CAJ Chronicle

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Message from

Head of School

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Do you remember being asked this question when you were a child? How did you answer? Looking back, does the answer you gave bear any relation to the path your life took?

How would you feel if someone asked you that same question today?

All of us find it easy to recognize that children need to grow up and that their future is yet to be realized. It is certainly easy for those of

us who work in a school every day to see this! Of course, we expect the students to grow physically over the years, from smaller kindergarteners to taller seniors, and in the context of their education, we expect them to grow in skills and knowledge from elementary to high school. This is an important reason that CAJ exists as, along with parents and others, we teach students what they need to know to succeed in their adult lives. But there's more.

The question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" has an unspoken assumption intended by those who ask it; the answer is expected to be a particular job or career. This is part of what makes it a hard question for many children to answer. They know enough to understand that they don't know enough about themselves, working, or the world to be able to give an honest answer. Their hesitation to give a clear response is often to their credit.

But if we look more closely at the question, we realize that there is a second assumption at work; what we do for our job is the equivalent of who we are and who we want "to be." We are our occupation. This is not helpful, and while it may be common in our daily lives to refer to ourselves firstly by our jobs or roles, we must know that we are defined by other, more important criteria.

At CAJ, we have a dedicated group of teachers and staff who are committed to helping our students grow in what they need to know to become successful both in university or college and in the working world beyond that. It is clear from the testimony of our alumni that they were well-prepared for their next steps after CAJ and that they are grateful for all they learned in the classroom.

However, a CAJ education goes further. It also addresses a better way to approach that old question of what we want "to be": "Who am I, and what is the purpose of my life?"

Ephesians 2:10 helps us remember that knowing who we are comes before knowing what we should do. Paul writes, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

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Growing in our knowledge and understanding of our identity in Christ comes first; there is nothing more important than grasping this. Knowing Christ, as well as who we are in Christ, will then make it clearer to us what we should do with our lives, whether in terms of our occupation or whatever else we do.

> Understanding who we are and what our God-given purpose is also reminds us that our education does not stop once we graduate or have "become" a certain job. We always need to be growing.

> Our teachers and staff are committed to continually growing because they understand the weight of the responsibility they carry toward the students. They are dedicated to growing in their professional capacities, as well as growing in their own knowledge of God and the purpose He has for them. We may be further down the path of life than our students, and perhaps more mature, but we are pressing on, knowing that more is yet to come.

> Our students are young enough to be continually growing, most obviously growing physically and in their academic knowledge. But there is more to us than our bodies and minds; our hearts and souls need to be growing too, and as a school community, we need to encourage this kind of growth. A CAJ education takes into account the whole student and guides each one to consider the most important questions of life from the perspective of the author of life.

> I don't think any of us are too old to be asked the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" My answer, and I hope the answer for all at CAJ. young and old alike, would be: still growing in Christ and in His purposes for my life.

David Mawhinney | HEAD OF SCHOOL



REBECCA NELSON | First Grade Teacher

It's the name of our subject, but what does it mean? Once they know that it is about living with people and building relationships, the lessons on self-identity, family, school communities, local communities, and global communities make a lot more sense. An essential aspect of my personal Deep Hope is that my students will "flourish in their identity by learning in community."

The term "Deep Hope" refers to a statement created by a teacher that summarizes their desires for the students they teach. Of course, anyone can create a Deep Hope for themselves, and I encourage you to discover your own Deep Hope.

At CAJ, the concept of Deep Hope is one of the objectives taught in our biblical integration program called Teaching for Transformation (TFT). Another theme that teachers create for their classroom that brings the class together is referred to as the classroom's "storyline." This community building has a great impact on the areas of

growth I desire for my students - first in their own classroom, and then throughout the school community.

In order to share more about the concept of the Deep Hope at CAJ, I interviewed several colleagues. Vincent Howard, AP English Literature teacher, similarly said: "Our storyline in AP Lit is an invitation to Get to know the family. I share the following idea with my seniors: 'All themes and characters and stories that you encounter in literature belong to one big interlocking family,' says Northrop Frye."

