



Christian Academy in Japan 70th Commencement Ceremony

Class of 2025

Friday, June 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Program

Procession

Welcome David Mawhinney

Hail, Alma Mater! Led by Senior Choir

Invocation Nick Petkoff

Presentation of Awards Tyrone Fambro

Senior Address Jane Kettelman

Commencement Address Nelle Potter

Presentation of Diplomas and Bibles David Mawhinney

Scripture Benediction (Numbers 6:24–26) ... Mrs. Yukari Nakamura (Japanese)

Mr. Lars Liljesson (Swedish)

Mrs. Chengai Piao (Mandarin)

Mr. Appaji Kosaraju (Hindi)

Mrs. Natalia Yokota (Russian)

Mr. Deryck Yu Thomas (Fijian)

Mr. Chee Yee Pao (Cantonese)

Mrs. KyungSun Lee (Korean)

Mr. Gregory Swenson (English)

Recession

Announcement David Mawhinney

Hail, Alma Mater!

1. Hail, Alma Mater, raise high thy gold and blue!
Colors reflecting our loyalty to you.
Strong and enduring, in Christ you ne'er shall fail.
Hail, Alma Mater, all proudly we hail!

2. Hail, Alma Mater, beneath the towering pines!
Christian Academy stands beloved through time.
God hath ordained thee to blaze a truth-sod trail.
Hail, Alma Mater, all proudly we hail!

Senior Music Awards

YunByeong Chae
Selin Choi
Jane Kettelman
AGyeol Kim
Gyung Won Kim
Momoka Komatsu
Anna Liljesson
Miki Nakazawa
Timothy Oue
Aiden Yang
Audrey Yang
Erica Yokota

Senior Athletic Awards

YunByeong Chae
Timon Fambro
Ray Marcianti
Izumi Matsuoka
Simon Nakamura
Timothy Oue
Kalista Potter
Daniel Seminoff
Ellen Swenson
Xavier Van Dam
Nikki Van Druff
Erica Yokota

Career Knights Roll of Honor

Jolie Broeker
YunByeong Chae
Selin Choi
Rebecca Hale
Zhien Huang
Hannah Jeggo
AGyeol Kim
Gyung Won Kim

YeRim Kim
Chee Kitajima
Momoka Komatsu
Timothy Oue
James Pao
Jihu Seo
Luke Sonnenberg
Yuka Sumitani

Mina Takahashi
Tenka Uchino
Nikki Van Druff
Louis Weeks
Alex Williams
Audrey Yang
Aiden Yang
Erica Yokota

PTA Departmental Awards

The recipient of each award is an outstanding student who has demonstrated one or more of the following:

- A deep understanding and appreciation for the subject
- A mature proficiency in the use of the tools of the subject
- The ability and willingness to contribute to the learning of others
- The ability to do useful, independent study in the subject

Winners, last year

Art: Isabelle Ang
Bible: Spencer Eisley
Creative Arts: Kosuke Sumihiro
English: Elliot McKay
Math: YoungJun (YJ) Ryu

Music: Mana Tsuruta
Physical Education: Tryphena Sexton
Science: Nathan Abels
Social Studies: Sunwoo Park
World Language: Kaya (Chajah) Kato

Alvey Leadership Award

This award is given to a senior who has demonstrated the highest degree of leadership qualities over his or her high school career. The donor for this award asked the man for whom it is named what leadership trait he thought was most important. This very successful businessman, at the sunset of his life, stated, "Humility." Humble leadership is one of the defining traits to qualify an individual for this award.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 Christopher Kinoshita
2023 Shun Tanaka
2022 Megumi Johnson
2021 Joshua Shew
2020 Jin Woo Lee

Judy Amos Distinguished Service Award

Mrs. Judy Amos served CAJ as a teacher, board member, board secretary, board vice chair, and board chair. This award honors her service, and the recipient, in like manner, is a student who has selflessly served the CAJ community.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 Elliot McKay
2023 Yasuko Yabuki
2022 Tabitha Sexton
2021 Joanna Ang
2020 Shun Collier

Samuel Public Speaking Award

This award is named after a dynamic and exceptionally well-prepared preacher who was also a mentor for others. It should also be noted that the talents of the biblical Samuel included ministry, speaking, and teaching.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 Marcus Hershberger
2023 Josh Julian
2022 Shunsuke (Shawn) Gallagher
2021 Enosh Mutenda
2020 Jin Woo Lee

Fitzgerald Career Athletic Awards

These awards go to a female and a male senior athlete for the positive impact that they have had on CAJ's athletic program over their entire high school career. The recipients have demonstrated excellence in their achievements in sports and are recognized for their consistent level of leadership. Seniors are compared based on the total number of varsity letters they have received over the course of their time at CAJ, the individual successes they have experienced during their careers, the total number of awards, and the opportunities they have had to emerge as leaders.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 John (J) Sakaguchi
Ashlie Sawka
2023 Sho Surai
Marikah Bedow
2022 Peter Junker
Joy Peterson
2021 Enosh Mutenda
Jessica Bedow
2020 Eugene Reedy
Rachel Nelson
Rina Seminoff

