

# Friends

フレンズ

「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。 Summer 2025

MeySen  
Newsletter

No. 211



Get Ready for the Summer

Adventures!





# Lots of excitement around the Corner!

Summer vacation is finally here, and so many exciting things are waiting for you! Take your time to explore what interests you, go out with your family and friends, and make lots of wonderful memories. We'll be looking forward to seeing you back at school with a big smile when the new term begins!

## Art Day

A row of cardboard boxes in all shapes and sizes is waiting for the children on a big blue sheet.

Today is the long-awaited Art Day, and the theme is "Let's Get Messy with Paint!" With brushes and rollers loaded with vibrant colors, the children begin painting bold strokes. Some use sponges like stamps to create patterns, while others cover large areas with rollers. As they get more into it, some even start using their hands and feet to paint!

They mix colors to discover new shades, and the



Let's Get Messy with Paint! (Age 3)

## Let's express ourselves freely!

once-clean canvas quickly becomes a lively, colorful masterpiece. Even teachers and volunteer parents become part of the fun, getting splashed with paint. The children enjoyed it so much that some said, "Is it over already?"

Earlier in the first term, we had activities like "Design Your Own Umbrella" and "Let's Explore Oil Clay." The children proudly showed off their unique umbrellas and were excited to touch oil clay for the first time.



Let's Explore Oil Clay (Age 4)



Art Day at our kindergarten began in 2016. It's all about open-ended activities where there's no right answer—just free, creative expression. We hope every child's imagination and creativity will shine brightly through these experiences.



Design Your Own Umbrella (Age 5)

## A New Donkey and Pony Have Arrived at Maruyama!

At the Maruyama Campus, our beloved donkey Pokey has retired due to old age, and now a new donkey has joined us! With her warm brown fur, we've named her **Cinnamon**. She has a higher-pitched voice than Pokey.

We also welcomed a new pony with black and white fur—her name is **Mittens**. If you see her photo or meet her in person, you'll understand why she got that name!

Both Cinnamon and Mittens are 6-year-old girls from Aomori Prefecture. Please talk to them and be friendly during playtime—they'll love getting to know you!



About Mittens

Unlike Oreo, who also has black and white fur, Mittens has a unique brown stripe on her nose.



About Cinnamon

She's a little shy, so please be gentle and try not to startle her!

## A Day in the Toddler Class

It's been two months since the three-year-olds have started Toddler Class. At first, many were nervous and shed tears when saying goodbye to their parents. But as they explored the classroom, the play hall, and the outdoor playgrounds, their smiles began to grow. Now, they come to school every day with cheerful faces and greet us with the sweetest little voices.

From **Ms. Mina Konno**  
Takamori Toddler Class Teacher



With Friends

The children are starting to notice their classmates more. Even at this young age, they're beginning to understand the idea of "friends we spend time with every day." They worry when someone is absent and call each other by name while playing together. It's lovely to see these early friendships forming.



During Class Time

The children are learning to become more independent, trying things like changing their clothes and washing their hands, with supervision from their teachers. We gently support each child, respecting their feelings, whether they want to try things on their own or ask for help, so they can grow at their own pace.



English Time

In the Toddler Class, English time starts at 10 minutes in the first term and gradually increases to about 20 minutes by the third term. The children sing songs and listen to picture books with the English teacher, naturally getting used to the language. Their eyes sparkle with curiosity as they wonder, "What's next?"



Lunch Time

Before eating, the children sing a prayer song and greet everyone—it's such a heartwarming moment. Whether they're enjoying a packed lunch or school lunch, they happily say "Yummy!" and share joyful mealtime moments with their teachers and friends.



Children who stay for daycare spend time playing, enjoying snacks, and waiting happily for their parents to come pick them up.

From **Ms. Masami Ota**  
Maruyama Toddler Class Teacher

We missed you!

## Welcome back to MeySen!

At MeySen, our English teachers come from many different countries, including the United States. Sometimes, due to family reasons or other circumstances, they return to their home countries. That's why it's especially heartwarming when a teacher chooses to come back and rejoin us.

