



Message from an Alumna

Minori Hoshi (Melissa)
Takamori 34th Graduating Class

At work with colleague Yurika Abe (Carol, Takamori 36th Graduating Class)

I have only fun memories from my time at MeySen: hanging out with friends and teachers before class, eating American-sized portions of meat and snacks at different events, and many other experiences that I would not have been able to enjoy anywhere else.

Sometime during high school, I came across a newsletter article about a senior student who studied at the Department of Global Citizenship Studies at Seisen University. Reading about their volunteer work abroad, I was inspired to do something to help people, and I enrolled in the same department.

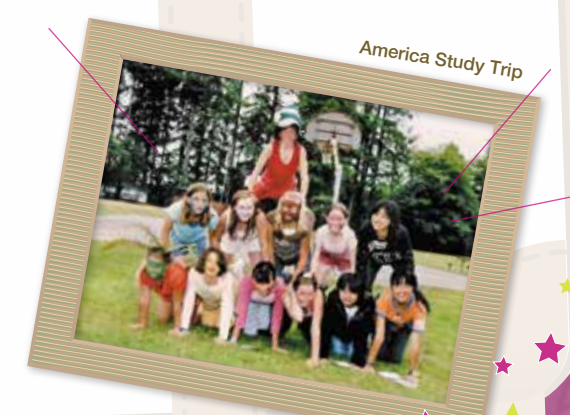
I was able to study and volunteer in the Philippines for two months, and in Korea for half a year. In Korea, I took classes together with other foreign students from Europe and America. This gave me the opportunity to converse with people from all over the world, and it broadened my worldview.

I wanted to utilize this global worldview which I cultivated at university, so I started to work at Tobu Top Tours, my current workplace. I am also involved in organizing the Aichi and Kansai Study Trip every year. This trip holds many fond memories for me as I also participated in it as a fifth grader. My experience at MeySen is foundational for

who I am now, and it is an honor to be able to join these trips as a tour guide.

My job, which I have been doing for five years now, involves sales for group trips. Before the pandemic, I went on business trips abroad and worked with inbound visitors (foreign visitors to Japan) using my English ability that I gained at MeySen. I have passed the exam to qualify for working at foreign offices, but due to the pandemic it is unclear whether I will be sent abroad.

Travel agencies continue to be under severe pressure because of the pandemic, but I am doing my best to make fun memories for people through enjoyable trips.



America Study Trip

★ Gifts for the Children ★



Every year in May, Vegalta Sendai organizes a one-day soccer and cheerleading class for K5 students. This year, they also gave MeySen twenty-four stuffed animals of Vegatta-kun and Rutana-chan, the team mascots. They are currently on display, twelve at each campus, in different classrooms, so be on the lookout to find them.

Delta Air Lines also provided gifts for Premier G5 students who were scheduled to go on the annual trip to Seattle in March of last year. The candies they received are ones that they usually give out during the flight. It was disappointing that the Seattle trip had to be canceled due to the pandemic, but it was nice to receive this surprise gift.

MeySen would like to say a big thank you to Vegalta Sendai and Delta Air Lines for these special gifts to the students.



Bible verse

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 27 John 14:1-3 (ESV)

聖書

Starting Off Our 55th Year



Daniel Fanger
Principal

It seems only the other day that we were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of MeySen Academy, but already we are beginning our 55th year for Maruyama and our 44th year for Takamori. I have been involved in MeySen for 45 years, my first 8 years as an English teacher and English Program Director and my most recent 15 years as principal, besides serving as a member of the board for much of the time in-between.

45 years ago in 1976, Maruyama campus had only Kindergarten and Friends Club, with only 30 faculty members. Two years later, Takamori Kindergarten started, and when we refurbished the buildings on both campuses 20 years ago, we started taking in K3 students, opened junior high and high school classes along with Kangaroo Club, and the faculty expanded to 150 members. Since 2006 when we celebrated our 40th anniversary, we opened Premier School and EX classes and added many more English teachers. We currently have 280 faculty members.

It is only with the support and favor from the parents and the neighborhood community that we have been able to reach our 55th year.

Looking back at 2020 —an unprecedented year

Last year, we were forced to close our school due to the pandemic, and we gave up on the America Study Trip for the seventh grade students that we had conducted every year for the past 44 years. At the beginning of last year, there were many concerns on how the year was going to unfold, but looking back, we were able



First day of school after a long break

to go back to our regular schedule for the most part after June, only closing the school in April and May and canceling some of the events until summer. This March, we were very happy for our students in Kindergarten and other grades to graduate and move on to their next year and next school.

The teachers poured a tremendous amount of energy into creating videos and sending them out during the long pause, and the Day Care staff continued to provide care for the children without a break despite the mounting tension and anxiety being felt all around. The

department heads and the head teachers, office staff, and administrative staff all united as one to deal with this unprecedented situation. I am so proud of all of the MeySen staff!

