

CAJ Chronicle

Christian Academy in Japan

Summer 2022

Seasons of
CHANGE





CHRONICLE

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Thank you to those who in the early days of CAJ had the foresight to record the school and its happenings. We appreciate you, although we don't know your names.

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Message from Head of School



These past weeks have been filled with “last moments” for me. I’m reminded of when I had children graduating from high school, and all the bittersweet occasions they marked: the last soccer game, last concert, last class, last walk to school. I find myself celebrating and reflecting on some of the same “lasts.” I want to savor each main event, and also take time to appreciate those ordinary episodes that make up a day in school life.

I am so grateful for this CAJ community that spreads beyond here and now to include those whose lives intersected here in Higashi Kurume many years ago. In this *CAJ Chronicle* “last” issue for me as head of school, we talk about the changes ahead, confident that the God who does not change is still guiding us through the days and years before us. We affirm with the Psalmist,

But [God] is the same, and [his] years will not come to an end.

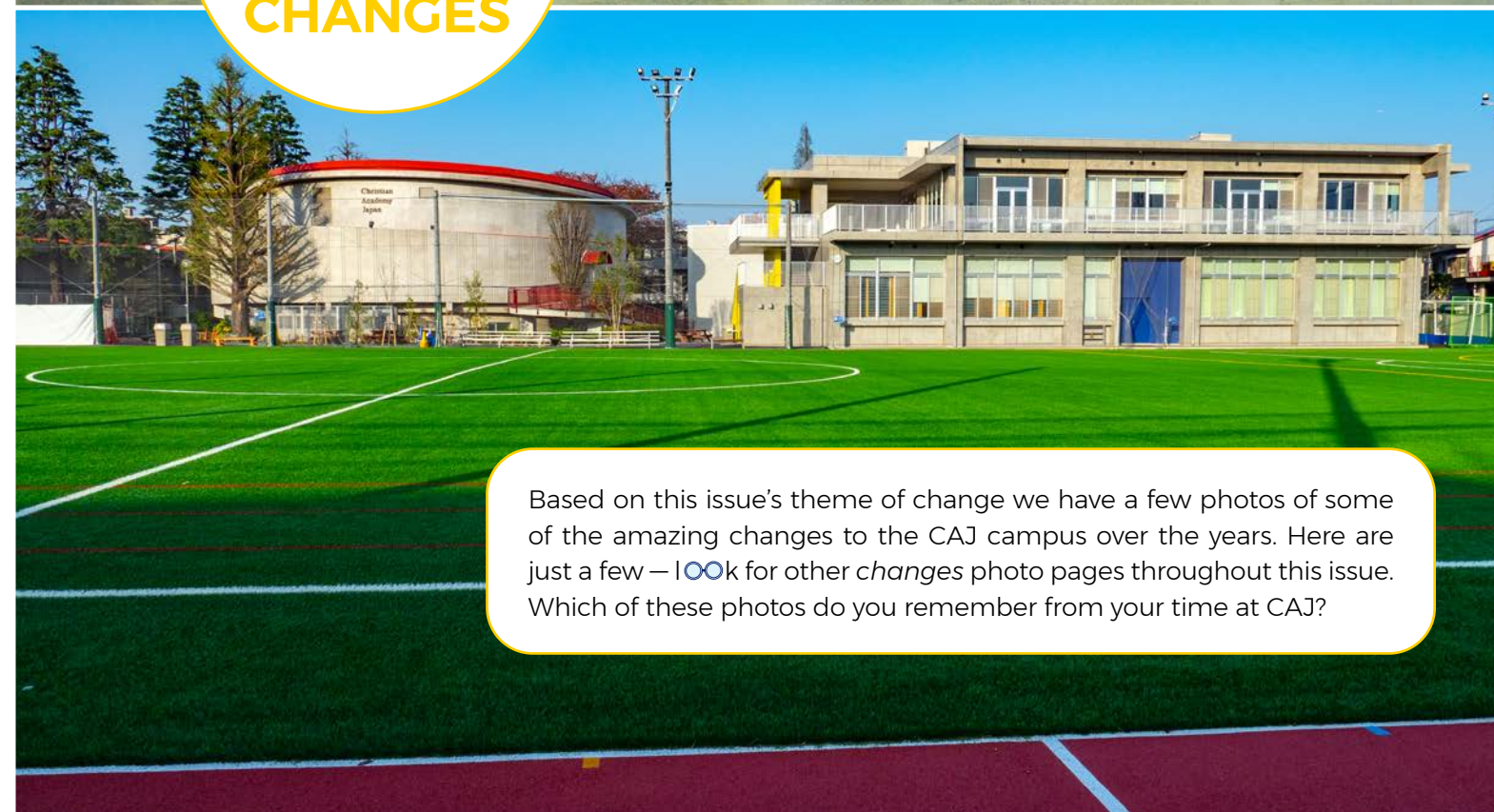
~ Psalm 102: 27

May we all find rest in his eternal changelessness.

Anda Foxwell | HEAD OF SCHOOL

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Based on this issue’s theme of change we have a few photos of some of the amazing changes to the CAJ campus over the years. Here are just a few — I **look** for other *changes* photo pages throughout this issue. Which of these photos do you remember from your time at CAJ?



MANAGING change

ANDA FOXWELL
Head of School

CHANGE CAN BE EXCITING or frightening, something we embrace or avoid. When one imagines how many changes each of us face during our lifetime, you would think we'd be used to their impact, but changes still generate a variety of emotions. CAJ is facing some changes on the horizon with a new Head of School arriving and several long-term staff members reaching or nearing retirement. How does this impact a school? How do we navigate change, while staying on the course we have chosen?

We need to be certain of where we are headed. When we know that the goal we have in the distance has not changed; when we are sure that map that guides our course is reliable; when we understand what is important to us in the journey we are assured that despite changes around us, we will stay the course. This is the reason we talk so much about our core statements that define our vision, our mission, our values, and our objectives. These statements serve as our destination, our map, and our means of travel. No matter who the person is who will be leading the way, we will aim toward "equipping students to serve Japan and the world for Christ."