This year, we're happy to welcome back several teachers who have returned to MeySen and are now working as homeroom teachers. We asked them what made them decide to come back—and here's what they shared.

### Isaac & Gail



Mr. Isaac  
Maruyama Premier G6 Teacher



Ms. Gail  
Maruyama Premier K4 Teacher  
Right: PSK Japanese Teacher Ms. Yasue Soga

Hello, we are Isaac and Gail Sauer and we just moved back to Japan. We taught at MeySen about three years ago and have just recently returned. While in America, Isaac was a Children's Pastor and Gail was an assistant manager at a daycare.

We came to MeySen in 2019 and spent 3 wonderful years here. Sarah (Mrs. Corder) taught the G2 Dinosaurs class and Mr. Dan taught the G4 Stingrays class, as well as worked as a Teacher Trainer and Literacy Specialist. We loved working at MeySen and made so many memories with our students and colleagues. It was an extremely difficult decision to leave in 2022, but we needed to return to the U.S. due to family matters and the desire to continue our graduate education. We spent two years teaching in American schools and earning our master's degrees. Dan spent 8 months in Germany, taking courses and learning the German language, and Sarah spent time in Spain with Spanish students. Even after these adventures and spending quality time with our families, we both felt a pull to come back to Japan. We missed our friends and students terribly and felt that our time here was not complete.

We are so thrilled to be back teaching at MeySen and have felt at home from the moment we returned. Sarah has taught science for many years and loves being able to teach her first graders about plants and animals, and Dan enjoys teaching his 3rd graders about cultures around the world. As for our life in Sendai,

We loved our jobs and we loved the state of Utah. We also gave birth to our now 2-year-old daughter, Beau, while back in the United States.

You may be wondering why we decided to return to Japan and to MeySen. The answer is Japan has felt like home to us. We loved our time here and thought about it often. We really loved teaching at MeySen, and although we had a very satisfying life in the States, we missed our students and teaching. We loved the community we built while we were here and wanted to be a part of that again. We feel like Japan is a great place to raise our daughter and are excited for her to grow up somewhere so safe. We also felt a strong sense of knowing that we were supposed to be living and working in Japan, so we chose to listen to that and reached out to MeySen. We were so happy that MeySen was just as excited to have us back as we were to be coming back!

We are so happy to be back and look forward to what the future holds for us here in Sendai and at MeySen.

### Dan & Sarah



Ms. Sarah Corder  
Takamori Premier G1 Teacher



Mr. Dan  
Maruyama Premier G3 Teacher

we are now renting a house and have a black labrador puppy named Juno! She is very spirited and likes to eat the newly planted flowers in our garden, but we love her very much!

We are so thankful to the MeySen community for welcoming us back with open arms and look forward to caring for and providing the best learning experience possible for our students.



## Alumni Association Donates Food to Food Bank Sendai

As part of its annual activities, the MeySen Academy Alumni Association sells food and drinks during Friends Day. This year, we had leftover mini churros and sausages, so on June 20, we visited Food Bank Sendai to donate them.

With rising prices making it harder for some families to afford meals, we hope this small donation can help support those in need, even just a little.



Mr. Wataru Ogura (left in photo, Douglas, 22nd Alumnus Class of Takamori), a board member of Food Bank Sendai, and Mr. David, an English teacher from the Maruyama Campus.



Mr. Yuji Aoki, President of the Alumni Association (Darrell, 11th Alumnus Class of Maruyama), handing over the churros and sausages.

You can learn more about the wonderful work of Food Bank Sendai, whose mission is to help eliminate poverty and hunger, by visiting their website.







# 20 Anniversary of Premier School



## Two Decades of Partnership with Parents Built on Trust and Cooperation

**Daniel Fanger, Principal**

Exactly twenty years ago, in 2005, I was preparing to take on the role of principal at MeySen Academy. As part of those preparations, we conducted a survey among the parents. The results revealed that satisfaction with our English education was not as high as expected, with many expressing a desire for more practical English skills, especially in speaking.

