

Message from an Alumna



Turning aspirations into reality. A professional Dancer living in the U.S.

Marin Asano (Patricia) Maruyama 38th Graduating Class

I attended MeySen Takamori Kindergarten and Maruyama Friends Club. I remember how much I enjoyed going to MeySen, the teachers who always treated me warmly with kind smiles, and the interactions I had with all the animals, both in the school buildings and outside in the rich natural surroundings.

I experienced American culture through fun events such as the Jamboree party and the Christmas party, where Santa Claus with his long beard came to visit us. These events at MeySen made me yearn to experience the United States for myself.

When I was about seven years old, my mother took me to see a ballet concert. I was fascinated by the sparkling ballerinas on stage and decided to start classical ballet myself. It was around this time that I began to dream of becoming a dancer. As I continued classical ballet, I had many opportunities to experience entertainment overseas and had a vague dream that someday, I would be a dancer overseas.

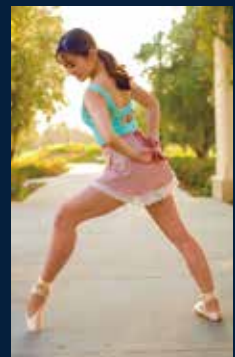
When I became a high school student, I had the opportunity to participate in a study abroad workshop at MeySen, and this vague dream

that I had been carrying all these years, turned into a clear goal. In preparation for studying abroad, I used the internet to search for schools in the United States that excelled in dance and ended up attending and eventually graduating from California State University Fullerton, with a bachelor's degree in Performing Arts Dance.

When I first enrolled in the program, I could not speak English very well, so I recorded lectures and studied hard at home, every day. The cultural differences were confusing at times, but dancing together with my classmates who had the same dream as I did, motivated me to face those challenges head-on.

Now, as a professional dancer, I belong to a dance company that performs in Los Angeles and Orange counties in California, performing various genres such as classical ballet, modern dance, and contemporary dance.

I will forever be grateful to my parents, who have remained by my side regardless of distance, and to all those who have helped guide me to this point in my life. I will continue to work hard to create the best dance entertainment that I can, believing that I am exactly where I should be, living my dream, in America.



Bible verse

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

聖書

Welcoming the New School Year

We have begun our 57th year, here at MeySen Academy. Every year at this time, we welcome many bright-eyed new students to our school. The Bible says, "God in heaven created us human beings in His own image." When I look at the faces of these little ones, I am reminded of how much God loves each and every one of us. Children truly are precious gifts and treasures from God.



Daniel Fanger, Principal

Seedlings Half Harvested

In Japan, there is an old phrase "nae hansaku" which roughly translates to "seedlings half harvested". The meaning behind this phrase is that when you take the time to grow good rice seedlings, this seemingly small investment is in reality the majority of the work and will guarantee that you will harvest high-quality rice. While growing the seedlings takes just a short period of time, it's actually the most important part of the process. If you grow your seedlings mindfully, taking care to give them the right amount of water and light, and maintaining the ideal temperature, you will produce a quality crop.

The same can be said for raising children. Children are with their parents for only a small part of their lives, but how we interact with them, how diligently we put our heart and soul into parenting, and how much quality time we spend with them will greatly impact their lives.

A Child's Happiness

Every parent wants their child to be happy. To achieve this, it is important to think about your child's future and to raise your child diligently and accordingly. Just as water and light for seedlings are important in rice cultivation, the balance between kindness and compassion and correction and discipline towards children is of utmost importance. And the most important thing about correction and discipline towards your child, is that it's done out of love. There is a huge difference between disciplining your child emotionally out of frustration or anger and disciplining them calmly and lovingly for the sake of their development.

Various studies have shown that people who were allowed to do as they pleased and left to their own devices as children, did not feel loved by their parents, while those who were raised with firm but loving guidance and discipline with clear boundaries, felt loved by their parents. Through this loving guidance and discipline, children will respect their parents and be grateful to them. Parents and teachers should strive to maintain a good balance of kindness and discipline in their interactions with their children.

Mission of MeySen Academy

The greatest responsibility for education lies with the parents, and the education and discipline received from parents is the most effective. Of course, we believe that kindergarten education also plays an important role in a child's growth. It is to help them grow through experiences and learning that cannot be obtained in the home environment alone. It is a privilege and a great pleasure to be able to be involved in and help educate these precious children in their early years, as they are forming the foundation of their lives. We have a clear vision for the education of our students, and will be introducing this vision, which consists of six pillars, in future newsletters.

To date, more than 24,000 students have graduated from MeySen Academy, and our graduates as adults are active in various places throughout Japan and abroad. Our greatest joy is to see our graduates lead meaningful lives and contribute positively to not only their own families, but to their communities as well. For this reason, we will continue to do our utmost to educate our students, to the best of our abilities.



