



Christian Academy in Japan
71st Commencement Ceremony

Class of 2026

Friday, June 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Program

Processional: Pomp and Circumstance March, No. 1	Sir Edward Elgar
Welcome	David Mawhinney
* Alma Mater	<i>Hail, Alma Mater!</i>
Invocation	Nick Petkoff
Presentation of Awards	Tyrone Fambro
Senior Address	Daniel Shew & Hanna Tomiyama
Scripture Reading (Psalm 139:1–6).....	Matthew Lindsey
Commencement Address	Yukiko Howard
Presentation of Diplomas and Bibles	David Mawhinney
Scripture Benediction (Numbers 6:24–26) ...	Dr. Ryosuke Fujinuma (Japanese)
	Dr. Vijayalakshmi Rajamanickam (Tamil)
	Mrs. Roeden Sierra Nakamura (Tagalog)
	Mrs. Chen Li (Mandarin)
	Mr. Timothy Arjmandpour (Farsi)
	Mr. KyoungHo Park (Korean)
	Mrs. Ximena Cisneros (Spanish)
	Mrs. Misty Sargent (English)
Recessional	
Announcement	David Mawhinney

* Please stand

Pre-event music composed by Yushi Abe '26

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

Yushi Abe
Nathaniel Bae
Kazuo Fujinuma
Moana Hasegawa
Shihyun Huh
Emma Imamura
Sarah Kinoshita
MinGi Lee
Yunnah Park
Ella Pousseur
Jean Ryu
Joanna Sargent
Ji Hwan Shin
Daigo Takakusaki
Hanna Tomiyama
Haoyi Wang

Senior Athletic Awards

Haruto Abe
Sakurako Abe
Moana Hasegawa
SeWon Kim
Konosuke Ohashi
Tyler Reidenbach
Joanna Sargent
Daigo Takakusaki
Hanna Tomiyama

Career Knights Roll of Honor

Sakurako Abe
Yushi Abe
Nathaniel Bae
Moana Hasegawa
Shion Iida
Joonseok Kim
Sarah Kinoshita
Leila Kwon
MinGi Lee
HyeAn Park
Yunnah Park
Jean Ryu
Wataru Seto
Daniel Shew
Shiori Sun
Daigo Takakusaki
Hanna Tomiyama
Haoyi Wang

PTA Department 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:	Momoka Komatsu	Music:	Jane Ketteman
Bible:	Audrey Yang	Physical Education:	Timon Fambro
Creative Arts:	Hannah Jeggo	Science:	ZhiEn Huang
English:	Airi Iyama	Social Studies:	Alex Williams
Math:	Aiden Yang	World Language:	Yuka Sumitani

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. Mr. Alvey, a successful businessman for whom this award is named, particularly valued humility in leaders. Humble leadership is one of the defining traits to qualify a senior for this award.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2025 Mina Takahashi
- 2024 Christopher Kinoshita
- 2023 Shun Tanaka
- 2022 Megumi Johnson
- 2021 Joshua Shew

Judy Amos Distinguished Service Award

Judy Amos served CAJ as 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

- 2025 Jolie Broeker
- 2024 Elliot McKay
- 2023 Yasuko Yabuki
- 2022 Tabitha Sexton
- 2021 Joanna Ang

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

- 2025 Luke Sonnenberg
- 2024 Marcus Hershberger
- 2023 Josh Julian
- 2022 Shunsuke (Shawn) Gallagher
- 2021 Enosh Mutenda

Fitzgerald Career Athletic Awards

These awards go to a female and a male senior athlete for the positive impact that they have made on CAJ's athletic program over their entire high school careers. The recipients have demonstrated excellence in their achievements in sports and a consistent level of leadership. Criteria considered include total number of varsity letters received while at CAJ, individual successes experienced, total number of awards received, and opportunities that they have used to emerge as leaders.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2025 Simon Nakamura
Erica Yokota
- 2024 John (J) Sakaguchi
Ashlie Sawka
- 2023 Sho Surai
Marikah Bedow
- 2022 Peter Junker
Joy Peterson
- 2021 Enosh Mutenda
Jessica Bedow

June Habbestad Fine Arts Award

The Habbestad Fine Arts Award is a tribute to 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

- 2025 Miki Nakazawa
- 2024 Kaia Dishner
- 2023 Hikari Shinagawa
- 2022 Akari Hirayama
Kento Gray
- 2021 Anika Claxton
Darcy Lewis

Howard Blair Award

This award is a tribute to 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

- 2025 Hannah Jeggo
- 2024 Mana Tsuruta
- 2023 Rei-AynD'ru Fleming
- 2022 Yuki Koshio
- 2021 Melisa Heimann

Joan Johnston Senior Capstone Award

This award honors 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 award is presented to a senior who has engaged with the Senior Capstone process in a manner that has made a lasting impact on their life and the world around them. The winner of this award is not necessarily selected based on the highest marks, but by the passion and manner in which the student seeks practical solutions to a significant problem.

