

CAJ Chronicle

Christian Academy in Japan

Fall 2022



together in
COMMUNITY





CHRONICLE

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Message from Head of School

Welcome to a new edition of CAJ *Chronicle*! The theme of this edition, and indeed of our school year, is "Together in Community". We are all aware of how much communities have been disrupted in recent



times and it is now our job to rebuild our CAJ community, restoring much of what was lost and creating new ways to live out our mission together. Community doesn't just happen but requires an effort, and in this edition of the Chronicle you will read how different members of our CAJ community are making an effort to bring us all closer together.

My wife Susan and I are new to CAJ, and we have personally experienced being warmly welcomed into this community.

So many have done so much to help us, and a community of people who are part of God's family is a special place to belong. We are glad to be here! But the CAJ community extends beyond those who come here every day; it also includes parents and grandparents, alumni, and other supporters of the school. My prayer is that all of us who have a connection to CAJ will work to build one another up as we live out our school's mission, together in community.

David Mawhinney | HEAD OF SCHOOL

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COMMUNITY

in kindergarten



CHRISTINE IJIMA | Kindergarten Teacher

In kindergarten, there is much to learn with our youngest students. Learning to sit at a table or together on the carpet without bumping into each other are big learning skills.

At the beginning of the year, we take time to talk about what it means to be a class family. We do this by reading books like *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller and *Our Class is a Family* by Sharon Olsen, having discussions, and using vocabulary to encourage treating each other with respect. To be a family means taking responsibility for our actions, working together, playing together and sharing physical space.

When students were asked what showing kindness meant to them, Ellie said, "It is helping kids go to the nurse and telling the teacher." Sorato shared that saying, "Let's play together," was how he shows kindness. When the children chose a play

area during one rainy indoor recess, too many friends were in one spot. I asked one child to change to the other play area where it was not so crowded. She dragged her feet. Then another child spoke up and said, "I will go to the other area because I want to show kindness." Of course, I was thrilled that she quickly applied what we had just talked about and could move to another play area willingly. What a great example of showing kindness so the first child could stay in the place she really wanted to play. Not all moments are so smooth in kindergarten; learning to get along with others is very challenging sometimes!

As many of our parents of kindergarteners are new to the CAJ community, we also want them to feel connected and that our school is a family community as well. In kindergarten we do this by asking each parent for information about their child so we can get to know them better. This includes how a child gets to school so we know which kids come by train or car and may be impacted by traffic or congestion. We also ask about their child's strengths so we can build on those and engage their background knowledge. For Meet and Greet Day, we asked each parent to introduce themselves and invited them to the Fall Festival and PiP (Parents in Prayer). Having this time to meet each other is how they are beginning to connect. As a mom who sent her children to the local schools without knowing much of the language, I can appreciate the many questions that some may have for our American curriculum and unique international environment. I often ask what questions they may have about our class and our school. These families and sweet children now belong to our class family.

For five and six year olds, continual practice of routines and behaviors is essential in learning and applying them. So all year long my co-teacher Haruka Akashi and I will emphasize the value of our class family and being in community. Almost daily we make references such as "our classmates are part of our class family; please be kind," and model what it looks like. For some of these little ones, they will be in school with each other for many years to come. Learning how to appreciate each other's differences and enjoy each classmate is not always easy, so modeling and training our youngest friends to be willing to share and take care of each other pleases our Creator. 🙏





TOGETHER in community

DAVID MAWHINNEY
Head of School

SOMETIMES IT IS ONLY when something is taken away from us that we realize its value. When it is gone, we no longer take it for granted and we miss it. So it has been for many of us during these COVID times when it comes to being in community. We went from spending time in school, at work, and with friends, to being in isolation, learning online, and living virtual lives. We weren't able to be together and we soon saw the negative impact it had on us. Maybe it took COVID to remind us all just how important community is.

Community is certainly important for CAJ. Indeed, one of our core values is, "God created humans for community." One of the reasons we need to be together is because students learn more effectively in the company of others rather than on their own, whether in the classroom, in informal study groups, or in conversations with teachers. Students develop in different areas of their lives as they participate in athletics, the arts, and club activities. And while growth in our minds is important, growth in our characters is even more important, and it is as we relate to others and participate in

God created humans for community.



