

Tamagawa Academy - IB Division **NEWSLETTER**

Issue 04

August 2026

Our parents, their stories

Every member of our school community has a story worth sharing.

Learner Profile Awards

Small actions and positive attitudes can make a lasting impact!

Handbell Club interview

Discover the dedication behind one of our school's most harmonious clubs.

DP subject choice

Our G10 students are about to complete their MYP journey and prepare for DP.

Music with a purpose

Our talented student band raised funds for the Red Cross!

Riding to Success

K.U. has taken 1st place in all of Japan at the Under-18 Equestrian Competition!

TBCJ

Emmaly Isobe has placed 3rd in all of Japan at the prestigious TBCJ contest!

Grade 6 **Rinkan Gakkou**



LEADING MACHIDA: **A Conversation with the Mayor**



What happens when two curious students sit down with the leader of their city? In this exclusive interview, S and Y speak with Mayor Inagaki about his vision for Machida, the lessons he has learned through public service, and his hopes for the next generation.



Mr Furnival's message



Welcome to the IB Division's August Newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading about the activities our students have been getting involved in both inside and outside of the classroom; building a sense of community across the Division. A real highlight for me was hearing the Mayor of Machida talking about making a change in the local community, listening to the Music Festival and watching the Grade 10 Charity Music Concert, which was a great example of Service as Action.

I am writing this from Shenfield Library in Essex, England, where I grew up. While I spend most of the year with a forward thinking International Mindset, as all IB teachers and students love to do, summer for me means returning home to see family, friends and old places. All bring back different memories. This is the library where my Grandmother took me when I was young, which I based my first university assessment on "Concept of Community" on, where I sat and read my pre-reading for my teacher training course and, when I'd qualified, where I used to do grade homework and assessments after work if it was too noisy at home!

Shenfield is part of Brentwood, a very busy town on the outskirts of London where nobody seems to have any spare time, and everyone seems to be in a rush. Libraries play a very important part in building the local community. They are far more than simply a place to borrow books. They give people a chance to meet and connect with others. There are 10 different community groups held at this library, including "Knit and Natter", "Wellness for Women", "Games Mornings" and "Toddler Reading Groups". Each one is designed to build a community spirit, to get people talking to each other, and to help stop people feeling alone or left behind in this busy world.

The library also holds a yearly "Summer Reading Challenge" which is aimed at getting school children to read throughout the Summer Holiday with prizes being given out in the local schools in September; I am sure Mr Hinchey will approve! I used to do this challenge myself when I was young, and got my children to do it when they were at school, which I am sure started their love of books.

I hope you all get the chance to have a well earned break this summer; to reconnect with family you don't see all of the time, to read for fun and to look around your community to see what is going on and to get involved.

I look forward to seeing you at International Day and the Tamagawa Ground Festival on September 5th.



Oliver Furnival
Head of IB Division

BACK

LEADERSHIP COMMENTS



Ms Takahashi

In summer, the sky seems a little higher than usual. Whenever I look up at the endless blue sky, I am reminded of the endless possibilities that each child has.

Summer vacation is a special time to discover new ideas, new experiences, and new ways of learning. Whether exploring a new place, experiencing a different culture, enjoying a favorite hobby, or simply spending meaningful time with family and friends, every experience helps children grow. Each moment becomes part of who they are and helps them learn how to connect and grow with others.

I hope this summer becomes a wonderful and unforgettable chapter in each child's story. Wishing you and your family a joyful, relaxing, and enriching summer!



Mr. Osawa

Summer vacation seems long, but it actually goes by quickly. Please try something you don't usually do—even just one thing! I'm going to start surfing.

I'll ask everyone about it when summer vacation is over. I'm looking forward to hearing about all the new challenges you take on.



Mr. Soai

Japanese summers are hot. In the heat, I reflect on the precious gift of peace. How blessed we are to hold our own future in our hands!



Mr. Hinchey

Summer is a great time to read lots of books and reflect. I will be reading and rereading some of my favorite books this summer. I hope that all students get a chance to try the Summer Reading Challenge or just enjoy reading for fun. Don't forget that the blockbuster movie this summer, The Odyssey, was based on a very old book!

And so the countdown begins for our Grade 12 students! With the release of the Grade 12 Term 1 report cards, the university application season is now officially underway.

Our Grade 12 students are also settling into a focused study routine as they prepare for the IB examinations over the coming months. While the summer break presents a valuable opportunity to make meaningful progress in their studies, I have also encouraged students to strike a healthy balance by taking time to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends.