Students will continue to be led into “servant leadership by providing guidance for their spiritual journeys, cultivating individual excellence, fostering healthy relationships and building a sense of local and global responsibility in a Christ-centered, nurturing, diverse and inspiring learning community.” We will persist in maintaining the values of teaching God’s truth, cherishing his image in each individual, and building community where we are and beyond.

We have methods and systems in place that help us safeguard these important principles. Our Board of Directors monitors the impact of decisions on the direction of CAJ and helps ensure that we stay true to our identity and vision. CAJ is led by a team of leaders who each know the strengths and needs of their division and further contribute to the wisdom of the team. Teachers receive ongoing training and development in strategies to meet our objectives through the lens of a biblical perspective, as well as building their own leadership strengths. Many checks and balances help protect the integrity of CAJ so that small changes do not shake the foundation.

Of course, the one unshakeable constant for CAJ and for all those who form the community connected to it is that God himself never changes. It is his unfailing love that sustains us and will continue to be the light that guides us into a future that is “as bright as the promises of God” (Hudson Taylor). Change is inevitable, but we serve a God who “is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). 🙏



DENISE OWEN

41 years of faithful service

At the end of this school year, CAJ will say a fond farewell to Denise Owen, who has been teaching at CAJ since 1981.

Denise was born in Indiana, USA and studied music at the Oberlin Conservatory (Bachelor of Music) and Regent College (Master of Christian Studies).

She came to Japan on March 9, 1981 as a short-term missionary with LIFE Ministries. A LIFE Ministries leader had children at CAJ and Denise heard that CAJ was looking for a piano teacher. Denise initially taught piano on her day off, but shortly after that she applied for a one-year placement. That one year has turned into 41 years of continuous service at CAJ.

During her time at CAJ Denise has taught elementary music, middle school choir, private flute and flute ensemble, and has been the accompanist for Chamber Singers and High School Choir. She has also taught piano and accompanied the Middle School Choir.

Over her time at CAJ, Denise has seen many changes. She notes that the

demographic of the students has changed. There are a lot more EAL (English as an Additional Language) students now than there were in 1981. There are over twice as many students overall. New buildings have been built: the gym, the middle and

high school building, and now the ARK, with its Cafeteria, multi-purpose space and band room.

