

Message from an Alumnus

Takayuki Nakata (Robert)
Takamori 30th Graduating Class



With friends at Friends Club



Kindergarten Christmas concert (far right)

Greetings to all of you who read the Friends Newsletter. My name is Takayuki Nakata, and I am a MeySen alumnus. I am 30 years old, and work as a lawyer at a law firm in Tokyo that specializes in corporate legal matters. I am currently working as a corporate lawyer at an internet related company.

I attended MeySen Takamori Kindergarten and Friends Club. I would like to share with you how my experience at MeySen is being utilized in my current life.

The first thing I want to mention relates to English pronunciation. It was after I started working that I realized how vital good pronunciation is in English communication. During video calls with clients from overseas, when I boldly speak up in the English that I acquired at MeySen, from then on, people see me as an "English speaker." While I was at MeySen, I communicated with the friendly teachers, and without realizing

it, I gained good pronunciation that is close to native level.

Second is listening ability. I am currently studying for TOEFL in preparing to go to law school in America from summer of 2022. The TOEFL test consists of four areas: reading, listening, speaking, and writing, for the purpose of testing overall practical English ability. My colleagues at my law firm are also studying for TOEFL, and they seem to especially struggle to get higher scores in the listening section. For me, I don't find it such a challenge, and I feel that this is also thanks to my experience at MeySen. I am realizing that I was very fortunate to have had the chance to learn foundational English skills during kindergarten and elementary school, an age when it was easy to absorb new learning and skills.

Third, I want to comment on the daily Bible teachings at MeySen. My job as a corporate lawyer is tough on both the mind and the body, and it requires resili-

ence and sincerity even in when dealing with physical tiredness and stress. To be honest, I did not pay such good attention to the teaching on "Truth" while I attended Friends Club, but I feel that those teachings have given me direction and support even on a subconscious level which has enabled me to maintain the high moral standard required of a lawyer. I hope that you will all make the most of your opportunities at MeySen, and learn many things.

I want to thank the principal for giving me this opportunity to write this article, and I also want to thank the teachers and staff, and my parents for having me study at MeySen. May this article be an encouragement in some way to all of you.

■ Mr. Takayuki Nakata is planning to study law in America, and later taking the national exam for the American Bar Association and working at a law firm in America. We wish him all the best.

Bible verse

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

John 5:28-29 (ESV)

聖書

MeySen's Core Values

NEW series

The Principles We Hold Most Dear

There are values and mindsets that we share and value as MeySen staff. It was a culture that was passed down by the original faculty and staff since the time of MeySen's founding 54 years ago. Then around ten years ago we endeavored to put our culture in words and distilled them as these five points: diligence, integrity, servanthood, humility, and compassion. This is the legacy that we would like to pass on to all of our staff, and all of our training revolves around these values. We refer to these five core values in our recruitment process as well.

I would like to take the opportunity in this newsletter to introduce these to you one at a time. I am sure they will be a great help to you when you start working in the future, as well as in your studies and your relationships with friends. Please take these to heart and put them into action.

Daniel Fanger, Principal.



Diligence Whatever you do, do it with all your heart and all your strength

MeySen Core Values Part 1

Diligence means to put effort into your work and study. The opposite of diligence would be laziness, idleness, and negligence. Whether it is study or work, household chores or helping at home, you will have good results when you put your effort into it. On the other hand, when you do not try your best but are lazy, you will not succeed. Many famous people who have had success in business state that their success is due to their hard work. Athletes and professional musicians will only succeed when they put hours into practice without compromise.

Of course, natural talent, timing, and luck have a large influence on success too. However, even with these factors, there is no success without effort. The Bible talks about diligence and laziness in the following verses:

The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor. (Proverbs 12:24)

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. (Proverbs 13:4)

The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty. (Proverbs 21:5)

The first verse mentions the word "slothful," which means lazy. A "sluggard" is someone who wants to avoid trouble, someone who is idle. People who are lazy will have trouble and end up having to serve other people. These verses also say that diligent people will be fulfilled in their heart, and their plans will be profitable.

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame. (Proverbs 10:4,5)

Not all poverty comes from laziness, but if you are idle, you will not succeed. It is a shame when there are things to do but someone is too lazy to get it done.

Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber a little folding of the hands to rest... (Proverbs 6:6,9,10)

Of course this does not mean that you should use all of your time for work and not sleep. It means that when someone tends to be lazy, it will become worse and eventually corrupt the person. Ants will work effectively according to plan. As we learn from them, we will be blessed.

In other words, diligence means to be responsible and put one's best effort into what they have been given to do. It means to not only finish the job, but to put 100% of one's skill and ability into it. It means to not cut corners even when no-one is looking.