Vincent invites his students to share their stories by writing them in daily notebooks or compiling them into polished pieces of writing. Most importantly, he invites his seniors to recognize the Christian story as the foundation of all other stories, including themes such as finding a lost identity, the return from exile, and overcoming our alienation once and for all.

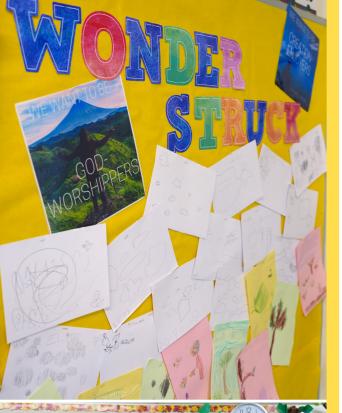
So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

IS WITH A HEART FULL OF THANKS that I walk into school each morning knowing that God has brought me back to CAJ to build relationships with the students, my colleagues, and the community now as a teacher! I feel that God has prepared me for the work of service that is teaching through my time as a student at CAJ, my university experience in Canada, and working in both Canada and Japan for my first five years One of the first lessons I teach my students in the teaching field.

Most essential to my growth has been the influence of my past teachers and colleagues in my teaching journey. With a theme of "Growing" at CAJ this year, my hope is that the reflections I've made and the teachers who have shared their experiences in this article will encourage you to grow in your own communities this year, wherever that may be.

centers around the term "social studies."









In the younger grades, a common theme in the class-rooms is exploring God's world and being Creation-enjoyers together. The Kindergarten classroom has a "Wonderstruck" bulletin board where students display artwork of something they've drawn in nature, such as the clouds they've observed from the cafeteria balcony or the many shades of green of the bushes and trees around the plaza.

Kindergarten teacher Christine lijima has taught TFT concepts to her colleagues this year, and as a result, TFT tends to come to her mind frequently as she teaches in the classroom. She can express her wonder and amazement of God's creation in a way that the students are able to join in with her.

Vincent, who works with Christine in teaching TFT this year, added, "I think TFT invites us to sincerely consider that every part of the classroom experience — from our words to the way we plan lessons, to the way we design curriculum — sends students a message."

In fourth grade, teachers Roel Maraya and Shyni Paul have planned their storyline together and displayed it visually across the classroom. They invite students to add to the many bulletin boards in the classroom, including the "Cross-Curricular Growth," "Look at Our Community," "Prayer Wall," and "Grateful Wall." Their classroom takes community growth to the next level as students put up pictures of themselves being active in the community. They hope for the fruit of the Spirit to grow in their students' lives as they relate to the people around them.

I am humbled by the many ways my coworkers are encouraging community growth in their class-rooms and amongst colleagues. It is also inspiring to brainstorm how we can build up the body of Christ. I think the best part about community is that we can mature together with those God has placed in our lives.

If you've ever enjoyed a rejuvenating time with friends, family, or coworkers where you have the opportunity to share your worries, frustrations, and joys with each other, you know that going through life is not meant to be a solo journey. We learn and grow alongside each other, supporting one another along the way. Are you ready to grow this year?







For something to grow, it needs to be nurtured. It needs sunlight, water, air, nutrients, and a little love. Nurturing growth in the library has been our goal these past few years.

In the fall of 2020, I started working in the library at CAJ. We can all remember those days of masks, sanitizing, and everyone running straight home. It felt like a time when growth couldn't be happening. Looking back, those dormant times actually led to important growth. We used that season to look deeply at the library and see what our community needed.

We began by weeding (this is the actual term for it among librarians). We removed items that weren't serving our community anymore. Like weeding a garden which allows the plants to thrive, weeding the library allowed the other books to stand out.

This weeding led to more room. That added room led to a reorganization. Now, the space has grown and transformed into something new. For instance, the former elementary library space is a new collaboration space rich with educational possibilities like teaching digital literacy in our elementary library classes.