We would like to thank the parents who, in the midst of a stressful, concerning situation, trusted and supported us. I always tell our visitors that MeySen is blessed with understanding, supportive parents, and last year was another confirmation of this. At the same time, I feel again very privileged to be doing work where I can interact with children every day.

MeySen's motto: Mercy and Truth

MeySen Academy's motto is "Mercy and Truth." This is from a passage in the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament:

*Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart,
And so find favor and high esteem
In the sight of God and man.
Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.
Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and depart from evil.
It will be health to your flesh,
And strength to your bones.*

Proverbs 3:3-8 NKJV



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Cover: "Spring into the New Year" is a play on words, expressing both the feeling of the newness of the spring season, and using the English expression "to spring into something." While there are still many restrictions to daily life because of the pandemic, let's let our hearts bounce with joy as we start this year!

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

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Spring into the New Year!



FRESH NEW START

Congratulations to all of the new K3 students and their parents on starting kindergarten. Miyagi prefecture has declared a state of emergency and there seems to be no end to the pandemic in the near future, but all of us at MeySen Academy will work hard to provide the children with the best opportunities to make friends, have meaningful experiences, and learn new and interesting things.

For all of our other students, April is the start of a new school year. This may mean students in elementary and junior high are facing a busier year from having moved up a grade or having after-school club activities. We want MeySen to be not only a place for study, but also a place to meet up with close friends and teachers, a place that makes you smile.

All of the teachers are looking forward to seeing you at MeySen. Let's set clear goals and enjoy this year!



MeySen's Slides Then and NOW

The Kangaroo Slide at Maruyama and the Gorilla Slide at Takamori are both playground equipment that have a long history at MeySen. When the Kangaroo Slide was first installed in the 1970s, the end of the rollers were made of wood. The Gorilla Slide has been popular since the opening of Takamori campus, and the gorilla's face has only been replaced once. The slide has a face of a cartoonish gorilla now, but many alumni will probably remember the King Kong-like face of the old slide.

MeySen has many other slides, and each one has been made specifically to fit the slope of the landscape and terrain, while taking into account both the thrill of speed and safety of design when they were installed.



The higher parts of the slide are made into tunnels with clear walls to prevent falls and to enable the teachers to ensure safety from the outside.

Slides were tested to find the best incline so that children will not come to a stop in the middle while sliding down nor slide too fast.

The height of the sides of the slides is an important aspect in preventing falls. Sides are higher on the slides that are longer or have a sharper incline.

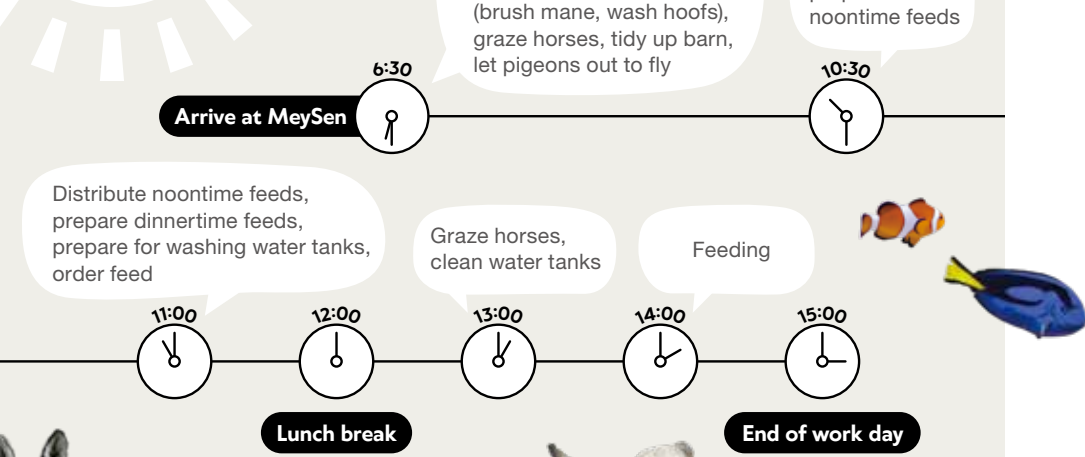
What kind of work do the teachers do? Part 3

Introducing MeySen's Animal Care Teachers

Horses and ponies, rabbits and other small animals, the fish filling the many aquariums around campus—MeySen is certainly full of animals. Here and there you can see the smiles of the students who love them, are petting them, talking to them, or just watching them move around in their tank.

For our spring edition of Friends, we would like to introduce the teachers responsible for caring for the animals. If you want to know different things about animals or have any questions, don't hesitate to go up to them and ask.