Miss Owen has been my flute teacher for many years and has taught me so much. She is a very talented flutist and a good teacher. She is not only my flute and ensemble teacher, but she is also my friend who shares fun stories about her cats and interesting details about her life.

Sarah | CLASS OF 2023

I have been immensely blessed by working with Denise Owen. She is a consummate musician: talented, skilled, knowledgeable and helpful. She has applied these attributes to her role as accompanist for my two choirs during the past eight years (and did so for many years for my predecessor). As her accompanist for middle school choir, I have watched a master teacher elicit from her students beautiful, exciting, skillfully performed music. I have learned new techniques and no small amount of music history. Most importantly, our students have benefited greatly from Denise's instruction, which will influence musicians for generations to come.

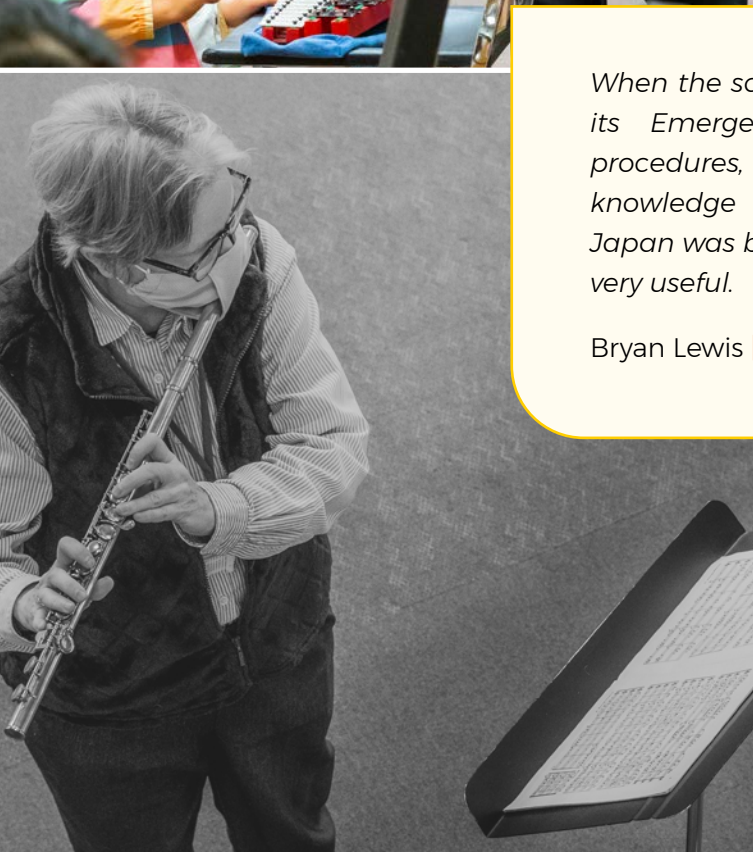
Scott Ponzani | MUSIC DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND FINE ARTS COORDINATOR





When the school was reviewing its Emergency Management procedures, Denise's detailed knowledge of earthquakes in Japan was both impressive and very useful.

Bryan Lewis | BUSINESS MANAGER



However, despite the changes over the years, Denise says that some things never change - students in general like to be here and want to learn and cooperate.

Teaching is not always easy, and one of Denise's biggest challenges has been helping students who come in the upper elementary grades who have not had any music education at all catch up with the rest of the class

As well as music, Denise has been involved with the Emergency Management procedures at CAJ. Denise says "I have always been interested in science, and coming

to Japan I was interested in earthquakes. I became very afraid of large earthquakes after the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995, when we had a student who came to school here for a few months from there. In 2011 I was also very afraid, but by that time we had ways to learn from the Internet, so I realized I could learn more about earthquakes and thus be less afraid of them. I am interested in risk mitigation, earthquake and volcano monitoring, and science communication."

In the future, Denise hopes to teach private and group music lessons in this area, and continue volunteering as a translator at the volcano museum at Sakurajima in Kyushu.