We saw the biggest growth when we added new furniture this year, as that brought many students back into the library. For a while, students weren't allowed to spend long periods of time in the library because of COVID. Then, as we transitioned the space, we realized there wasn't enough room for them. Now, students come in to study by themselves or in groups, read on bean bags, collaborate for group work, and even take an occasional nap.

The pruning that occurred in the previous years brought much fruit and growth to the library, bringing the CAJ community into the library and toward each other. Sometimes we have elementary, middle, and high school students all sitting together on bean bags. We also see parents reading with their own children while others listen in.

So what's keeping you from visiting the library? If you are in Japan, please stop by. Alumni, parents of alumni, and previous staff members are still a part of our community. It's through you that we are able to have the growth that we have had in the fertile soil you left us to work with. If you aren't in Japan, visit your own local library and become a part of that community. Foster your own growth and the growth of those around you through supporting a library; you'll meet a lot of great people there!









JARED JOHNSON | Physical Education Teacher

searching for ways to make their curriculum more engaging and effective for all students.

Nash Bridges, elementary and middle school art teacher, has taught at CAJ since the 2017-18 school year. In the past four years, Nash has broken new ground in the art department with a "flipped classroom" strategy that is providing numerous benefits for students from a variety of learning styles, preferences, and language levels.

In a flipped classroom, the teacher records video explanations and demonstrations of subject content. Students will then select a video to watch while the teacher circulates the classroom to answer questions or clarify concepts. This strategy can enable teachers to essentially become their own instructional assistant during class time.

Nash learned about flipped classrooms in her Master's degree program, which she has since finished. She began flipping her classroom in fall 2019 by creating videos to show in class to her elementary art students.

Aside from art class, students could also access these videos on Seesaw, CAJ's online learning platform for elementary students.

EACHERS AT CAJ ARE CONSTANTLY "I thought it was a good solution to students working at their own pace, reviewing, and helping students who are absent," Nash recalled. "It's really convenient when students are absent, because they don't miss anything."

> When CAJ's classes went to distance learning in March 2020, Nash was extremely thankful to have her flipped classroom in place. Students could use her videos to keep learning about art and practicing their skills at home.

In August 2020, CAJ students returned to campus. At that point, Nash then discovered two more benefits to her flipped classroom - its impact on English language learners and its ability to facilitate choice-based art.

Nash collected data showing that the flipped classroom system helped students learning English as an additional language both understand more vocabulary and execute various art skills more effectively.

"I can put the vocabulary in [the videos], students can rewind it, and they can even slow down my voice if I am talking quickly," The improvement was profound enough that she ended up writing her final paper for her Master's program on the effectiveness of helping EAL students learn English via the flipped classroom method.

Nash, who teaches all of CAJ's elementary and middle school students, has also used her flipped classroom to offer more choicebased art projects, especially with her middle school students. She is still in the process of creating more videos for those projects.

"One student might want to learn to use watercolors, while another might want to use colored pencils, or acrylic paint," Nash said. "Now they will be able to go and select [a video to watch] rather than having to

flipped videos, and she also hopes to create flipped videos specifically for students and their parents to watch as they practice art techniques together. Nash is also working with art department

the art department at CAJ in different ways.

She plans to build a QR code library of her

head Erin Hughes to create more opportunities for highlighting the talents of CAJ's art

From November 10-17, the art department hosted a jungle-themed art show in the CAJ atrium. Nash said they "took over the atrium and made it a jungle" with art ranging from students kindergarten to 12th grade. "I feel like the school already does













Nash said. "I want to find ways to recognize students who are artistic and make them more celebrated in our community."

While Nash has brought new teaching techniques to CAJ's art department, she hopes to keep learning along with her students. Many of Nash' students are showing interest in digital art, so one of her current tasks is learning to create art on an iPad.

Like many teachers at CAJ, Nash acknowledges that students aren't the only ones who should be learning at school.