Being in community is a call to action.

community that we grow and mature into the people God created us to be.

Community is important, but the best communities include not only people but have God in their midst. God's triune nature reminds us how central community is to His character and it is not an accident that we humans have the desire for community within us. We need to be with others—we need one another's help, support, and encouragement. But we also need to be with God—He is our light, our strength, our song. CAJ is a Christ-centered community and here we get to know and work with God's people and God Himself. We have a God-given purpose and with God at the heart of our community we can better know the heart of God for our community.

Of course, it's possible for a group of people to be together in the same place at the same time but to remain separate and disconnected from one another. Just being around other people doesn't make a community, as any visit to a busy Tokyo train station will make clear. Here at CAJ

we intentionally come together in community with a shared commitment to God, to the vision of the school, and to one another. Being in community is a call to action, as who we

are and what we do changes because we share life with one another.



God has a lot to say about how we should be together in community.

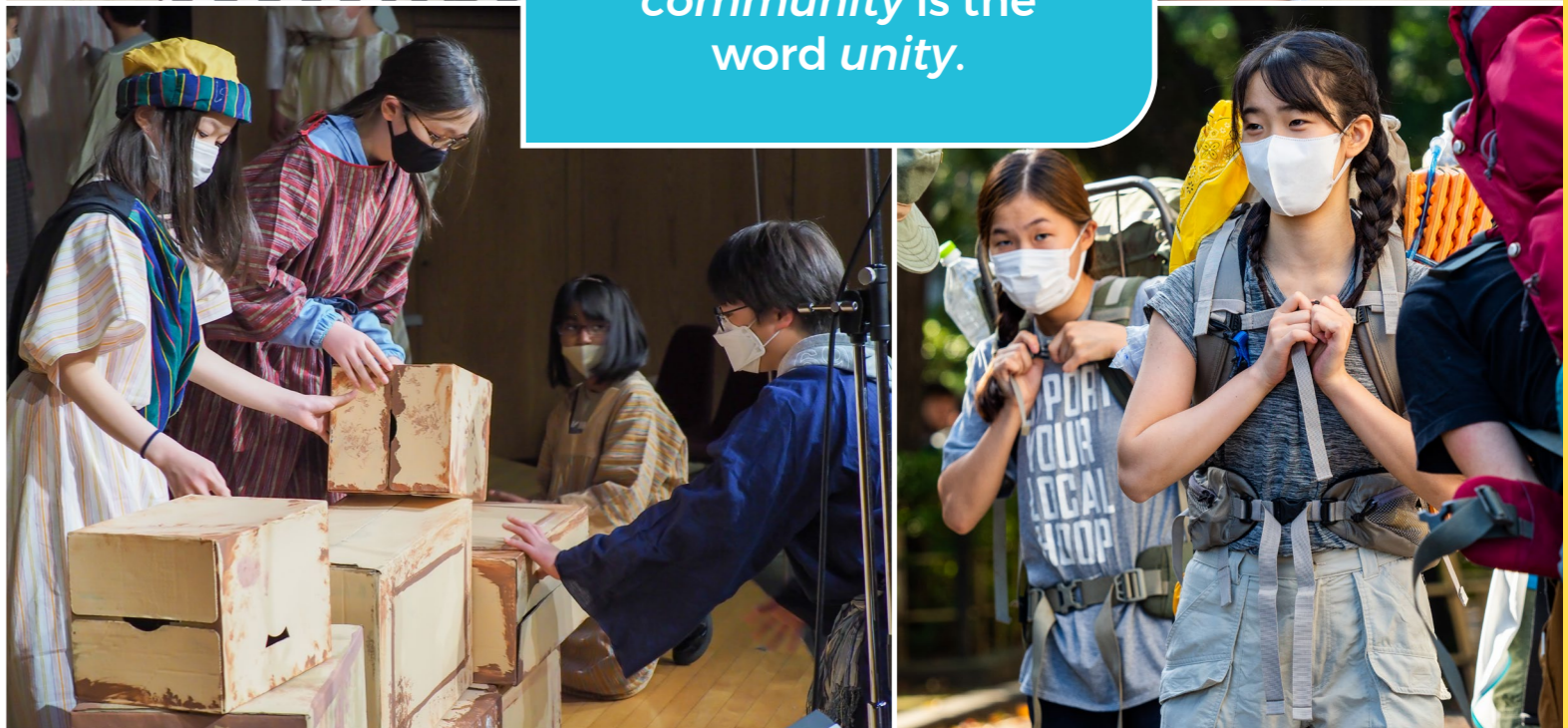
God has a lot to say about how we should be together in community. He calls us to **love one another** (John 13:34), to **serve one another** (Galatians 5:13), to **care for one another** (1 Corinthians 12:25), to **build one another up** (Romans 14:19), and to **honor one another above ourselves** (Romans 12:10). He tells us to **teach one another** (Colossians 3:16), to **encourage one another** (1 Thessalonians 5:11), to **be patient with one another** (Ephesians 4:2), to **forgive one another** (Colossians 3:13), and to **pray for one another** (James 5:16). Words are not enough; we must love one another with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18). Creating community is not easy and does not happen by accident. It requires purposeful and diligent work, much of it on an individual level.