Honorary Chairman Attends Teachers' Farewell Party

At the end of March each year, the school holds a farewell party for teachers who will be moving on from MeySen Academy. This year, Honorary Chairman of the Board, Philip Broman, attended the event for the first time in many years. Many alumni and parents may remember him dressing

up as Santa Claus in the Christmas videos he produced for the Friends Club children when he was the acting principal or visiting each of the MeySen classrooms with Chico the llama. Whenever the students saw him walking around the school grounds, they would run up to him and enthusiastically call out, "Principal!"

Serendipitously, Philip Broman was celebrating his 88th birthday on this very same day and enjoyed catching up with the MeySen staff at the farewell party, with a broad smile on his face, just as he had done many years before. We wish all the departing teachers success in all their future endeavors.



We would like to express our warmest wishes to the teachers who are leaving MeySen, as well as to those who will continue to work with us in the new school year.



friends フレンズ
「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。

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.

Published by: MeySen Academy Schools
www.meysen.ac.jp
Publication Date: April 20, 2023



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「読む」とつながる。「読む」とひろがる。

MeySen Newsletter No. 202



Premier G5 Students Safely Return from Seattle Study Trip

On this trip, the 5th graders demonstrated the English language skills they have acquired in Premier School and had many valuable experiences while interacting with the people they met in Seattle!



Trip Schedule

- Day 1 >>> Depart Japan / Arrive in Seattle (Miracle Ranch Camp)
- Day 2 >>> Sightseeing at Woodland Park Zoo
- Day 3 >>> Begin School Experience at King's Elementary and Homestay
- Day 6 >>> Finish School Experience and Homestay Return to Miracle Ranch Camp Camp Fusion Begins (International Camp)
- Day 9 >>> Sightseeing at the Space Needle and Museum of Flight
- Day 10 >>> Sightseeing at the Seattle Aquarium
- Day 11 >>> Depart Seattle
- Day 12 >>> Return to Japan



The Seattle study trip, which had to be canceled due to the COVID pandemic, has finally resumed this year, as the Premier School 5th grade students departed Japan on March 26. While in Seattle, they fully demonstrated the English skills they have been working on diligently these past seven years and enjoyed interacting with their host families and with the children of King's Elementary School.

Fortunately, the COVID situation has begun to abate, and students from the Premier School grades that could not attend the Seattle trip due to the pandemic, will have the opportunity to participate in the Junior High study trip to the United States and also the short-term study abroad trip in Australia, so we hope that they will use these trips to continue to hone their international sensibilities.

Our new building, the Toddler House, has been completed at the Maruyama Campus.

Adjacent to the Friends Square, which was completed three years ago, the Toddler House has six childcare rooms, a large play hall, and a teachers' office. Our before and after-school childcare program, which had been using the Autumn Building until now, moved to the Toddler House in April. We are also starting a new program at MeySen in September, which we will call the Toddler Class. This new program for two-year-olds, will also be using the spacious Toddler House.

The architect who designed the Toddler House
Mike Whalen

The Toddler House was designed by Mike Whalen, a registered architect with the American Institute of Architects in Seattle. Mike has designed all the current kindergarten buildings at both the Maruyama and Takamori campus, and he purposefully designed the new Toddler House to blend in with the existing buildings and campus landscape and to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere for our students.

Mike is a well-known architect who has designed several office buildings, but MeySen Academy is the only school he has designed. Since the first building he designed for MeySen was completed back in 1999, the concept of "children coming from their own homes to MeySen's 'big house' every day" has not changed.



Toddler Class Opens in September

In September of this year, MeySen Kindergarten will become a four-year preschool, with the addition of our newest program, the Toddler Class. This new program is for two-year-olds, and they will be joining the kindergarten starting in September for the 2023 school year, and then from April from 2024 onward. The decision to start this new program was made in order to meet the needs of working parents, and to provide the same education that has been cultivated at MeySen so far, for these younger students. Many people showed interest, and the number of families that applied was over two-and-a-half times higher than the number of openings available.

We are thrilled to welcome our newest little students, at both MeySen kindergarten campuses this September!



Yagiyama Zoological Park

Sendai Umino-Mori Aquarium

MeySen children, parents, alumni, and community members have come together with the MeySen staff to support each other through volunteer activities and donations.

MeySen Teachers Volunteer — with NPOs, Kids' Door & STORIA

On February 18, with the cooperation of Kids' Door Tohoku (an organization that supports children's learning and helps support children from less fortunate situations), MeySen hosted a cross-cultural experience event for 19 junior high and high school students. Through the volunteer efforts of Mr. Jeffrey and Mr. Peter, along with several other MeySen teachers, this event was a huge success. The students played "MeySen-style" games in the play hall, much of which was done in English, and even toured the Maruyama campus, playing on the giant slides and visiting the animals in the barn. The day ended with a pizza party and ice cream for dessert. It was a wonderful experience for the students and the MeySen staff!