Winners, last 5 years

- 2025 Yuka Sumitani
- 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

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

- 2025 GyungWon Kim
- 2024 Spencer Easley
- 2023 Eryka Kindervater
- 2022 Joseph Pao
- 2021 Anna Stoesz

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

- 2025 Daniel Seminoff
- 2024 Marcus Hershberger
- 2023 Eryka Kindervater
- 2022 Lydia Byun
- 2021 Yohana Miyajima

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

2025 YeRim Kim
2024 YoungJun Ryu
2023 Sophia Taylor
2022 Joseph Pao
2021 Krista Suzuki

Jeannie Johnson Memorial Next Generation Award

Established in 2026

This award is presented to a student who has demonstrated a heart for serving and engaging with younger students at CAJ, being a positive role model and a faithful caretaker. This award is established to honor Jeannie Johnson, who began working at CAJ in 1988. She worked in a variety of roles, most notably with School Support Services, now Parallel, where she was the first teacher of Stories Plus. No matter the context, her love for children always showed through.

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

2025 Hannah Jeggo (V)
ZhiEn Huang (S)
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)

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

2025 Jane Ketteman
2024 Joe Byrd
2023 Rachel Kang
2022 Christina (Tina) Walker
2021 Krista Suzuki

The Class of 2026

Haruto Abe

Sophia University

Sakurako Abe

Application Pending

Yushi Abe[†]

Tokyo College of Music

William Cyrus Arjmandpour

Fordham University

Riina Asakura

Hosei University

Nathaniel Sangmin Bae^{*†}

Wheaton College

Kazuo Andrew Fujinuma

Montana State University

Moana Hasegawa^{†‡}

International Christian University

Hikari Horiuchi

Sophia University

Shihyun Huh

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Shion Iida^{*}

Boston College

Emma Imamura

Undecided

Aya Ishii

University of Nicosia - Medical School

Joonseok Kim

University of Southern California

Sejun Kim

Temple University - Japan

SeWon Kim

Tokyo International University

Sarah Sachiko Kinoshita^{*‡}

Northeastern University

Seojin Kong

Application Pending

Leila Kwon

Application Pending

MinGi Lee

Seoul National University

Sarang Lim[†]

Application Pending

Kyungjae Min

Purdue University

Reona Nakamura

Application Pending

Konosuke Ohashi

University of Arizona

HyeAn Park

Sophia University

Yunnah Park

Baylor University

Ella Grace Pousseur

Binghamton University

Rohan Ramirez-Thorne

The Master's University

Tyler Reidenbach

Santa Clara University

Jean Ryu[†]

Waseda University

Joanna Elisabeth Sargent

Anderson University

Wataru Seto[‡]

Washington University in St. Louis

Daniel Seiya Tsuchido Shew^{*‡}

Northeastern University

Ji Hwan Shin

Application Pending

Shiori Sun[†]

Sophia University

Eunbin Sung

Waseda University

Daigo Takakusaki^{*‡}

University of California San Diego

Johaán Basil Tiby

University at Buffalo

Hanna Kaori Tomiyama Cisneros[‡]

University of British Columbia and Sciences Po
Dual Degree

Amitraashini Vijayalakshmi

Kurinchiselvan

Application Pending

Haoyi Wang

University of Michigan

Ayme Danielle Watanabe[†]

Wheaton College

Dear Class of 2026,

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 has 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

Ryan Potter '98
Morris Yaegashi '98

Senior Council Advisor

Matt Lindsey

Leadership Team

David Mawhinney (*Head of School*)
Tyrone Fambro (*High School Principal*)
Emily Fahey (*Director of Advancement*)
Pamela Kumate (*Human Resources Manager*)
Bryan Lewis (*Business Manager*)
David Marshall (*Director of Teaching and Learning*)
Nathaniel Rudd (*Information Technology Director*)
Renee Van Druff (*Middle School Principal*)
John Van Hofwegen (*Elementary School Principal*)
Jacqueline Willson '84 (*Parallel Educational Services Director*)
Stephen Willson (*Facilities Manager*)

Board of Directors

Nick Petkoff, Chair
Susan Bae
Grant Buchholtz
Chad Farmer
David Mawhinney
Dave Skipper
Anne Marie Smoker '85

Board of Councilors

Philip Foxwell '75
Jay Greer
Christine Iijima
Jim May
Hydi Peterson '82
Poppy Roberts
Heidi Skipper
Kathy Trim

Mark Bedow (*Supervisor Auditor*)
Karen Johnson (*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/hsg Graduation>