A MeySen teacher will endeavor to give the best education to each student in their classroom. Other staff members will do their best to finish their job thoroughly and quickly. Performing a task given by a senior staff member is the least of what they will do. They are looking beyond the task at hand and working to provide a better envi-

ronment for the children and students who come to the kindergarten. I ask our staff to think about how they would work and serve customers if they were running their own shop or business, and to approach their work at MeySen with these things in mind.

I encourage you to think about the situation you are in. Do you listen diligently to the teacher and focus in class? Are you quick to start working on your homework when you get home, and try to finish it neatly and promptly? If you have a chore that you are responsible for, do you work at it thoroughly? As you determine in your heart to do the things you need to do with all of your heart and strength, you will experience a sense of achievement and joy. When you first finish your homework and your chores before you play, you will be able to fully enjoy it without worry or concern. As you are aware of being diligent and make it a habit, it will become a wonderful virtue that will make you distinguished.

There is a phrase in Japanese, "on-wa-kin-ben." It is composed of four Chinese characters which mean to be calm and gentle in demeanor and diligent in work or study. As you make that a part of who you are, it will be a great help for you as you go into society or have your own family in the future. I encourage you to make that your goal and work towards it.



Friends

MeySen Academy Newsletter フレンズ

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Let's play with the animals at MeySen!

While the fresh green and blossoming flowers shine bright, MeySen invited 100 families (pre-kindergarten children and their parents) and held a special event, "Play with the Animals at MeySen" this May.

The children rode on the horse-drawn wagons, played with the rabbits, goats, and ponies, and moved around the campus with big smiles on their faces. Several of the parents commented happily that, "it was nice to have the students at the kindergarten greet us so energetically."

We hope that the children had a memorable time with the animals, and that they will visit the campus again.



明泉の動物と遊ぼう!

Cover: MeySen's camping season has arrived with activities such as camping on the grounds, Canadian kayaking at Onogawa Lake in Fukushima, river trekking at Hanayama, and more! We can imagine the students' smiles and laughter as they release their hearts and bodies into playing in nature.

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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.



LET THE SUMMER BEGIN!

The news on Covid-19 can get you feeling down sometimes, but you only have one chance to enjoy the summer of 2021. Let's make this summer vacation a memorable one by making new friends, reading books, working on REP homework, and enjoying sports and hobbies!



My teacher



Norika Hayashi (Madeline)
Takamori Premier Elementary G3

Let me introduce you to our G3 Tigers class teacher, Mr. James. He is tall and very funny. When we do well in class, our team gets a sticker worth 15 points. It's really fun and makes us feel like trying hard.

My teacher is Ms. Kanoe. She helps me when I don't understand a word, she tells me the meaning easily. When I don't know the answer in the Writer, she gives me some hints. In May, we made marble runs". She helped me when I was making it and when I can't reach the high parts. At recess she plays with us. We have had our class for only three or four months, but I want this class to be fun. Sixth grade is the last year of Elementary School, so I want to make good memories with Ms. Kanoe and my friends.
(Written in English by Wesley)

"Marble runs" are a game where rails are connected to make a path for marbles to travel down. In Premier G6, students study about ancient civilizations, and as part of one assignment, students constructed a Mesopotamian temple using the marble run rails.



Ibuki Maro (Wesley)
Maruyama Premier Elementary G6

Vegalta Sendai Soccer & Cheerleading Classes

Every year, Vegalta Sendai (the city's national league soccer team) visits kindergartens and day care centers during their Kindergarten Kids Soccer Caravan to hold soccer and cheerleading classes. On May 17 this year, the Vegalta soccer school coaches, along with the Vegalta cheerleaders, came to Takamori to teach the students the fun of moving their bodies. Unfortunately, Maruyama's visit had to be canceled, but it was impressive to watch the K5 and Premier K5 students come alive as they chased balls and danced to the music.



In June, thanks to Shuhei Akasaki, one of the players of Vegalta Sendai, 30 students* and their parents received invitations to the Hokkaido Consadole Sapporo match. Bodily movement and play with other children is indispensable for a child's healthy development. MeySen is always looking for ways to provide opportunities for students to exercise and enjoy sports, despite the current situation with Covid-19.

*from Kindergarten and Premier Kindergarten



The parents and children that were invited to the game each received a gift pack from Mr. Akasaki: towels with the Vegalta logo, a copy of the book by Fumiya Hayakawa, "Soshite aruki dasu" (And start walking), and an introductory booklet to soccer for children.

Presents for Children at Asahigaoka Gakuen

MeySen presented 150 t-shirts and toys to the children living at Asahigaoka Gakuen, a children's home in Kesennuma. Vice Principal Jonathan Calnon presented the gifts to Principal Ryo Sugawara, for "the children who are thriving despite the Covid-19 situation." The staff at the home were very happy to receive them.