All in the community benefit personally as its members treat one another in these kinds of ways, but the impact of this sort of community reaches beyond the community itself to the world beyond. As we love one another, everyone will know that we are followers of Jesus (John 13:35). As we love one another we will become one, and as we become one the world will know that God sent Jesus and that God loves us (John 17:23). Hidden in the word “community” is the word “unity” and there is great power to change the world and advance the Kingdom of God when there is unity in community.

The vision of CAJ is to equip students to serve Japan and the world for Christ. Part of this equipping is for all our students



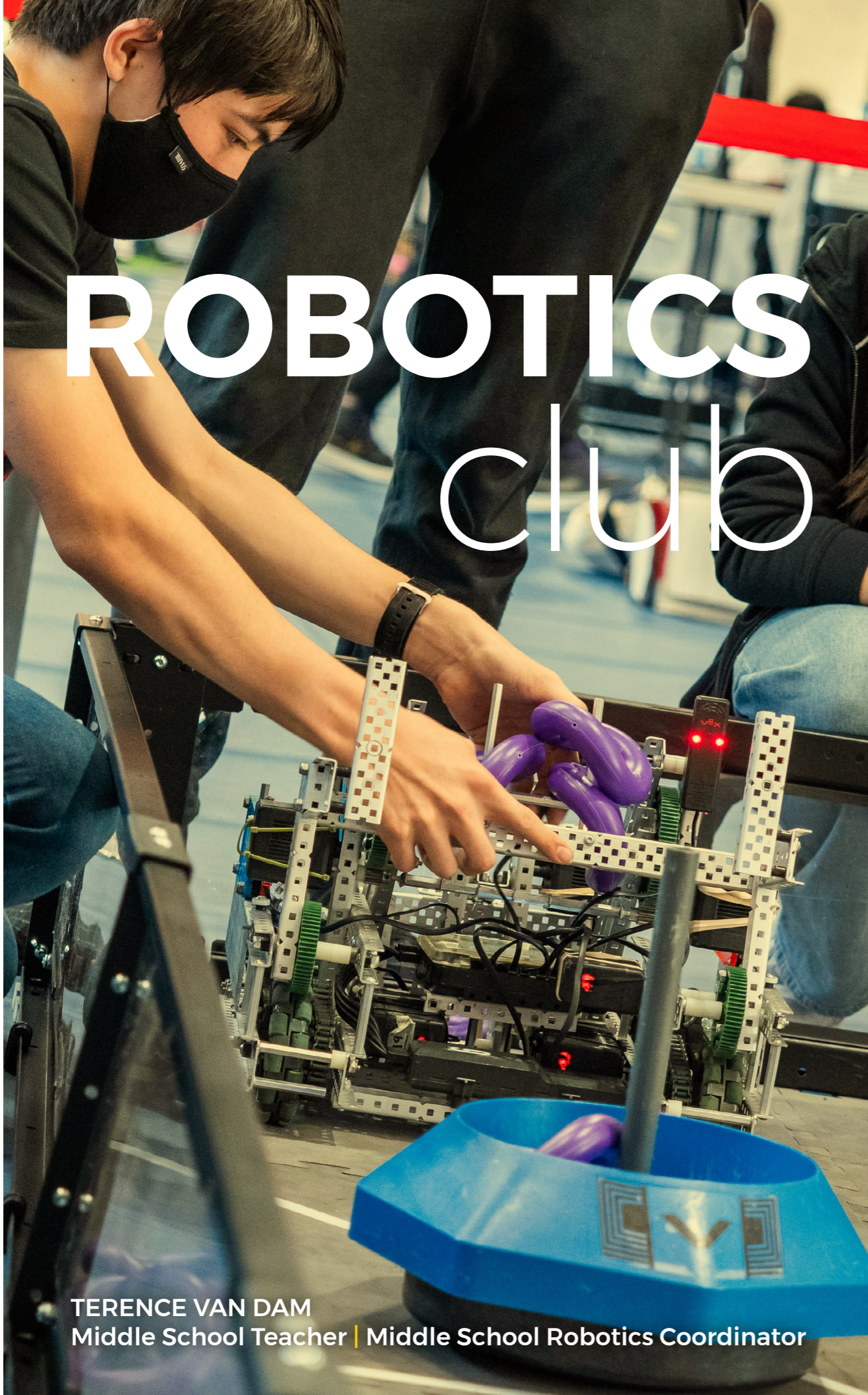
Hidden in the word community is the word unity.