June Habbestad Fine Arts Award

The Habbestad Fine Arts Award is a tribute to Ms. June Habbestad, who was an active sponsor of fine arts activities for many years. Senior students are nominated for this award by either a staff member or fellow student and then submit an application outlining their artistic achievements, which includes a statement on the role they foresee the arts playing in their lives after they leave CAJ.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2024 Kaia Dishner
- 2023 Hikari Shinagawa
- 2022 Akari Hirayama
Kento Gray
- 2021 Anika Claxton
Darcy Lewis
- 2020 Jin Woo Lee

Howard Blair Award

This award is a tribute to Mr. Howard Blair, who taught English at CAJ for many years. This award is presented to a senior who has consistently demonstrated talent, dedication, and excellence in the study of literature and who has maintained a high standard of communication in writing and speaking. The student is remarkable for developing skills and for presentation abilities.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2024 Mana Tsuruta
- 2023 Rei-AynD'ru Fleming
- 2022 Yuki Koshio
- 2021 Melisa Heimann
- 2020 Emi Miyazaki

The Joan Johnston Senior Comprehensives Awards

These awards honor Mrs. Joan Johnston's lifetime of service, many years of which were dedicated to the care and nurturing of CAJ students, staff, and parents. Joan's life exemplified what we desire to train our students to do: serve Japan and the world for Christ. This was something she did one class, one student, one conversation, and sometimes one cookie at a time. The awards are presented to seniors who have engaged with the Senior Comprehensives process in a manner that has made a lasting impact on their lives and the world around them. These awards are not necessarily selected based on the highest marks, but by the passion and manner in which the students seek practical solutions to a significant problem.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2024 Elliot McKay
- 2023 Shun Tanaka,
Eryka Kindervater
Marin Yoshihara
Sunhye Baik
Hyugo Ishikawa
- 2022 Yunkyung Baik
- 2021 Catherine Ayumi Fong
Aya Fujimura
Mariko Maeda
Yohana Miyajima
Abhirupan Vijayalakshmi
Kurinchiselvan
- 2020 No recipient due to COVID

Les Johnston Biblical Perspective Award

This award is presented to a student who has shown exceptional ability to apply a biblical perspective across disciplines and issues. This student not only has mastered the academic skills involved, but also has made a personal commitment to embracing a Christian worldview.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2024 Spencer Eisley
- 2023 Eryka Kindervater
- 2022 Joseph Pao
- 2021 Anna Stoesz
- 2020 Reeko Ohashi

Ron and Carolyn Hardy Discipleship Award

This award is presented to a student who has demonstrated and expressed a vital relationship with Jesus Christ and who has been involved in discipling others within CAJ or the wider community, encouraging them in their faith journey and helping them move toward where God desires them to be.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 Marcus Hershberger
2023 Eryka Kindervater
2022 Lydia Byun
2021 Yohana Miyajima
2020 David Augustus Thicksten

Kidron Valley Award

The Kidron Valley Award is given to the student from a missionary family with the highest GPA after the Academic Achievement Awards are determined.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 YoungJun Ryu
2023 Sophia Taylor
2022 Joseph Pao
2021 Krista Suzuki
2020 Rina Seminoff

Academic Achievement Awards: Valedictorian, Salutatorian

The Academic Achievement Awards are presented to the students with the highest overall grades. The valedictorian is the student who has earned the highest weighted grade point average during their time at CAJ. The salutatorian is the student who has earned the second highest weighted grade point average during their time at CAJ.

Winners, last 5 years

2024 Elliot McKay (V)
Mana Tsuruta (S)
2023 Kayla Rood (V)
Ye Eun (Grace) Kim (S)
2022 Elijah Shew (V)
Yuki Koshio (S)
2021 Joshua Shew (V)
Joanna Ang (S)
2020 Jin Woo Lee (V)
Reeko Ohashi (S)

CAJ Honor Award

The criteria for this award, considered the most prestigious of our awards, are as follows: “One member of the senior class who is respected as a leader and outstanding role model of what CAJ desires its students to become spiritually, academically, and socially. Some qualities that are exemplified and looked for include: interest in helping others, attitudes of genuine friendliness, a daily lifestyle that brings honor to the Lord, and faithfulness.”