MeySen continues to support those who suffered loss and damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and we hope to maintain our relationship with Asahigaoka Gakuen for years to come.



This story was featured in the local newspaper, Sanriku Shinpo

photo credit: Sanriku Shinpo



Friends Club classes used to be on Saturday afternoon.

What Saturday afternoons look like now

Why does MeySen have "Special Days?"

During the first semester of every school year, Friends Club and Premier Elementary hold what are called "Special Days." They are exciting days, with activities such as trips to Yagiyama Zoo and Michinoku Park, but until about 20 years ago, MeySen did not have Special Days. This is related to the history of Japanese public elementary schools. Originally, Japanese public schools always held classes on Saturday mornings. Many parents will probably remember those days. Because of this, Friends Club also held classes on Saturday afternoons, after school and lunchtime. Eventually, public schools took off every second Saturday, then every second and fourth Saturday, and finally, in 2002, every Saturday. Since then, Friends Club changed to Saturday morning, but Special Days were added to make use of the free time in the afternoon. So the answer to the question is: because public elementary schools no longer hold class on Saturday!

What kind of work do the teachers do?

Introducing MeySen's Janitorial Department

"The campus is always so clean—I think it is amazing how well it is maintained."
"Thank you for keeping the paths clear of snow so that the children can walk safely during the heavy snowfalls."
MeySen receives many comments from parents in its yearly survey expressing gratitude for how the buildings and grounds, including the parking lots and the paths leading from them, are well cleaned and maintained. In this summer edition, we would like to introduce you to MeySen's Janitorial Department.

A typical day for the janitorial teachers

Arrive to work

- before Kindergarten students arrive
 - clean toilets
 - clean the paths and grounds with a leaf blower
 - vacuum the corridors
 - grounds cleaning and maintenance

The toilets and sinks are cleaned at least three times a day.



after the Kindergarten students leave, until Friends Club and Premier Elementary classes begin

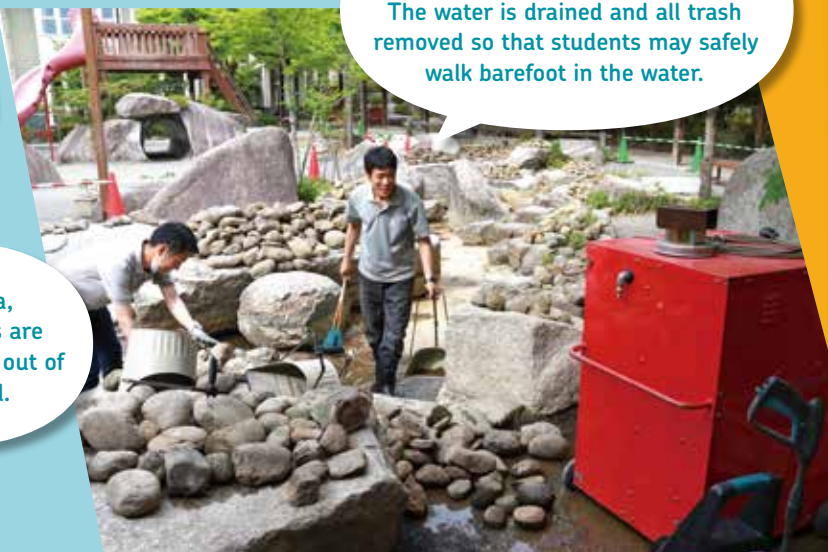
- clean toilets
- vacuum the corridors
- set up the shoe racks

The classrooms are cleaned by the teachers.

after Friends Club and Premier Elementary classes

- put away the shoe racks
- clean the buses
- clean the halls and rooms

At Maruyama, mud and leaves are regularly cleaned out of the waterfall.



Cleaning the rock field is a unique job at Takamori. The water is drained and all trash removed so that students may safely walk barefoot in the water.



Maruyama Takamori

Fire Lookout Tower at Maruyama Campus

At Maruyama, near the pigeon coop, there is a fire lookout tower. Why does Maruyama Campus have a fire lookout tower? According to Mr. Philip Broman, the honorary chair of the board, the fire lookout tower was set up around the second or third year of MeySen Maruyama Kindergarten. When the local people gifted the school the land below the Spring Building to build the "Yoiko Garden," the area with the ring climb in it, there was a request for a bell to ring to let people know the time. The teachers at the time found an old fire lookout tower and set it there. It may not look so big from distance, but it is actually 10 meters (33ft) tall.

What is a fire lookout tower?

Historically, Japanese houses were built with wood. A fire could spread quickly, so it was important for the whole town to be notified as soon as possible in the event of a fire. This is where the fire lookout towers were used. They enabled people to view the town from a high vantage point, and if a fire was spotted, they could ring the bell to warn people, which greatly aided in extinguishing fires and preventing them from spreading.