In response, the board of directors held a meeting and decided to establish a new course at MeySen, aimed at fostering bilingual proficiency. I was tasked with planning for this program, working closely with the former principal, Mr. Phil Broman. This led to the launch of the “MeySen Immersion Class” in the 2006 school year (later to be called Premier School).

Over 400 parents attended the fall 2005 explanation meeting, reflecting the strong interest in an English Immersion program. We initially planned to start the Immersion Class at only the Takamori campus, with plans to expand to the Maruyama campus the following year. However, due to the strong interest from the Maruyama parents, we decided to accept 17 children from Maruyama to join the children at Takamori, resulting in a first-year launch with three classes and a total of 49 students.

The Immersion Class curriculum included GrapeSEED, which was being developed at the time, and was supplemented with additional content from an American early childhood education expert, Ms. Loretta Kusak. Each grade level was given a thematic focus, incorporating subjects such as science and social studies to foster comprehensive English development. Every year involved a cycle of preparing materials for the next grade while continuously refining existing content—a process of ongoing trial and improvement. In 2020, fifteen years after its founding, when the inaugural class graduated from high school, the full curriculum was finally complete.

Thanks to the unwavering support of so many parents, Premier School is now celebrating its 20th anniversary. I am especially grateful to those who joined us in the early years and placed their trust in our vision.

The students from our inaugural class are now 24 years old. I look forward with great anticipation to seeing our graduates thrive in society, making meaningful contributions both in Japan and around the world.



## Celebrating Two Decades of Love and Learning: MeySen Academy's Journey

**Loretta Kusak**

With the Maruyama Dolphins Class (May 2025)



**Amazing!**

That's the first word that comes to mind when I think about MeySen Academy. This past April, I had the joy and privilege of returning to MeySen for the first time since 2017. At that time, I had completed my work as a curriculum writer, developer, and teacher trainer, yet MeySen had never left my heart.

**A Chance Encounter**

Looking back, I vividly remember the day I was teaching kindergarten in Mercer Island, Washington, when my principal brought in a group from Japan to observe my classroom. One of those visitors was John Broman. From that first meeting, a beautiful partnership began. Soon, John started bringing Japanese teachers to observe and interact with my students. Before long, John and Phil Broman invited me to speak to MeySen parents about the activities in my classroom and my teaching methods—a true honor.

**Building the Foundation**

In September 2005, John shared exciting news: MeySen would be sending Esther Fanger and Judith Broman to Seattle, and he asked if I could help them shop for educational materials for a new English immersion program. When they arrived, we spent several days selecting the best resources we could find. After the third day of shopping, gathered around my dining room table, I asked if MeySen already had a curriculum. When they said no, I offered, “Would you like some help writing it?” That evening, we sat down together and began sketching the first dreams of what would become the MeySen English Immersion program.

In October, Timothy and Samuel Broman, along with others, came to Seattle, and together we continued to shape the program. By December 2005, I traveled to MeySen, where I worked closely with Timothy, Samuel, Esther, and Daniel Howard developing the overview of the program.

**Perfect Timing**

The timing couldn't have been more perfect. Having already decided to retire from teaching kindergarten, I was thrilled to accept the opportunity to help create something so meaningful. With God's guidance and a love for children, we poured our hearts into writing the curriculum. I also helped set up the new classrooms, making sure they reflected a true, welcoming English-speaking environment that would spark wonder in the children's eyes.

**Training Time**

Training and guiding the teachers through the new curriculum was a true labor of love. The curriculum needed to be taught with care and precision so the children could maximize their learning. The teachers were nothing short of amazing—not only mastering new materials but also adapting to new methods of teaching with incredible dedication. Their commitment and thoughtful feedback allowed us to refine the program even further. Katie Wendland and Jonathan Calnon provided invaluable insights.