When asked what legacy she hopes to leave at CAJ, Denise says: "I hope to leave students with a desire to serve God, others and themselves through music, and the theory and technique to be able to do it. 🎵"



THE FLIPPED classroom

RENEE VAN DRUFF | Grade 8 Algebra Teacher

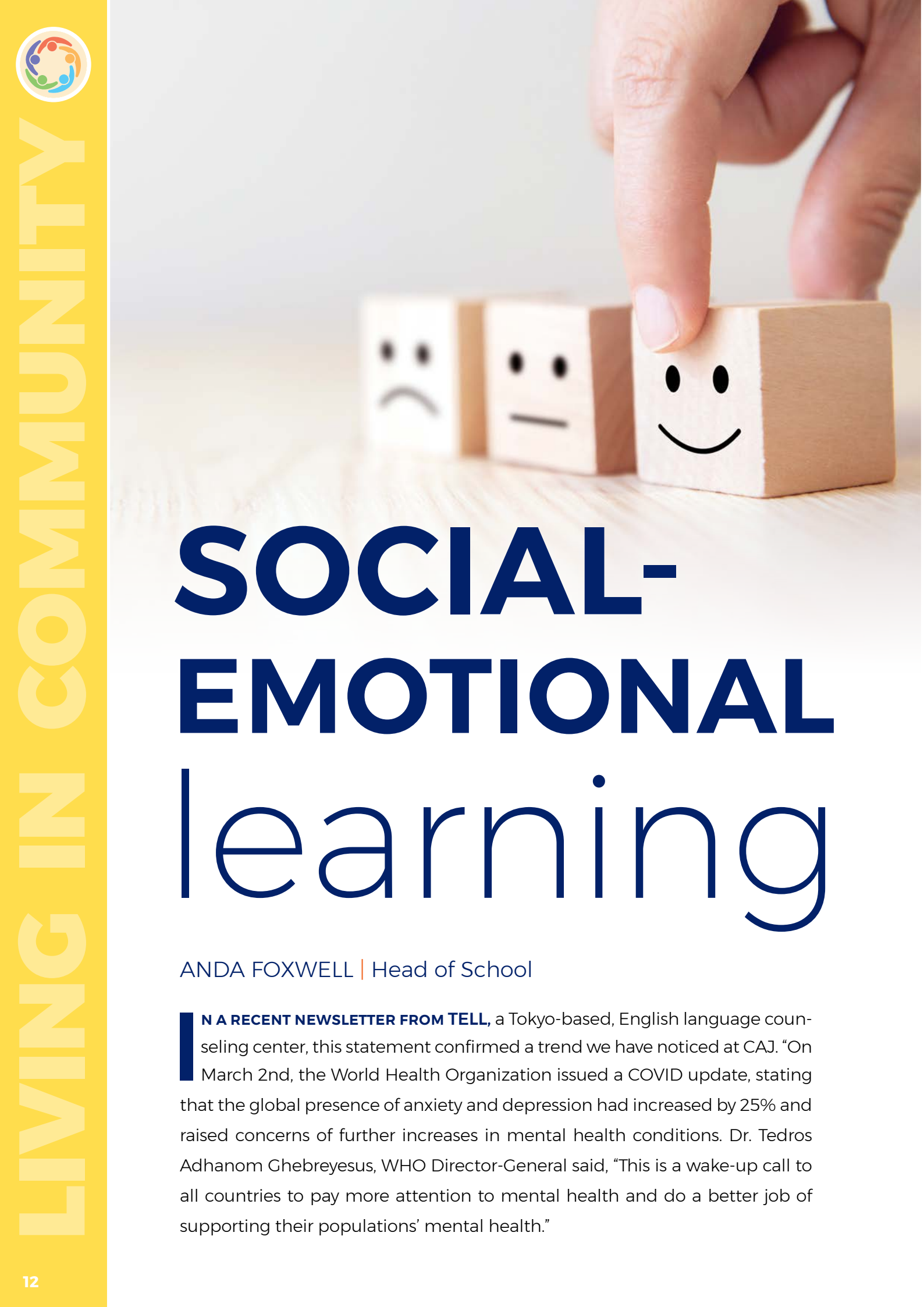
HAVE YOU EVER sat in a class and thought you understood the lesson, only to get home, pull out the assignment and realize you still had lots of questions and there was nobody there to help? Just about anyone who has taken a math class has had this experience. It was this problem, along with some challenges of the new Block Schedule, that motivated Heidi Eby and me to FLIP our 8th Grade Algebra classroom.