to understand the power of a Christ-centered community living out together God’s calling on how we are to treat one another, not only for our own sake but for the impact it can have on the world around us. This applies not only to our students but to the rest of us too.

The COVID era disrupted much of our ability to come together but at CAJ we are determined to build up our community among all groups – students, teachers, administrative staff, families, alumni, volunteers, supporters, and others. The welcome that my wife Susan and I have received at CAJ is just one example proving that community is a core part of who we are, what we have been, and what we aspire to, and we don’t want to settle for anything less than all God has for us. It will require lots of “one anothering” from all of us but the payoff will be tremendous. Thanks be to God that at CAJ we can be together in community. 🙏

ROBOTICS club



TERENCE VAN DAM
Middle School Teacher | Middle School Robotics Coordinator

WHEN WE THINK ABOUT COMMUNITY, some people will think about events such as Fall Festival & Bazaar (formerly Thrift Shop) and Meet and Greet Day (formerly Back to School Day). These are chances for both students and parents to come together on campus in a relaxed atmosphere and fellowship together. These events are important, especially after COVID, but they are not the only sources of community at CAJ.

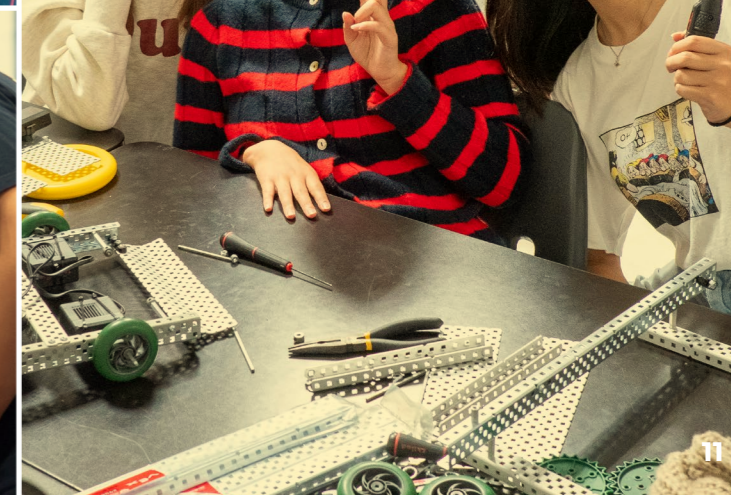
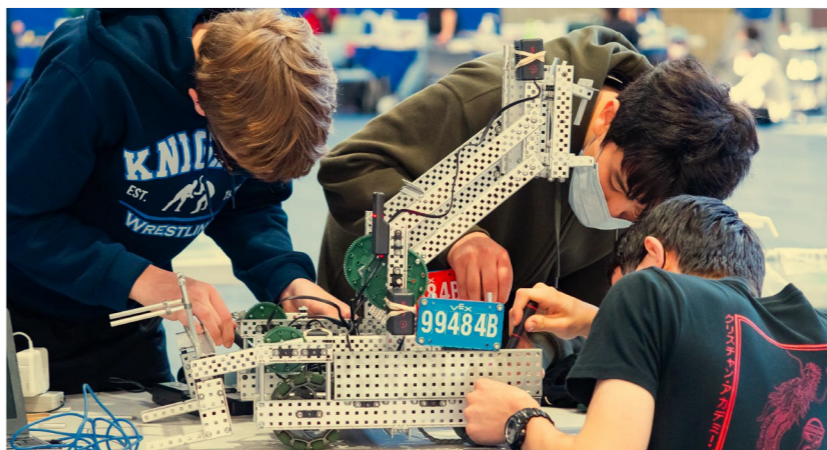
The robotics club provides a different sort of community. CAJ's robotics team is a different kind of co-curricular activity. Unlike most sports which have only one season, students on the robotics team can participate for one, two or all three seasons if they like. Students in robotics are divided into smaller teams that design, build and program a robot to do a specific task based on the current year's competition.