**Built on Love**

From the very beginning, the immersion curriculum was crafted with love—a love for children and their limitless potential. Love is the invisible thread that weaves strength and beauty into a program. At MeySen, that love shines brightly. The teachers administer the program with a passion for teaching and an abiding love for each child entrusted to their care.

**A Joyful Return**

What did I observe when I returned to MeySen eight years later? I saw teachers preserving the spirit and techniques of the program. The classrooms still buzzed with English, laughter, curiosity, and joy. The English Immersion Program wasn't just surviving—it was flourishing.

And what did I feel? I felt love everywhere I turned. On the playgrounds, in the classrooms, among the teachers, and most of all, surrounding the children, each one treasured, nurtured, and celebrated.

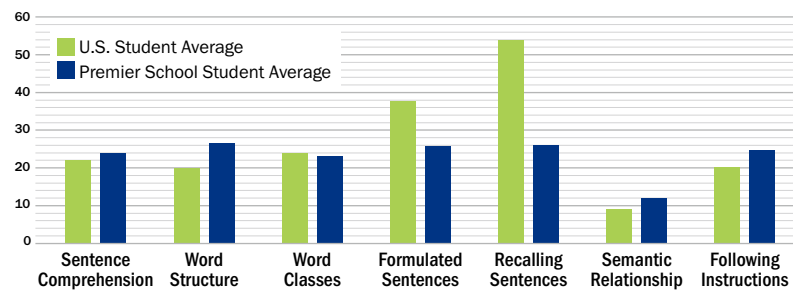
It was an honor to witness the Premier English Immersion Program thriving, a living testament to what love and dedication can build.

**Happy Twentieth Anniversary, MeySen Academy!**

May the future continue to bring fulfilled dreams, inspired children, and lives touched by love.

## English Learning Outcomes at Premier School

### CELF Test Results



The graph on the right shows the average scores of Premier School students on the TOEFL Junior test. For the 5th and 6th graders, the test is administered without prior notice or preparation. In contrast, our junior high school students take this test voluntarily.

The average score of 740 among first-year junior high students is considered equivalent to passing the “Grade Pre-2” level of the EIKEN test, a level often regarded as the benchmark for English proficiency in many Japanese university entrance exams.

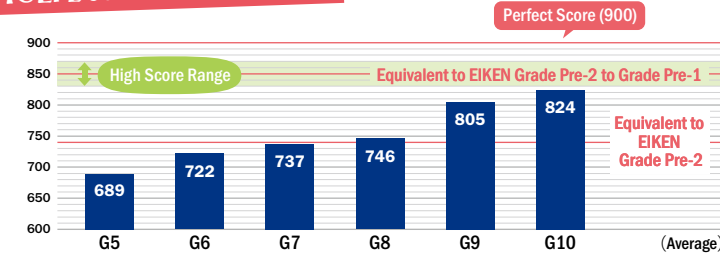
Each year, some 5th and 6th graders achieve scores around 850, which corresponds to the upper range of the “Grade Pre-2” level and into the “Grade Pre-1” level on the EIKEN scale. This higher level is often required for admission through comprehensive selection processes, returnee student entrance exams, and certain recommendation-based admissions at private universities. It may also qualify students for bonus points or exemptions for certain university English exams.

In fact, several students have scored 895 (missing only one question), and one 6th-grade boy achieved a perfect score of 900, earning special recognition from the test administrators. This score is considered equivalent to

Using the “Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF),” an assessment tool developed by the American educational services company Pearson, we conducted English proficiency evaluations for our 5th grade students in 2014 and 2017. While there were some areas where scores differed from those of American students of the same age, there were also several categories in which Premier students exceeded the averages for American students. These results clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of our English education in Premier School, in measurable terms.