Don't worry, we did not turn the desks upside down. A "flipped" classroom is a teaching model where students are introduced to new content at home, usually through video lessons, and then they do activities and assignments to practice the new content during class. When students do the easier, note-taking part at home, it frees up time in class for more engaging activities and meaningful practice of the concepts. We first realized structuring our math classroom this way was possible when Covid-19 forced us into distance learning in the spring of 2020. This change required us to develop new ways to deliver content to students. We started using technology to create tutorial videos, and we

noticed that students were successfully using them to learn, even though we could not be together in person. When students returned to the classroom in August we decided to fully implement the idea of a flipped classroom.

Changing to a flipped classroom structure has had many advantages. Most of the practice takes place under the guidance of the teachers, so when students have questions they can be answered right away. Misconceptions are discovered and corrected quickly. Gone are the days of doing an entire assignment only to find out later that it was done wrong. Another advantage is that students have the ability to watch the video lessons as many times as needed, and they can pause and rewind as well. Who hasn't wanted to be able to do that while in class taking notes? Additionally, when students are absent they can still access the video lessons so they don't have to fall behind. This is the second year that we have used this format and the 8th graders have risen to the challenge and adapted well to the new way of doing math class. Sometimes change brings opportunities to grow, adapt, and improve and this has certainly been true of our change from a traditional to a flipped classroom. 🙌





SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL learning

ANDA FOXWELL | Head of School

IN A RECENT NEWSLETTER FROM TELL, a Tokyo-based, English language counseling center, this statement confirmed a trend we have noticed at CAJ. “On March 2nd, the World Health Organization issued a COVID update, stating that the global presence of anxiety and depression had increased by 25% and raised concerns of further increases in mental health conditions. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General said, “This is a wake-up call to all countries to pay more attention to mental health and do a better job of supporting their populations’ mental health.”

Students have so many issues facing them in today’s world: influences of media; pressure to excel academically, tensions that come with peer relationships; conflict at home; questions about identity, culture, and faith. Dealing with a global pandemic and the stress that accompanied periods of distance learning, disrupted sports seasons, cancellations of special events, the need for social distancing and fewer opportunities to gather together, we have heard this “wake-up call” at CAJ as well.

With our change to using a block schedule (longer periods of class-time fewer times a week) we were able to devise a plan that included a period we call “skinny block.” This shorter time each day allows for time for students to participate in clubs, have time to read for pleasure, learn more about study skills and college admissions, and also have one day a week when we focus on social and emotional learning. Though we have a planned curriculum for this, it also allows time for conversations and discussions that can help students focus on self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and self-management.

Social-Emotional learning helps students be stronger and better prepared for the challenges they face, but when the inevitable mental and emotional health issues arise, CAJ employs two counselors – one for elementary students and one for secondary students – who can help them navigate the storms of life. We address these issues through the lens of a biblical perspective, letting them know they are unique people created in God’s image, loved and cherished by Him.

Schools are emotional places – this has always been the case – and a global pandemic has increased strain on students. We seek to meet these challenges through adapting and adjusting to meet the needs, while remaining faithful to our mission to equip our students to serve Japan and the world for Christ. 🙏





NEW opportunities IN NEW spaces

JARED JOHNSON | Elementary PE teacher

Energy is probably the most common word that comes to people's minds when they think of lower elementary students. As the elementary PE teacher at CAJ, I can assure those people that they are 100 percent correct.

CAJ's youngest students use PE class time to shake the pent-up energy out of their bodies in an appropriate setting. These growing kids also learn valuable movement and coordination skills, teamwork and sportsmanship.

But it's important to have the right space for this learning.

CAJ's new Multi Purpose Room (MPR) is on the first floor of the recently constructed building, named the ARK, and it replaced the gym arena as the new home for kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade PE classes at the start of the 2021-22 school year.

The room's teal and orange floor is slightly spongy, and its walls are padded with yellow mats. These features make the space safer for lively bodies to dart around without fear of injury.

Sage (2nd grade) said, "I like that the MPR is softer so that when you fall down, you don't get hurt."

Another key attribute is the MPR's compact size — it is about one-quarter of the size of the gym. Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students still occasionally use the gym for certain PE activities, but the new MPR is usually perfect for their smaller bodies.