Winners, last 5 years

2024 Joe Byrd
2023 Rachel Kang
2022 Christina (Tina) Walker
2021 Krista Suzuki
2020 Dominic Lazaro Climacosa

The Class of 2025

Jolie Broeker[†]

North Greenville University

YunByeong Chae

University of Michigan

Selin Choi[†]

Waseda University

Rion Chun[‡]

undecided

Timon Fambro

undecided

Millabella Fannin

Temple University, Japan

Jonah Gooding

Cedarville University

Rebecca Hale^{*}

Rose Hulman Institute of Technology

Zhien Huang[†]

Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology

Airi Iyama

Waseda University

Hannah Jeggo^{*}

University of Surrey

Takatoshi Kanemura

Binghamton University

Jane Kettelman^{*†}

Welch College

AGyeol Kim

undecided

Gyung Won Kim[†]

International Christian University

Min Kim

undecided

YeRim Kim

undecided

Chisato Kitajima^{‡†}

University of Toronto

Momoka Komatsu[†]

undecided

Venkata Akshara Kosaraju

Illinois Institute of Technology

Anna Liljesson

undecided

Konosuke Maeda

undecided

Ray Marcianti

San Diego State University

Izumi Matsuoka

Arizona State University

Simon Nakamura

LeTourneau University

Miki Nakazawa[†]

Westmont College

Timothy Oue*

Kennesaw State University

Ching Him Pao

Calvin University

Olivia Perry

undecided

Kalista Potter

The University of British Columbia

Daniel Seminoff

Biola University

Jihu Seo

Keio University

Kyanna Sims

undecided

Chaewon Son

Keio University

Luke Sonnenberg[†]

University of Waterloo

Yuka Sumitani*[‡]

University of California, Los Angeles

Ellen Swenson

Wheaton College

Leaf Tai

undecided

Mina Takahashi*[‡]

undecided

Kiara Thomas

Waldorf University

Mark Tierney

San Diego State University

Tenka Uchino

International Christian University

Xavier Van Dam

Simon Fraser University

Nicole Van Druff*

Ouachita Baptist University

Louis Weeks

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Corey Wilkins

undecided

Alexander Williams

Waseda University

Tsz Him Wong

The University of British Columbia

SiEun Yang

Waseda University

Sunghoon Yang[†]

University of Michigan

Erica Yokota[‡]

Mount Holyoke College

Dear Class of 2025,

In my final message to you I want to share this journey of the Apostle Paul as he faced a dangerous storm on his way to meet Caesar.

Due to the storm, the ship was wrecked, and the passengers, including Paul, had to abandon ship. Despite the challenging circumstances, Paul was reassured by an angel the night before the incident, that God would guide him safely to his destination.

As you reflect on this story, I want you to consider the different approaches taken by the passengers to reach safety. Some dove in and swam, showing leadership and determination like trailblazers. Others surfed the waves with boards, defying the natural elements while displaying creativity and adaptability. Lastly, there were those who clung to broken pieces of the ship, symbolizing survival through resilience and sheer will. The lesson here is that despite facing adversity, each of them found their own way to make it through.

Just like Paul and the passengers in the story, each of you have the strength and faith to overcome challenges and reach your destiny. Trust in yourself, have faith in God, and as you navigate your next academic and personal journeys, remember that success comes in various forms. Whether you lead the way, take creative routes, or are forced to take a path that is less traveled, embrace your unique journey and remember, no matter how you choose to weather the storm, or whatever road you decide to take, believe you will make it through.

Sincerely,

Mr. Fambro

High School Principal

“He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land.

The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship.

In this way everyone reached land safely.”

Acts 27:43-44

Senior Homeroom Teachers

Keith Kelleth
Ryan Potter '98
Morris Yaegashi '98

Senior Council Advisor

Matt Lindsey

Leadership Team

David Mawhinney (*Head of School*)
Tyrone Fambro (*High School Principal*)
Jean Hino (*Elementary School Principal*)
Pamela Kumate (*Human Resources Manager*)
David Marshall (*Director of Teaching and Learning*)
Nathaniel Rudd (*Information Technology Director*)
Renee Van Druff (*Middle School Principal*)
Jacqueline Willson '84 (*Director, Parallel Ed. Services*)
Stephen Willson (*Facilities Manager*)

Board of Directors

Nick Petkoff, Chair
Grant Buchholtz
Chad Farmer
David Mawhinney
Seita Sakaguchi
Jeremy Seminoff
Daniel Sexton
Anne Marie Smoker '85
Greg Swenson '80

Board of Councilors

Philip Foxwell '75
Jay Greer
Christine Iijima
Josh Matsumaru
Jim May
Hydi Peterson '82
Mark Roberts
Poppy Roberts
Keiko Sexton
Heidi Skipper
Kathy Trim
Debbie Umipig-Julian

Mark Bedow (*Supervisor Auditor*)
Taizo Morimoto (*Supervisor Auditor*)

The ceremony is being broadcast live over the internet.

Photos and video of the ceremony will be available at:



<https://caj.ac.jp/divisions/hsgraduation>