*CELF is a comprehensive language assessment, conducted one-on-one between an examiner and a child. It includes both verbal and visual tasks and is widely used in public schools across the United States.*

### TOEFL Junior Test Results



the upper range of the “Grade Pre-1” level to the “Grade 1” level on the EIKEN scale, indicating an exceptionally high level of English proficiency. Multiple Premier School students in 5th and 6th grade have passed the “Grade Pre-1” level, and some junior high students have passed the “Grade 1” level.

While Premier School places its greatest emphasis on developing communication skills in English, students also naturally acquire comprehensive language abilities. These strong results in standardized testing reflect the success of our educational approach.

## Premier School Students Shine in English Competitions and Proficiency Exams

Premier School students have demonstrated outstanding achievements in various English-related contests and proficiency exams.



**41st National High School English Speech Contest**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs Award  
1st Place Nationwide  
**Taito Uchigasaki (Wes)**



**12th Ursula Eichi English Contest**  
Speech Division  
Best Performance Award  
**Kensuke Endo (Sid)**



**44th National High School English Speech Contest**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs Award  
1st Place Nationwide  
**Shion Saito (Ariel)**



**2023 EIKEN Grade 1 –3rd Session**  
Canada Ambassador's Award for Top-Scoring Elementary or Junior High School Student  
**Oriza Miura**

### Premier School Graduate Pursues International Dreams

Daisuke Egusa (Ethan), a member of Premier School's second graduating class, studied abroad in Canada after completing elementary school. He is currently playing on the ice hockey team at Nazareth College in New York State, USA. In 2022, he was selected to represent Japan as a member of the U-20 national hockey team.



You can watch an interview video about his experiences and reflections on Premier School here.

## From King's Elementary School in Seattle

### A Cultural Gift of Friendship and Faith.

**Evelyn Huling,**  
Principal King's Elementary School

At King's Elementary School in Seattle, Washington, we have had the extraordinary privilege of hosting 4th grade and now 5th grade students from MeySen Academy in Sendai, Japan for the past 14 years, every spring while our school is in session. It has become one of the most anticipated and meaningful traditions in our school community, a true highlight of our year!

What makes this experience so special is the deep connection formed between cultures, students, and families, all within the framework of Christian love and hospitality. Our King's families graciously open their homes to host two Japanese students, offering them not only a place to stay but a glimpse into American life through the lens of faith and friendship.

During the school day, our MeySen students are paired with King's students in their classrooms, where they participate in lessons, complete assignments, and speak English as they engage in the rhythms of an American elementary school. After school, the adventure continues. Host families provide a wide variety of American experiences, from youth group gatherings and sports events to beach visits on Puget Sound, dinners out, or a simple treat at a local ice cream shop. The opportunities are rich and diverse, but the heart of it all is relationship.

Perhaps the most treasured part of this exchange is the bond formed between the students throughout the week. The connection goes beyond shared activities. It is a friendship that crosses language and cultural barriers. As the week comes to a close after the MeySen students have sung “Friends Forever” for us, and the students depart for nearby Miracle Ranch Camp, the emotion is palpable. Tears are shed not just by students, but by teachers and administrators alike because something lasting has been planted: the love of a neighbor,



In the photo, the third person from the left in the back row is Principal Evelyn Huling.

the joy of learning from another, and the beauty of being part of a global community.

As the Bible reminds us in Matthew 22:37-39, the greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbor. This experience reminds us that “neighbor” does not depend on location. Whether across the street or across the ocean, we are all part of God's world—called to love, learn from, and serve one another.

We are deeply grateful for this opportunity each year. It is more than a program. It is a living testimony to the power of hospitality, the strength of cultural exchange, and the unifying love of Christ.



## Premier School: Opening Doors to the World

### Takumi and Rika Wada

Parents of Koki (1st Graduating Class, Grant) and Kyoka (4th Graduating Class, Brenda)

When we first learned about the launch of Premier School, we felt it was a gateway from Sendai to the world—and that feeling was what led us to enroll our children. Although the program had no proven track record and many of the materials felt handmade, that sense of starting something new together was exciting and inspiring.