Maintaining healthy habits, such as eating well and getting sufficient sleep, will be just as important as their academic preparation in the months ahead.



Ms Wei

Learner Profile Award Winners



Y.S. (G6) - Thinker

In Math class Y uses critical and creative thinking to solve both familiar and unfamiliar problems and develops well-reasoned solutions.



M.M. (G7) - Communicator

In English class M has been preparing in advance for the topics, speaking clearly, and delivering the messages with confidence.



N.F.(G8) - Communicator

N has updated her Art teacher with the progress of her work frequently and sought specific feedback that she could take action on to improve her learning.



R.H. (G7) - Thinker

In English class R demonstrated thoughtful thinking by applying feedback, actively participating in class discussions, and putting consistent effort into improving her work. This reflective approach resulted in a very good formative assessment and showed a strong commitment to learning.



H.I. (G8) - Risk-taker H volunteered to write for the Homeroom class newsletter when asked for contributors. This demonstrated a Risk-taker as Harutaka was willing to step forward and take on a new challenge.



L.O. (G9) - Social Skills

L's leadership qualities are commendable as she is knowledgeable, respectful and helps others to succeed and encourages her groupmates to contribute. She uses her science knowledge to help the group succeed with tasks.

LEARNER PROFILE AWARD WINNERS



L.S. (G9) - Caring

L consistently works towards understanding science better through focus and learning beyond. She is able to communicate her understanding at a proficient level.



K.M. (G10) - Inquirer

In Design class K has been an inquirer by challenging himself and independently acquiring new skills through research and putting his new skills into action.