"I like that it's not as big as the big gym, because the big gym is so big!" said Anna (K).

Psalm (2nd grade) added, "We can play Sharks and Minnows and we can do double-crossing. If we do it in the big gym, we will be too tired."

But the main draw of the space, at least according to most students, is the sheer quantity of active fun the students can enjoy in the MPR.

Kindergarten, 1st grade and 2nd grade students all walk from their classroom to the MPR in 30 seconds or less. The smaller space also means fewer distractions and shorter transition times between activities. The result of this is a much more efficient, action-packed 30-minute class period.

Students get more rounds of their favorite games, such as Sharks and Minnows, Throwers Become Catchers, Meatball Monsters, Animal Tag, Pick a Color and a wide variety of team relay races.

"I like the MPR because we get to play more games than the big gym," said Alisa (K).

Lisa (1st grade) agreed, saying that "there is more time for games and exercise."

While CAJ's youngest students will all eventually outgrow the smaller space, the addition of the MPR has made a huge impact in the elementary division this school year. 🏆



"We can play Sharks and Minnows and we can do double-crossing. If we do it in the big gym, we will be too tired."

"I like that the MPR is softer so that when you fall down, you don't get hurt."

"I like the MPR because we get to play more games than the big gym."

Farewell Anda Foxwell



THIS ISSUE OF *THE CHRONICLE* FOCUSES ON CHANGE. It's a subject close to me, as I look back and look forward, keenly aware of the changes both in my life and at CAJ. I came to CAJ as a 22-year-old teacher, newly married and living out of the United States for the first time in my life. Only a few years later, my husband and I joined the ranks of CAJ parents and remained so for the next 18 years of life, as our four children were raised and formed in the CAJ community. After a few years away when those children were very young, I returned to CAJ as a teacher, then a high school principal, and for the past six years, as head of school. This is my community, my village, and I am proud to have been a part of it in some way for 40 years.

As I transition out of life so closely connected to CAJ, I am confident that the important things that make this such a special place will remain constant. We have a highly functioning, extremely competent leadership team in place who will continue to collaborate and use their gifts to glorify God and serve CAJ. We have a staff who are passionate and qualified in each position they hold, and they will continue to equip students for lives of service. And we have core statements in place that guide us and help us to see where we have been and where we are going.

As I look back on the past six years, I feel very proud of the ways we have weathered some difficult challenges together. We have faced the difficulties of education in a global pandemic, which has included a monumental pivot to Distance Learning and keeping an active student body safe during uncertain times. We learned very sad news about abuse that happened at CAJ decades ago, but faced this news

with a desire to learn and tell the truth. The investigation into that abuse has been concluded and we continue to do everything we can to be sure such things never happen again. We have planned and executed a building plan that has resulted in the completion of The ARK and a redeveloped field and playground area. These new facilities provide more space for students to learn, imagine, play, and socialize.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve this community I love. CAJ has contributed to my own growth, both personally and professionally, and I hope to continue to be connected to it in less public and visible ways as I move on to new adventures which will likely include more time with grandchildren, traveling to new places, perhaps doing some writing, and finding new opportunities where God might use me in the future.

Anda Foxwell | HEAD OF SCHOOL

It has always been a pleasure having Anda as a core member of the Board Finance Committee. Anda had said early on that finance was not her favorite topic, but she had a natural and uncanny sense that enabled her to clarify and add important background and insights to the topics being discussed that positively contributed to our decisions. I do think that recently she secretly was looking forward to our meetings!

Joel Peterson
CAJ FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR



There are so many things that I appreciate about Anda. Even though we are the same age (I'm actually a few months older), I have often thought, "I want to be like Anda when I 'grow-up.' She is deeply caring, level-headed, and fun-loving.

Jean Hino
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Anda's deep love for the students and staff of CAJ was evident in every report she made to the board. Anda never forgot that behind the data were real people whom she deeply loved and cared for. Anda faced many challenges as Head of School and through each one she demonstrated dependence on Jesus for grace, courage, strength, and wisdom. God, indeed, enabled Anda to do the good work for which He prepared her to do (Eph. 2:10).