The students build community at several different levels. The first level is working as a part of a team, where each member has a specialized job such as captain, designer, builder, programmer or driver. The game is not just played by individuals, however. The

competition is designed so that teams need to interact with other teams, both from CAJ and from other schools at the competition, to play the most strategic game possible.

If the team does well enough (and CAJ's teams consistently have) they can qualify for the VEX Robotics World Championship in the US. Now that things are opening up after COVID, the team is looking forward to being able to compete in the US again. This is no inexpensive proposition, however. In order to make it to the competition, the CAJ community will need to come together to have fundraisers and collect donations to make this dream a reality.

For more information on the robotics team, you can email Matt Lindsey (mlindsey@caj.ac.jp).





human resources GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

DONNA LEWIS | Chronicle Editor

WHEN YOU IMAGINE the human resources department working in a busy school, what do you think of? Hiring, interviewing, contracts and salaries all come to my mind. But, as well as all those important functions, here at CAJ, you may just find the HR department busy hanging curtains, choosing furniture or sitting with a staff member at the hospital or the city office.

I remember very clearly our first talk with Pam Kumate, the HR Manager, after my husband had been offered a job as Business Manager of CAJ. We were trying to get our heads around moving from Australia to Japan, and my head was full of questions. How would we find a house? What furniture could I do without, as shipping was going to be very expensive? Should I buy furniture in Japan instead? What should I do about bank accounts? The questions were many, but as the chat progressed, I realised that none of this was going to be left for me to flounder around with, and that HR had our backs in every area of the move.

For the HR department at CAJ, an offer of employment is only the beginning. Then begins the busy task of moving the prospective staff member to Japan. First, visas. These have to be obtained early, and require a lot of paperwork, and a lot of time spent at the immigration office. Everybody who comes to work at CAJ has different needs, different family circumstances and different housing requirements, so finding a suitable house is a complex task that HR takes on, working with several real estate agents to find the perfect accommodation. It's not always easy!

Once a house is found, it is equipped with all the necessary furniture and appliances, and then, when it's nearly time to move in, HR comes in and makes the house a home. From food in the refrigerator to freshly made beds, the feeling of welcome is overwhelming, and tangible. And for very tired bodies, it's such a relief to be able to fall into bed, and let tomorrow



deal with itself, knowing there's breakfast in the house already. New staff are picked up from the airport, so the first face they see in their new country is a friendly one.

Why go to all this trouble? According to the HR staff I interviewed, the intention is that the love and sense of community should be immediately tangible to new hires. They are not just accepting a job, they are being welcomed into the CAJ community as a whole family. Small children get special care, and even a soft toy waiting for them in their new home.

The care that is taken to ensure that staff are made to feel like welcome members of our community is meticulous and far reaching.