Our son attended Premier School with joy and pride as a member of the very first class. He enjoyed learning so much that he received a perfect attendance award for all six years of elementary school. We believe he also wanted to embody the belief that “Premier School will surely succeed.”

During junior high, he studied abroad in Australia for three weeks, and in high school, he spent a full year in Sacramento, USA. As parents, we hoped that through these experiences, he would gain a deeper appreciation for Japan and be able to express its unique strengths in his own words—things that are often hard to notice from within. We also hoped that by experiencing life as a



Premier School Christmas Party (2010)



Graduation Ceremony with Family (2025)

foreigner while living abroad, he would develop greater empathy and learn to see the world from diverse perspectives.

These experiences led him to pursue higher education in Florida, USA. While at university, he built friendships with people from Peru, Spain, Taiwan, Vietnam, India, Colombia, and fellow Japanese students, making the world feel closer than ever. He even took Spanish classes, saying it felt like learning a foreign language for the first time—a refreshing experience for him. We were fortunate to attend his graduation ceremony as a family, and seeing how he thrived in a new environment, surrounded by good friends, moved us deeply. His quiet strength and unseen efforts over those four years were truly inspiring.

Without a doubt, our encounter with Premier School opened the door to the world.

## A Meaningful Journey with Premier School:

### Seattle Study Trip and 15 Years of Growth

#### Takuya and Chikako Kikuchi

Parents of Toki (4th Graduating Class, Pete), Kei (10th Graduating Class, Gregory), and Rei (Takamori G6, Hope)

For this special occasion of Premier School's 20th anniversary, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the journey our three children have taken with Premier School and express our heartfelt gratitude.

Our eldest son (4th graduating class), second son (10th graduating class), and daughter (currently in 6th grade, 13th graduating class) have all been part of Premier School. This March, our daughter participated in the Seattle study trip. Looking back, it feels as though our family has walked alongside Premier School for over 15 years.

The main reason we chose Premier School was its immersive English environment, where children spend most of their day interacting in English. Through daily communication with native-speaking teachers, our children naturally absorbed the language.



K4 Entrance Ceremony - Eldest Son, Pete

We were also deeply impressed by the school's commitment to Japanese language education. Not only did they nurture our children's English skills, but they also placed great importance on reading, writing, expression, and music in Japanese—something we are truly grateful for.

The continuity of the curriculum after graduation, allowed our children to continue learning English in an enjoyable and engaging way. Our daughter had a wonderful time with her host family during the Seattle study trip. She shared how much she enjoyed the experience and how sad she was to leave. At King's School, she made friends with American students, attended classes together, and played with them—experiencing the joy and confidence of being understood in English. After returning home, she told us, “I want to go back to America again!”

The time our children spent at Premier School has been truly irreplaceable for them and for us as a family. We are deeply thankful to all the teachers who provided such rich experiences and learning opportunities.

We sincerely hope that Premier School will continue to grow as a place where children's dreams and futures are nurtured.



Elementary Graduation Ceremony - Second Son, Gregory

## From King's School Teacher/Host Mother

### The time spent with Premier students is a cherished treasure.

**Sarah Cordova**  
3rd Grade Teacher  
King's Elementary School

My name is Sarah Cordova and I am a third-grade teacher at King's Elementary School in Shoreline, Washington. This is my 8th year teaching at King's. My husband, Brian, and I have 2 kids, Kylie (age 17) and Braydon (age 14). Our kids have attended King's since 1st grade/ Kindergarten, and we are very active in the King's community.

It has been an honor to host MeySen students in our home for three different years as part of the homestay program. My children have greatly enjoyed the oppor-

tunity to connect with students from Japan and learn about their culture. We enjoyed introducing the students to American cuisine and sampling the Japanese snacks they brought to share. The students who stayed with us truly became part of our family during their visit, and we considered it a privilege to extend our hospitality to them. Hosting these students has undoubtedly been a highlight of my children's elementary school years.