"I don't want to be that teacher who says, 'I don't know how to do that, so we're not doing it,' Nash explained. "If I don't know how to do something, I'll sometimes tell students, 'let's learn together."



They have met practical needs, like offering access to their school library and resources, as well as a willingness to have our staff collaborate with CAJ's staff. Parallel has been a huge support system for us."

Parallel shares CAJ's commitment to equipping students to serve Japan and the world for Christ. As a result, we are actively seeking new school of influence across Japan. We feel we

are bursting with potential, as we have recently moved from our previous basement location to an above-ground and light-filled new space in the annex building on the CAJ campus.

Ultimately, our Deep Hope in the Parallel Educational Services department is that "we will be able to come alongside families and school leaders." It is our desire to encourage and equip and creative ways in which CAJ can grow as a them to thrive in pursuing and uncovering their part in God's story. 👰







E ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE the renewing of Parallel Educational Services, a department of CAJ. Formerly known as SSS (School Support Services), our purpose is to come alongside families across Japan who are educating their children in English. We provide consultation, educational resources, programs, and events for families who are homeschooling full-time, or families who are sending their children to Japanese school and desire to continue their childrens' English language development at home.

In addition to assisting families, Parallel is affiliated with seven small Christian schools throughout Japan. We provide resources and expertise to complement and expand their programs. Masaki Jason Fukao, the principal of Zoe International School, shares, "Parallel has assisted our school in many ways, such as providing professional development for our staff and setting up opportunities to network with other affiliate schools.







A L U M N AND PARENTS OF ALUMNI

Out of **91** contracted staff members:

- 20 are CAJ alumni
- 52 have or have had children attend CAJ at one point
- 22 have children who graduated from CAJ

MESSAGES FROM CAJ STAFF ALUMNI

The following messages are from former Christian Academy in Japan students, now on staff. In the 2023-24 school year, 20 of CAJ's 91 contracted staff members are former CAJ students. From these staff members, eight of them took some time this fall to share their stories about why they came back, why they stay, and/or what's happening in their lives now.

I returned to CAJ as a teacher in 2015, coming back to the same classroom I started in CAJ as a student! CAJ has always been where I wanted to return as an educator because of the wonderful community. I found my passions and purpose here while I was a student, and I sincerely desire to help my students find theirs, too. I long to encourage students when they are down, celebrate their accomplishments with them, teach them to rely on God daily, and pray for them when they need it the most. I stay because I want to continue to grow as an educator, and because my colleagues are not just people I see at work, but people who have become my closest friends. I am incredibly blessed to be a part of CAJ and hope to give back to the community as much as possible!





Since graduating from university, I have successfully never used my degrees and have only ever done construction, maintenance, or other trades work. I genuinely love working with my hands, so after doing this type of work in Canada and the US, I started to think about how I could continue the same work in Japan.

I got hired on the maintenance team at CAJ in 2019. Never did I think I would be back at CAJ so soon — but I love it! It is such a blessing to be in a work environment where everyone loves the Lord so much and cares so deeply for the kids and their education.





JULIE JOHNSON
5th Grade & Elementary Head Teacher
| class of 2006 |

I have now taught at CAJ for longer than I was a student at CAJ, since this is my 14th year on staff. It's been so fun to teach the children of my CAJ せんぱいーI have taught kids from the Carrell family, Millard family, Cummings family, Hughes family (Erin Paris), and Rudd family (YooRan Kim), to name a few. I love the history that we have together and the chance to see new generations grow up here.

I came back to CAJ for what I thought would be a one year stint to cover a teacher's maternity leave. It's now my 14th year on staff, and the biggest reason I have stayed is because of the support and encouragement I have received from the administration and colleagues.



ALECIA MAY
Technology Support &
Data Protection Officer
| CLASS OF 2005 |

I'm now working in a completely different role from where I started, going from high school English teacher to full-time tech support. Each step in that transition has been a positive one, and I feel blessed to work in a place where I feel both supported and challenged to grow personally and professionally.