What about the members of the community that are not new? The care doesn't stop once staff arrive. Circumstances change, people get sick, and surprising things happen, and staff are often a long way from home and family support. This is where HR kicks in, and once again provides support as required. Some examples of this might be:

- Staff getting married and needing to change accommodation to meet their new circumstances.
- Staff members (or their spouses) might need support through a pregnancy or illness. The hospital system can be confusing in a new country.
- Official documents. Many of the things that were set up with HR's help will need renewing or updating. HR keeps a record of, and reminds staff members about renewals of their visas and passports, insurance, licenses, and health insurance.

The care continues even after staff leave CAJ. HR makes sure staff, their families and their belongings get safely to the airport, and that any remaining paperwork is tidied up after they leave. CAJ has a city tax prepayment system which helps staff to exit without surprises.

One thing that was very apparent to me as I interviewed for this article is that the HR department is very intentional about creating, welcoming into, and supporting the community at CAJ. Much of this work goes unnoticed, but it is a vital part of having a strong group of staff who are able and ready to serve the students. 🙏



We love our staff and we don't want them to get caught in the system.
~Yukiko Isaka



One of the fun parts of working in HR is meeting everybody first. I love looking for homes for our staff members.
~Naoko Sawada



The daily joy for HR is smoothing the way for staff to work at CAJ and live in Japan without distraction; the daily challenge is keeping abreast of Japanese labour and welfare law, keeping CAJ in compliance and applying improvements to employment at CAJ. It's certainly never dull!
~Pam Kumate

PARENTS CONNECTING THROUGH

prayer

TIM CLARK | Parent, 6th grade PIP co-leader

Parents who join report many blessings through their involvement such as:

- **Seeing prayers answered.**
One mom recently shared that she is seeing requests that she has prayed with others answered more quickly than when she prays privately.
- **Meeting parents that they would not otherwise meet.**
One of this year's new moms said that through CP&W she could meet parents of students in the higher grades, "people I was not likely to meet since they don't come to pick up their kids." Another appreciates the perspective she gets from meeting these parents; "It's so helpful to meet parents with older children who have gone before us."
- **Mutual encouragement through shared experience.**
"PIP is the place we can openly share concerns like our children making friends, academic progress, dealing with other temperaments, etcetera. We can realize that many problems are common, and can feel a bit of relief."
- **Connections even when connecting became more difficult.**
Amidst the many losses of the pandemic, these prayer meetings played an extra important role in some parents' lives; some groups even grew. "When COVID forced us to go online, we actually had more participants than usual, because some people can't travel to school for in-person meetings," one leader reported.
- **The blessing of diverse people uniting their hearts in prayer.**
These meetings bring together people from many cultures and religious perspectives. Non-Christians join. Each participant is welcome to pray in any language, or silently. One mom says, "I love worshipping bilingually and meeting parents from many different countries." Parents get to experience that aspect of life that is so normal for their children at this culturally diverse school.

It's quite possible that the day you are reading this, CAJ parents are gathering for prayer, growing in relationship as they lift the school's needs to the Lord. 🙏

BEHIND THE SCENES and sometimes online, parents are frequently meeting to pray for CAJ. In fact, over 100 times a year they gather, resulting in about two prayer meetings every three days the students are in class. The two main gatherings are:

- **PIP** (Parents in Prayer)
Each grade has its own monthly meeting.
- **CP&W** (Community Prayer and Worship)
Parents from all grades gather weekly.

These two forums are coordinated by the PTA's Executive Committee, and help to cover all aspects of CAJ in prayer: for new students and staff in their adjustments, safety and health, spiritual and emotional growth, plus wisdom and discernment for all.





community CELEBRATION

BRYAN LEWIS | Business Manager

What a joy it was in May to be able to come together as a community to celebrate the official opening of our new turf field, courts and playgrounds. It was also the first opportunity for many of our parents to be able to walk through the wonderful learning and community spaces in our new building. The fact that this was our first major gathering together since the pandemic began was very fitting, as the achievement of these projects truly was a community effort. It continues to be a blessing to daily see our students enjoy and benefit from the new facilities.

A detailed final report for this project, including thanks to all contributors, can be found in the Giving section of our [website](#). 🏡



MIDDLE SCHOOL



drama festival

JAMIE LATH | Teacher Librarian

BRAVELY FORGING INTO THE UNKNOWN, thirteen students headed off to the KPASS* Middle School Drama Festival. Due to Covid-19, our students had not been to this festival for three years and had no idea what to expect.