I have also had the privilege of hosting MeySen students in my third-grade classroom on numerous occasions over the years. My students thoroughly enjoyed getting to know their new friends from MeySen and were eager to experience school life together during their four-day visit to King's. They relished playing at recess, interacting in the classroom, and exploring the cultural differences and similarities. This invaluable experience has become a cherished tradition for my third graders, one they eagerly anticipate each year.

The unique partnership between King's and MeySen Academy offers an exceptional experience both in the

homestay program and within the classroom. The time spent with MeySen students is one of my favorite parts of the year. I am grateful for the cherished memories we have created and look forward to the enriching experiences yet to come.



## Lifelong Connections with Premier School

### – Reflections from a First Year Graduate

#### Kazuki Takahashi (Eddie), Premier School 1st Graduating Class

As I've grown older, I've come to appreciate more and more how fortunate I was to attend Premier School. Even now, nearly 20 years later, the first graduates still get together regularly—we've built lasting friendships that continue to this day.



Horseback Riding in Elementary School



Trip to Taiwan with Friends

When I entered university, it was during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no entrance ceremony, and classes hadn't yet begun. I decided to visit MeySen, and to my surprise, all the teachers still remembered me. I ended up volunteering in the Premier School Elementary classrooms for about a month, as I waited for my university to re-open. The people I met at MeySen still feel like family to me.

Premier School shaped not only my English skills but also my values and way of thinking. Being exposed to international cultures from a young age sparked curiosity rather than hesitation toward the world beyond Japan. At university, I studied tourism—a broad and global field—and also learned to speak French, Chinese, and Korean.

Many Premier School graduates are internationally minded and active on the global stage. I believe this is due to the school's immersive English environment and its overseas study programs. Living entirely in English was challenging at times, especially when I was corrected for slipping into Japanese. But those rules helped me develop the ability to respond instinctively in English. The Seattle study trip gave me firsthand experience of cultural differences. I remember playing billiards and running around in a yard that felt like a vast meadow—it was all on such a different scale. The food portions were so large that I came back noticeably rounder, and my parents jokingly said, “You've filled out!”

Growing up in such an environment allowed me to enjoy learning English and speak it naturally. It also broadened my dreams and the choices available to me. I graduated from university this March and have now joined a real estate company in Japan. My goal is to work in international business, and I'm gaining experience every day to make that dream a reality.

## Finding My Foundation at Premier School

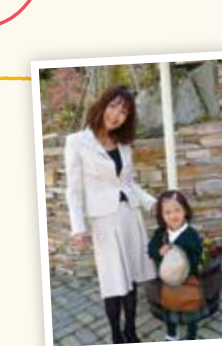
#### Momoha Shoji (Patricia), Premier School 4th Graduating Class

Hello everyone, my name is Momoha Shoji, a graduate of the 4th graduating class at Maruyama Premier School. I enrolled in K4 in 2010, continued through elementary school, and graduated from high school in 2022. I am currently studying at Akita International University.

Looking back, I can confidently say that the foundation of who I am today was built during my early years at MeySen. When English classes first began, I could barely even speak Japanese, and I had no idea what was going on in kindergarten. But I understood one rule clearly: “No Japanese in the classroom.” By repeating what the teachers said, I gradually began to grasp the pronunciation and meaning of new words.

In elementary school, we began formal writing lessons. At first, I struggled because I couldn't recognize my own mistakes. But through conversations with my teachers, I slowly improved. I especially remember how GrapeSEED's fun songs and illustrations helped me learn even difficult grammar naturally.

As I entered junior high and high school, English became my strongest subject. I had the opportunity to participate in English speech contests, where I could apply everything I had learned. Since I lived in an area not served by the



K4 Entrance Ceremony



University Ultimate Frisbee Team  
(Front row, second from left, wearing jersey #11)

MeySen bus, balancing club activities and schoolwork while commuting was challenging. But I was motivated by my dream of one day working abroad. I'm truly grateful to my family for supporting me with daily transportation—without them, I wouldn't be where I am today.