CAJ has been a place of learning and growth for me. I became a Christian after coming to CAJ, and God has really blessed me with a community that my family needed. My dad passed away a few weeks after I entered CAJ as a 7th grade student in 2008. As a new student in a new community, it was overwhelming, but God knew exactly where I needed to be and with whom I needed to be.

The teachers and coaches that have encouraged me, cared for me, and prayed for me had a huge impact on me. I wanted to come back to CAJ and give back for all the blessings I received back then. Not only have I been able to coach at CAJ, but in the years I have been here, I've gotten to work with Mr. Steve Hall and Mrs. Tanya Hall, who have been a blessing in my life. They are a huge reason why I came back, and why I choose to stay until God reveals a clear, new path for me.



MESSAGES FROM CAJ STAFF ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN ATTENDING CAJ

The following messages are from parents of students who have graduated from Christian Academy in Japan. A large number of current staff members (22 to be exact) have watched their children walk across the stage to graduate from CAJ. Let's hear from six of them on how CAJ impacted their children and what sets CAJ apart as an educational institution.



CAJ was instrumental in helping our son, Jordan, graduate. Since he was adopted from Ethiopia at an older age, he had learning challenges that come with starting school late and doing all of his learning in a brand new language. The personal support he received in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) made all the difference to his success. I think parents should choose CAJ if they are interested in a school that recognizes each student's needs and then partners with that student to ensure they succeed.

JEAN HINO Elementary Principal

MOTHER OF MARIYA ('06), STEPHANIE ('08), AND JESSE ('11)

I appreciated the staff who invested in my children and the friends they made, who are still an important part of their lives. Knowing the parents of my children's friends and seeing the positive impact those parents had on my children was an added benefit to the excellent education they received. The written curriculum is important and teachers are always improving their craft, but the unwritten curriculum, positive role models, care, and support are much more important to me. I'm thankful that all staff, not just teachers, are invested in the students at CAJ.

I have always been extremely grateful to CAJ for molding my daughters into selfless young women who have hearts that yearn to serve God. The CAJ education has taught both my daughters to integrate their faith in every aspect of their life. Many of the testimonies and teachings that they had heard while at school are becoming increasingly applicable to them as they are experiencing their own challenges out in the real world.



ESTHER TSUJI

Elementary Resource Teacher

MOTHER OF REIKO (18)

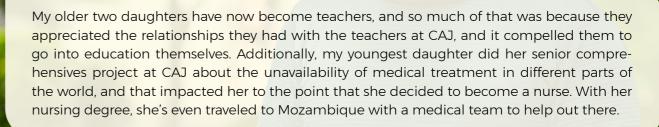
CAJ education played a critical role in shaping my daughter, Reiko. She studied at CAJ from kindergarten to 12th grade, and since her graduation in 2018, she has continued to be an instrument for God's kingdom. CAJ's education has impacted her beliefs, life choices, and priorities. During the college years, she participated in campus ministry through life groups, gospel nights, and various activities at a non-Christian



university. She has committed her time to reaching out to other university students and also has taught young kids in Sunday school at church since her first year of college. After graduating from the university with a business management degree, she found her calling as a teacher and now works in a Christian international school. I believe that CAJ's education equipped her with a strong desire to seek truth and lead a purposeful life in Christ.

STEVE WILLSON Facilities Manager FATHER OF LAUREN ('11)

FATHER OF LAUREN ('11)
RACHAEL ('13), AND CAITLIN ('16)



RIE MARTIN
Admissions Coordinator &
Administrative Assistant
MOTHER OF AIYANNA (14), LINA (16), AND JULIA (16)

My three daughters all graduated from CAJ, have gone through college, and now they are working professionals. I've heard them say over and over that CAJ has prepared them very well for college and professional life. I just saw my youngest daughter give a speech at her graduation of her paramedic program this summer. She was assertive, funny, and concise. When she was commended for giving a great speech, she said her high school prepared her well. That is a testament to CAJ's excellent high school program and hard-working teachers!