Split into groups with other middle schoolers from participating schools, students created a three to five minute play based on a theme and performed it for each other. They had about three hours total to make this work with the other fifteen students in their group.

“I feel like a Hollywood actor after today,” said sixth grader Samantha. The professionalism of working with drama teachers and having the chance to act on the stage is not an opportunity our middle school students often have.

The process required our students to work on skills like voicing their thoughts while listening to others and compromising. “Everyone had different ideas,” said Tanvi, a seventh grader. “I really liked all the different stories.”

The Drama Festival also gave our middle schoolers an opportunity to get to know students beyond CAJ. “Spending time with students from other schools was my favorite part,” said Kira, an eighth grader. “We haven’t gotten to do that much because of Covid.”

Having been through the isolation of this pandemic, it was wonderful to experience things moving back towards normal for our students. Whether it was looking up dances from the 80s for their play or simply chatting with a new friend from a different school, the middle school drama festival gave our students a taste of the beauty of the arts and increased dramatic skills. 🎭

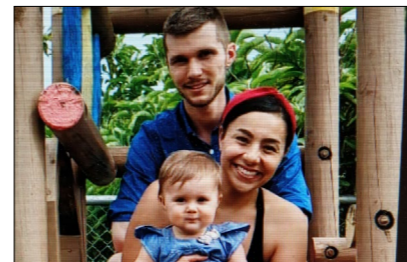
*Kanto Plain Association of Secondary Schools



Alumni Updates

Brady Carrico | CLASS OF 2014

Molly Lucia was born in Japan on September 9, 2021 to Brady and Isa Carrico. The Carrico Family lives in Costa Rica.



MULTI-CLASS REUNION

An "assembly of missionary children" was held in Belfast, Northern Ireland on July 29, 2022 and from that group this photo was taken of CAJ alumni.



Megumi Wilson | CLASS OF 2014

In August 2022, Megumi came in as second runner-up in the Miss Universe Japan competition. She advocates for children's education and empowerment of

women through business. She currently volunteers at the anti-human trafficking organization, Not For Sale Japan. Megumi said, "I



always dreamed but never thought I would actually apply for the Miss Universe Japan competition. It was a really great opportunity to present my message, and to use the skills I gained during my time at CAJ, such as public speaking, communication and leadership. I'm truly grateful, and I look forward to working more in Japan and abroad to further my message." Contact Megumi on Instagram [@megumiwilson](#) or Facebook [Megumi Wilson](#).

As mentioned in the previous issue, the Classes of 1965, 1966, and 1967 gathered in Michigan, June 23-25, 2022.

REUNION | CLASSES OF 1965, 1966, AND 1967

As mentioned in the previous issue, the Classes of 1965, 1966, and 1967 gathered in Michigan, June 23-25, 2022.



BACK ROW: Joel Bruinooge (65), Gaius Berg (65), Bruce Metcalf (66), Larry Arnold (67), Deane Hegge (67), Steve Hoke (67), Paul Holritz (67), Charles Ward (husband of Beth)

FRONT ROW: Jill Pape Rieck (67), Martha Foxwell Berg (66), Kathleen ("Casey") Collins Shelton (65), Howard Blair, Lorelei Johnson Verlee (68), Karen Holritz Drake (65), Beth Watson Ward (67)

ALL CAJ REUNION | FEBRUARY 24-27, 2023

Seven CAJ Alumni who graduated in the 1970s and early 80s are planning an All CAJ Reunion. It will be held Friday, February 24-Monday, February 27, 2023 in San Diego with organized activities. All Class Alums, Staff and their Guests are welcome. More than 85 Alumni and Staff are registered. For more information, please see this [Google Doc](#).

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.



**EQUIPPING
STUDENTS TO SERVE
JAPAN
AND THE WORLD
FOR CHRIST.**

www.caj.ac.jp



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

ACCREDITATION

Western Association of Schools and Colleges since 1976

GOVERNMENT STATUS

Gakko Hojin (School)