I am now enrolled in Akita International University, where I learn alongside students from around the world in an English-speaking environment. My dream is to work for an international company and help connect Japan with the world. I truly believe that I wouldn't have chosen this path if it weren't for Premier School. It has had a profound impact on my life.

I'm deeply thankful to all the teachers, friends, and especially my family who supported me over the years. I will continue to carry the lessons I learned at Premier School with me as I take each step toward my future.

## From Host Family

### This reunion in Sendai was made possible through connections formed during the Seattle study trip.

#### Hoskinson Family

Matt, Jamie, Hayden (18), Jack (16), Allie (14), Bennett (11)



King's Elementary has had a long history of hosting MeySen Academy students during some of their time in Seattle. This coming summer King's will be sending students to Japan for the first time, and they will spend 4 days in a homestay with MeySen Academy families. Our two eldest sons, Hayden and Jack will be amongst the students traveling to Japan in July. The trip to Japan has our sons very excited and working hard in their Japanese language classes. Our family thought that hosting MeySen Academy students at our home in March would be a fun way to connect with MeySen Academy ahead of the boy's trip.

We had the best time getting to know our two guests, Max and Randy! Our youngest son Bennett felt like he had two new best friends to play with and they connect-

ed on many of the same interests, video games, sports, and loving KFC chicken! We had a great time taking the boys to some popular sites in Seattle like the Ballard Locks. We enjoyed teaching them our favorite board game, Sequence and introducing them to our funny dog Chester. The boys were adventurous and always up for trying whatever food we cooked for them. Our family enjoyed many delicious Japanese treats that Max and Randy brought to share with us. Our kids were fascinated to hear about what life is like in Japan and loved learning more about Japanese culture. Our two eldest boys are even more excited about their upcoming trip to Japan. This was such a wonderful cultural exchange experience!

We were so sad to say goodbye to Max and Randy but we are grateful for the experience to meet them and get to know them. Hayden and Jack hope to see them when they visit Japan this summer.

Thank you MeySen Academy for visiting and sharing your students with us!



## Alumna



**Mika Saito (Lauren)**  
Maruyama Friends Club 43rd Graduating Class

### Dear MeySen Students

Hello everyone! I'm Mika Saito (Lauren), an alumna who attended MeySen from kindergarten through high school, including its study abroad program. For nearly three years,

I've worked at All Nippon Airways in Seattle. My English skills often receive praise, which I strongly credit to MeySen's positive learning environment. Though I initially struggled with reading and spelling, I truly enjoyed learning English through MeySen's curriculum and still remember some of the songs!

I deeply encourage you to cultivate a genuine passion for learning English. Let your personal enjoyment be your driving force, not outside expectations. It can be tough to stay focused when your enthusiasm might be misunderstood by friends, but please persevere. Your dedication and progress will inspire others and build strong connections with teachers and peers, just as I've experienced with lifelong friends and former teachers from MeySen.



These three have been close friends since their Friends Club days (Lauren is on left).

Finally, I must acknowledge my mother's crucial support during my MeySen education. Gaining independence has only deepened my appreciation for her sacrifices. Please express your gratitude to your parents and cherish your time with them.

Trust that every life event, good or bad, serves a purpose at the perfect time. Trust your growth process and continue to find joy in learning English. This mindset will help your skills shine brightly on the global stage.



## Vegalta Sendai Soccer & Cheer Dance Classes

On May 19 in Takamori and May 27 in Maruyama, Vegalta Sendai hosted its Kindergarten Kids Soccer Caravan. Children enthusiastically chased the ball alongside many staff members, including Mr. Ryang Yong Gi, a long-time player now serving as Club Coordinator, and Mr. Shingo Tomita, currently Club Communicator.

At the same time, a cheer dance class was held, featuring two leaders from the Vegalta Cheerleaders. The children danced to music while shaking their pom-poms, their bright smiles shining just as brilliantly as the pom-poms themselves.

Who knows — some of these children may one day take the field as players or cheerleaders!