Alumni Updates



2023 CAJ REUNION

The 2023 CAJ Reunion Planning Committee put on a successful reunion for the graduating classes of 1959–1998, combined with staff and other guests in San Diego, California last February. A good number turned out, with 164 student alumni, 7 staff members, and 41 guests. The food, fellowship, speakers, accommodations, and scenic surroundings made the reunion an unforgettable event. Thank you to the 2023 Reunion Committee for keeping us a family throughout the years.

Reunion Committee for all their hard work: Tracey Davies Kirk-Johnson ('82), Bobby Howe ('70), Ken Nielsen ('71), Jennifer Plesman-Jackson ('71), Rick Seely ('73), Dan Sims ('79), and Margaret Meggie Bower Smith ('73).













Class of 2003 ZOOM REUNION

Members of the class of 2003 celebrated with a Zoom reunion earlier this year in honor of 20 years since graduating from CAJ. This event was organized by April (Selander) Mack.

FIRST ROW: Anna Penner, Christa (Ransome) Green, Angela (Franklin) Rector, Brianna (Kennedy) Esquivel SECOND ROW: April (Selander) Mack, Christina Epley Moreau, Megumi (Mullins) Welch, David Sloan THIRD ROW: Silas Cole, Laura (Young) Bobick, Stig Olson, Mary (Trinkle) Bodnar FOURTH ROW: Megan McGinty, Leighton Gill, Lincoln Lau FIFTH ROW: Aaron Shaw



Marian Mine | CLASS OF 2007

Marian Mine celebrated her wedding to Keisuke Mine in Tokyo on September 23, 2023. Many CAJ graduates from her family, as well as friends from the 2006 and 2007 classes, were in attendance.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Joshua Mine (19), Julia Mine (14), Heather (Thompson) Mine (178), Marian Mine (107), Keisuke Mine, Yoshikazu Mine, Selah Izawa, Erika (Mine) Izawa (10), Takashi Izawa



LEFT TO RIGHT: Victor Eby ('07), Patrick McGinty ('07), Jessica Bauman ('06), Julie Johnson ('06), Sarah Turner ('07), Amanda (Justiniano) Apeland ('07), Irene Nohara ('07), Megumi (Suzuki) Murata ('07), Stephen Yosypiw ('07)

Class of 2013 | REUNION

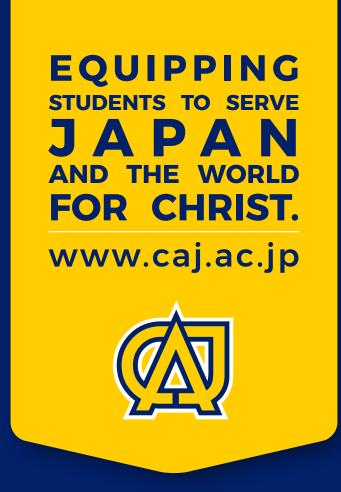
Several members of the class of 2013 met up on August 5, 2023, at T.Y. Harbor in Shinagawa, Tokyo, to celebrate a 10-year reunion from CAJ. Gene Jeong and Miyu Hayashi organized the reunion.

Rebecca Nelson commented: "It felt so nostalgic to be back together again, and we enjoyed recounting our high school days as well as hearing about all the new things everyone has been up to. It was as if no time had passed at all as everyone had the same energy and enthusiasm when we all came together!"



BACK ROW: Steven Connors, Gene Jeong, Christina Deakin, Evan Meeko, Piyush Vaidya, Nico Timbol, Takaaki Baba, Shogo Miyagi, Shuhei Tanaka, Jeremy Lau **FRONT ROW:** Ria Kitaura-Rachmin, Rebecca Nelson, Eito Okino, Miyu Hayashi, Azusa Yamamoto, Arpan Shrestha

We would love to hear from you! Take a few minutes right now - email your update to alumni@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)









