premier School Elementary students have been attending class six days a week (Mon–Sat), starting in the 2024 school year, we will be dropping the majority of our Saturday English classes for both programs.

The primary reason and aim of this change, is to improve the working environment for our English teachers, who are loved by their students and deeply valued by the school’s administration. We hope that by making this change, our teachers will experience

a better work-life balance, and that this increases the overall happiness and health of our teachers and improves teacher retention. This should also be a boost to our recruitment of new teachers, as Saturday work is a deterrent to many applicants in today’s society. We will continue to strive to provide high quality English classes that our students will enjoy, with measures and improvements that will maintain the same level of learning as before, through a slight increase in class hours for some grades, and special class days added periodically throughout the year for other grades.



### Answers to the previous question



- 1 Tulip 2 Pansies  
3 Flowering Kale  
4 Silk Tree 5 Hydrangea

### Thank you for the many submissions to the quiz in Issue 203. There were 121 entries and 105 correct answers.

**MeySen Magic Mug Winners**  
Maruyama: Sakurako Ouchi, FC3  
Takamori: Nanako Kajiyama, FC3

**MeySen Notepad Winners**  
Maruyama: Chiaki Saito, Nensho, Yurika Niinuma, Nencho  
Takamori: Yugo Chiba, FC1, Ayumi Wakamoto, FC3