Kids' Door Tohoku
 Certified Nonprofit Organization
<https://kidsdoor-tohoku.net/>

Greetings from the New Directors

Mr. Jimmy
 Maruyama Friends Club - Deputy Program Director

While I'll miss spending time with the children every day in the classroom as their homeroom teacher, I will do my best to continue to support the students and now the teachers in my new role, and work hard to help to make this an enjoyable experience for everyone.

Mr. Joshua
 Takamori Friends Club - Deputy Program Director

I am returning to Takamori for the first time in seven years. During that time, I was a classroom teacher and then the Deputy Program Director of Friends Club at the Maruyama Campus. I will use the experience I gained at Maruyama and do my best at Takamori. I look forward to seeing you!

Mr. Josiah
 Maruyama Premier School - Deputy Program Director

I'm back again! I'm very happy to be able to support you as the Deputy Program Director of the Maruyama Premier School, since my return to MeySen this January. I will do my best by utilizing the skills I acquired previously as a kindergarten and Friends Club teacher, as well as my experience in my former role as the Friends Club Program Director at Maruyama. Let's have an awesome year together!



In a combined effort with STORIA (an organization that works to solve child poverty in Japan), this past Christmas season we asked our MeySen teachers to come together and donate whatever funds they could, to help support children from less fortunate homes. Through their efforts, we collected 120,000 yen in donations. With the help of STORIA, we were able to use the funds and send Christmas gifts of sweets and fruit to these children.

STORIA
 Certified Nonprofit Organization
<https://www.storia.or.jp/>

Shopping Experience at MeySen Store Day

Upper-elementary students in the Friends Club and Premier School can exchange their REP points earned from English study at home for MeySen dollars, which they can then use to purchase candy, stationery, and MeySen goods on Store Day, held about four times a year.

4th grade students will make their shopping debut at the store this school year! REP learning is very effective in helping students remember and use the English they are exposed to during class. We hope our students continue to do their REP at home and that they will earn lots of points and enjoy shopping, while improving their English.

On Store Day, students will shop while conversing in English with their friends and teacher, which is good practice for their future study trip in the United States. On their study trip, they will be shopping at the camp and also some of the sightseeing locations, so this is a great opportunity to shop in English, using "American-type" money!



MeySen dollar bills with the portrait of Honorary Chairman Philip Broman

"A Way We Learn" Gathering for Local Businesses



Plaques of appreciation for sponsorship were presented to the donors.

In January, we held a gathering to show our appreciation for the donations made by local businesses, that were used to support our community-integrated study abroad support project "A Way We Learn" and also supported the construction of our new Toddler House building. The number of businesses that support "A Way We Learn" has increased from 25 in 2017 when the program began, and is now up to 93, and we cannot thank them enough for their generosity.

We hold this gathering not only to show appreciation, but to also encourage these local businesses to continue working together with MeySen to support the growth of children and local communities, and to provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas across industries.

One of the highlights of the gathering, was when two MeySen students, who both had received scholarship support for their own study abroad experiences, gave thank-you speeches to the business leaders. This upcoming year, five more MeySen students, who have recently passed the selection process, will soon leave for their own long-term study abroad experience in the United States. We hope that they will broaden their perspectives and their horizons through this new challenge in their lives and that they will have a heart of gratitude for the people that helped them achieve this dream.

Parent Volunteer Activity Report

In fiscal year 2022, 118 parent volunteers supported the school's education in various aspects, and during the year they worked a total of 1,750 hours. All of us at the school would like to express our sincere gratitude to them. Parents' help in preparing teaching materials and preparing for school events is not only extremely helpful, but also allows the teachers to focus on spending even more time with their students.

The "Heart & Hands" program is a valuable opportunity for parents to deepen their understanding of MeySen through volunteer activities, as well as for the school to work together with the parents to provide a carefully planned education.

A gathering for these parents was held in February, to express appreciation for the year's activities, and commemorative gifts were presented.



We are hoping for new parents to join our activities for the upcoming school year, and will continue to expand the program to include even more parent volunteers in the future.

Thank you for the many responses to the quiz in Issue 201. There were 252 entries and 136 correct answers.

- MeySen Cap Winners**
 Maruyama: Naotaro Ogasawara, FC3
 Takamori: Otoh Sasaki, Kindergarten Nenchu
- MeySen Notepad Winners**
 Maruyama: Sana Tomizuka, FCT, Akiho Otsu, FC6
 Takamori: Sakurako Sone, FCT, Akira Iwasaki, FC5

- Answers
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Maruyama Kangaroo Slide | 4 Maruyama Hambo Slide |
| 2 Takamori Gorilla Slide | 5 Takamori Snail Jungle Gym |
| 3 Takamori Slide (Lakeside Grounds) | |



The aquariums at MeySen have many different types of fish! Can you identify the fish below?



JUMP INTO SPRING WITH FRESH EXPERIENCES!



Michinoku Lakeside Park



MeySen Family Day