A typical day for the Animal Care Teachers

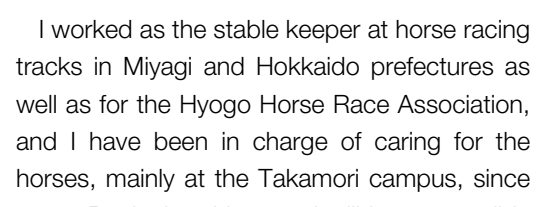


Nice to meet Ewe! My "baaa"thday is in March!

Ms. Yuko Aizawa



I have always loved animals. As a child, my pets included a duck, a chicken, a dog, a turtle, and a parakeet. I took home a pigeon that became blind after an accident at MeySen, and it lives at my home along with my cats. I went to a high school that kept many animals on its campus, and I belonged to a horse riding club. After graduating, I worked as a caretaker at Kaminoyama Horse Racing Track in Yamagata prefecture, and I came to MeySen in 2018. I have so much fun taking care of all the different animals every day.



Mr. Kazuki Onodera

I have been around horses since I was in junior high. My job at MeySen is mainly training horses. The horses and ponies at MeySen are relatively young and personable, but they are also strong animals. I try to communicate with them not just by leading* them or using them on wagons, but through actually riding them and training them, so they can be trained to have children on their backs or pull wagons safely.

*having someone ride on the horse's back and guiding them with a rope



Mr. Takumi Tanaka

Bringing our hearts together.

With the start of the new school year, the Maruyama Child Care Department and the Maruyama English Department (Friends Club and High School) each have a new head teacher. The Day Care Department has also been assigned a head teacher in order to improve MeySen's day care environment even more. These three teachers have long-time experience working with students and leading in the classroom, and we believe they will be able to work together as a team to support student development.



From left - Ms. Ogawa, Ms. Mihara, Mr. Jeffrey

Ms. Yukiko Ogawa
Day Care Department Head Teacher (both campuses)

I have realized the increasing need for day care services. In current society where women's roles in the workplace continue to expand, demand for day care services is growing, and the number of students using day care facilities is growing year by year.

In contrast to what students experience in their kindergarten classroom environment, at day care students are together with students of different ages, and also with different teachers each day. I consider this to be the biggest advantage of day care, and I am eager to make it a place where students can spend their time safely.

Ms. Sayoko Mihara
Maruyama Child Care Head Teacher

My years at MeySen are full of many unforgettable and cherished memories meeting and working with the students and their parents. I worked as Assistant Head Teacher for 10 years, supporting the former Head Teacher and the rest of the department faculty. Through this I gained a deeper understanding and a new perspective about how a kindergarten is run.

This new school year is the start of a new phase for me personally as the head teacher of the Child Care Department. I will do my best to provide the children with a fun school life, bringing smiles and joy to both them and their parents. Don't hesitate to come talk to me anytime!

Mr. Jeffrey Hash
Maruyama Friends Club Program Director

I have worked on both campuses for a long time, so I am sure most of you know me. I am thankful to be able to support you all at MeySen, and to be able to interact and walk together with all of you.

I have been asked to be the head of Maruyama Friends Club from this spring. While this is a huge responsibility, I am very excited about this new role. No one can do everything perfectly, myself included. But just as the Bible says, I want to pour my energy into supporting all of you at MeySen with a heart of mercy, humility, servanthood, diligence, and sincerity, just like our Lord Jesus Christ who loved and served people. Let's have a great year together!



Premier School Celebrates 15th Year

Premier School started at the Takamori campus in 2006, and in 2021, it celebrates another landmark in its journey of fifteen years. Along with Maruyama Premier School, which opened in 2007, a total of 355 students have graduated from this program.

Four of the G6 students that graduated in March successfully passed the EIKEN Test in Practical English Proficiency Grade Pre-1 (the second most difficult level). One student also scored 100% on the TOEFL Junior exam. These outstanding scores are a clear result of each student's commitment to daily class attendance and their effort to learn English at a high level.

This spring, 49 new K4 students have started their learning journey in Premier School. Premier School will fully support these new students along with all of the current students taking their next step into their new grade.



Four students from G6 that passed the Grade Pre-1 of EIKEN. From left - Oriza Miura (Oriza), Haruka Nishioka (Karen), Kensuke Endo (Sid), Harunobu Zaima (Nathan).

The Fruit of Hard Work

The G5 and G6 students of Premier Elementary take the TOEFL Junior exam once a year in order to test the effectiveness of their learning and to motivate themselves for the next step. While they intentionally do not engage in any special study or preparation for this exam, on average, students are scoring 690 in G5 and 720 in G6.

Last October, Kensuke Endo (Sid) of Takamori G6, who graduated in March of this year, scored 900, a perfect score. Scoring 900 on this test indicates an ability in English equal to high school level worldwide. For a sixth grader to achieve this score is something that is hardly seen in all of Japan. Kensuke was featured in an article in the 2019 spring edition of Friends that talked about the number of English books he was reading on his own, and it shows just how much of a difference that daily exposure to English can make in learning.