Karen Stoesz
CAJ BOARD SECRETARY



Anda was my English 12 teacher, and she was fantastic. I remember clearly her lessons on Frankenstein, Beowulf, and Brave New World. She really instilled in me a love for English Literature, and was always open to talk about the books we were reading. Anda truly changed my life through her patience and joy in the classroom and outside of it. She stirred my affection for literature. Because of her, I'm now teaching English, and even teaching some of the same books!

Eliot Reasoner
CLASS OF 2013



Years ago we did a "choose the animal that represents your personality" exercise in our leadership team meeting and Anda chose a mother elephant to represent herself. In all the time I have known Anda, she has exhibited well the elephant personality traits of deep compassion, confident intelligence, unwavering commitment and fierce protection of those in her care.

Jacquie Willson
DIRECTOR & EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT
SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES



MEET THE NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL

David Mawhinney

Early in our married life, my wife Susan and I lived for three years in San Antonio, Texas, and that is where our two daughters were born. As I write this, we are about to return there for the first time after moving to Boston 25 years ago, a trip to show our daughters — and our Boston-born son and his wife — where they were born and lived in their early years.



One of our memories of that time was the common sight of a bumper sticker saying, "I wasn't born in Texas but I got here as fast as I could." As Susan and I prepare to join the CAJ community, I believe I can say the same thing about us and Japan. What we have learned in our lives has come together at this time and for this opportunity as God planned in advance all along. y community, my village, and I am proud to have been a part of it in some way for 40 years.

For the last 14 years I have worked at Boston Trinity Academy, serving on the leadership team for 10 years in various capacities including Director of Admission and Dean of Faculty. However, I am a teacher at heart, and my main academic interest is world history, especially Chinese history. I also coached the girls' varsity soccer team for eight years, winning three championships along the way.

I was born and raised in London, England; my father was from Belfast, Northern Ireland and my mother is from Detroit, Michigan. Susan and I met and later got married in Hong Kong and she too will be joining the CAJ community, teaching first grade. We spent a number of years living and working in China as missionaries and teachers. My educational journey has taken me from the University of Southampton to the University of Texas at San Antonio to Harvard University.

As the new Head of School, I am fully committed to implementing the vision of CAJ to equip our students to serve Japan and the world for Christ. Every child is created by God to grow in knowledge and understanding, in wisdom and character, in the company of others, and in the pursuit of God's call on their life. CAJ has a dedicated faculty and staff and supportive families and together we can continue to move forward in realizing this vision, for our children, our world, and the glory of God. 🙏



Alumni Updates

Howard Blair | STAFF

Mr. Howard Blair, who will be in attendance at the 1965-1967 reunion in Michigan this June, served as a missionary to Japan for 42 years under SEND International. For much of that time, he both taught at the Christian Academy in Japan and pastored Kurume Christ Church. Last summer, he published a book titled *Christian, What Do You Believe? A Pastor's Reflections on the Apostles' Creed*.

JuShin Kim | CLASS OF 2002

JuShin and SungHoon Jang welcomed DaeHan Jang to the world. DaeHan was born in Tokyo on January 10, 2022. He weighed 3355g and was 50.5 cm long.



Jared Johnson | CLASS OF 2011

Landon Timothy Johnson was born in Tokyo on February 4, 2022 to Jared and Christina Johnson. He weighed 3414 grams and was 53 cm long.



Noah Okada | CLASS OF 2019



Noah, who is a student at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, has been awarded a Goldwater Scholarship. The scholarship is one of the top scholarships in the United States for undergraduate students of math,

natural sciences and engineering. Noah has been working in a neuroscience lab. According to an Emory University article announcing this news, he is "developing VR (Virtual Reality) landscapes and memory paradigms that recreate real-world experiences that open new research options in neuroscience".

To read the full article, go to:

news.emory.edu/stories/2022/04/er_college_goldwater_scholars_06-04-2022/story.html

To learn more about the Goldwater Scholarship, go to:

goldwaterscholarship.gov/

REUNION | CLASSES OF 1965, 1966, & 1967

The Classes of 1965, 1966, and 1967 are gathering in Michigan, June 23-25, 2022. Anyone from those classes is welcome! Mr. Blair is planning to attend as well. The planning committee is Judi Mollenkof, Jill Rieck, Kathy Shelton, and Gaius & Martha Berg. For more information, contact Martha at: gaiusandmartha@gmail.com

50th REUNION | CLASS OF 1972

The Class of 1972 will hold their 50th reunion in Duxbury, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston over the weekend of October 7-9, 2022. For more information, contact Mark Ramseyer at:

ramseyer@law.harvard.edu

We would love to hear from you! Take a few minutes right now — email your update to alumni@caj.ac.jp

*CAJ Alumni Updates is a forum for updates from alumni, provided as a community service.
The inclusion of any piece of alumni updates is not necessarily an endorsement by CAJ.*

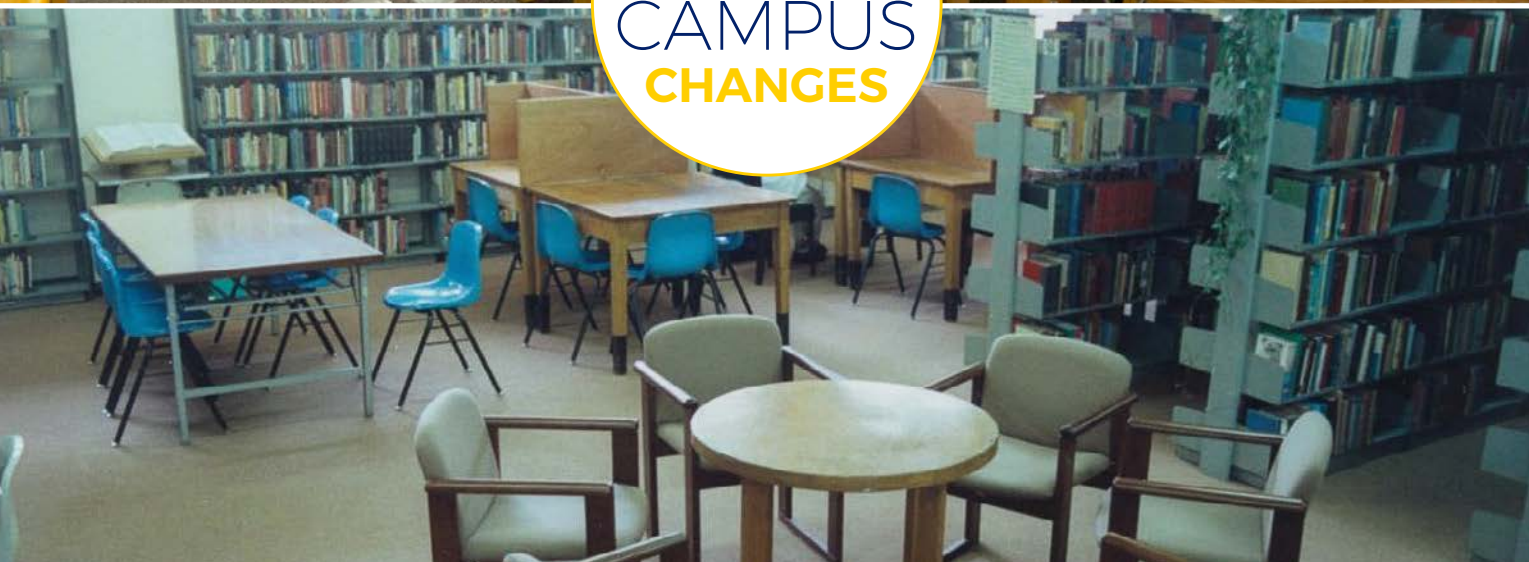
ALL ALUMNI REUNION February 24-27, 2023

Inviting all alumni and CAJ staffers to attend this event at the beautiful Best Western Island Palms hotel property in San Diego, CA. It will be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect. There were over 135 attendees at the 2016 reunion and we expect the 2023 reunion will surpass this attendance. More information coming soon. Hope to see you in 2023!

PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Bobby Howe, Ken Nielsen, Jennifer Plesman, Dan Sims, Tracey Davies, Margaret (Bower) Smith, Rick Seely

CAMPUS
CHANGES



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AND THE WORLD
FOR CHRIST.**

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Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support making our mission possible.

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