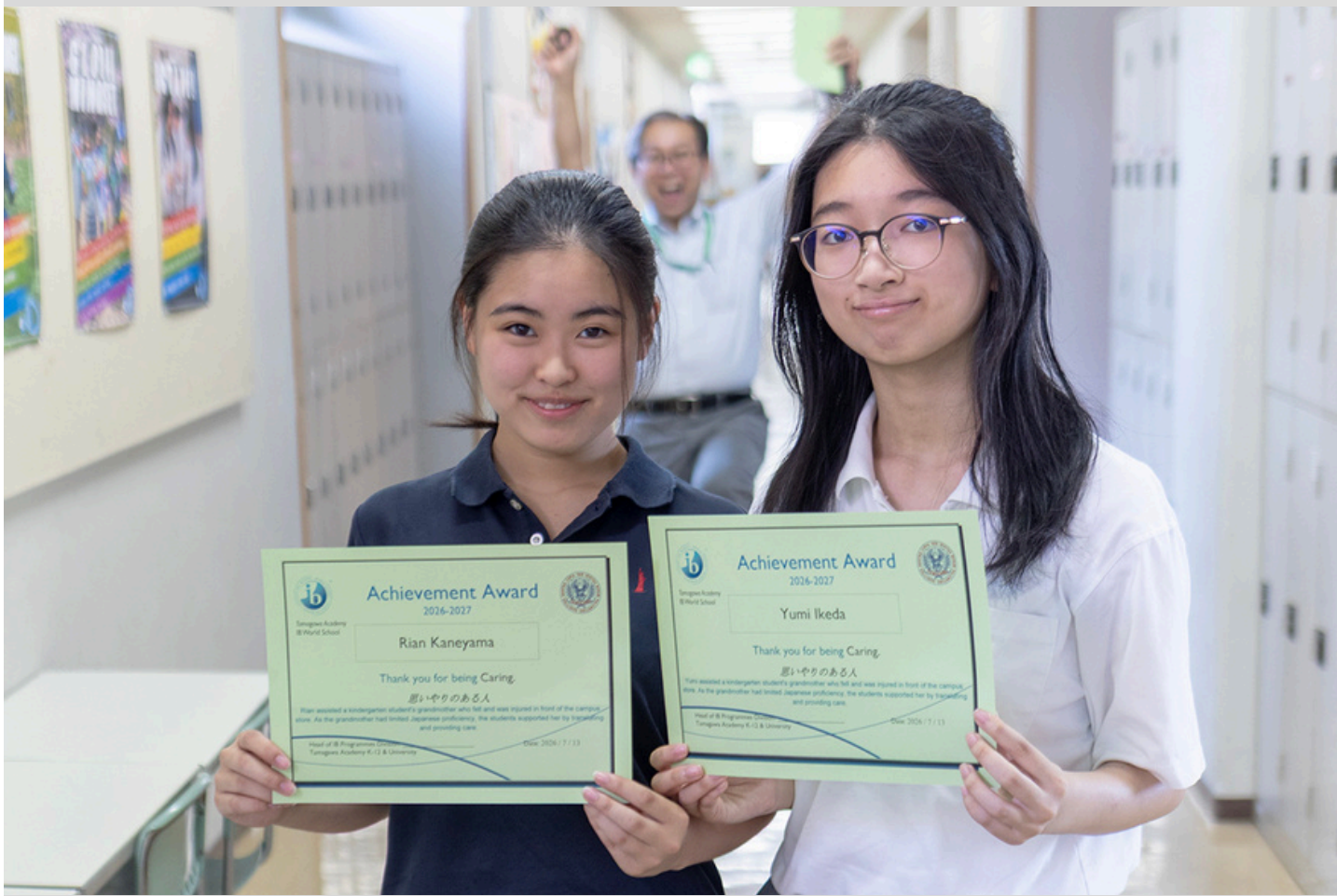
Kento Fukuoka (G12) - Thinker

Kento has shown consistency in learning economics and it's very pleasing to see him progressing with excellent grades.



K.K. (G10) - Caring

K came to the aid of a third-grade elementary school student who fell ill and collapsed on the way to school. She immediately called the school office to report the situation which helped ensure a swift response from the teachers and the school nurse.



R.K. and Y.I. (G11) - Caring

R and Y assisted a kindergarten student's grandmother who fell and was injured in front of the campus store. As the grandmother had limited Japanese proficiency, the students supported her by translating and providing care.

S.C. (G12) - Researcher

In Economics class S consistently demonstrates perseverance and resilience in her learning. She remains persistent even when faced with challenging tasks and actively works to improve her performance.

Our Parents, their stories

T.K.



An explorer. A cyclist. A driver. A businessman. None of these were part of a carefully mapped future, yet each became an essential chapter in one remarkable journey. In this month's feature, Mr. T.K., IB alumni R's father, invites us to rethink what it means to have a dream—and reveals why passion, persistence, and embracing the unexpected may matter even more than having all the answers.

Back in elementary school, when asked to write about our "future dreams" for the class anthology, I wrote that I wanted to become an explorer. In truth, though, I was just obsessed with TV and radio. In middle and high school, I got completely hooked on cycling—riding through the mountains, falling off cliffs, and even getting lost once. By college, my obsession shifted to cars. Despite endless spins, blown engines, accidents, and failures, I kept at it simply because I loved it.

It wasn't until I entered the workforce that I found a real dream: "I want to make people happy with my own ideas." Yet, my first four years were a string of failures, making me the biggest underachiever in the company. Still, as I persisted, results finally began to show. Just when I thought my dream might be coming true, I was suddenly asked to join my father's business, so I changed jobs.



Reality, however, was harsh. Problems piled up both inside and outside the company, to the point where bankruptcy was looming over us. Every day, I threw myself into resolving the immediate crises right in front of me, taking it one step at a time. Those steps led me to the work I do today. I realized that Japanese people often know the least about Japan—and I find immense purpose in trying to change that reality, even just a little, by sharing the culture and value of Japan.

Looking back, my life hasn't been about chasing grand dreams so much as accumulating the things I was passionately absorbed in at any given moment. Accepting failure, digesting it thoroughly, and giving everything you have to the task at hand—I believe that experience itself becomes an irreplaceable asset.

T.K..

BACK



What was the turning point that led a Tamagawa Academy student to become the mayor of Machida? In this exclusive interview, S.S. and Y.H. uncover the story behind Mayor Inagaki's remarkable journey. From unexpected career changes to lessons in leadership, communication, and serving the community, discover the experiences that shaped his path.

When you were a student at Tamagawa Academy, did you ever imagine that you would one day become the mayor?

Not at all. Before becoming mayor, I was a physician. My father was also a doctor, so from elementary school I dreamed of following the same path. Since Tamagawa did not have a medical school at the time, I transferred to another school that did, and fortunately I was able to achieve my goal of becoming a doctor.

Becoming mayor was something I never imagined as a student. Looking back, three experiences inspired me to enter public service. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I served on a city advisory board and realized how important expert knowledge is when creating public policy. Later, through the Chamber of Commerce, I had opportunities to propose policies for Machida and began thinking, "Rather than simply making suggestions, I'd like to help make them a reality." Finally, as a school doctor responsible for the health of about 4,000 students across seven schools, I noticed that many children rarely greeted adults.



That experience convinced me that building a community with stronger communication and human connections was something worth working toward. I realized that, as a mayor, I could help create the kind of society where those values could flourish.

Looking back on your time at Tamagawa Academy, what is your most memorable memory?

It's difficult to choose just one memory because I had so many wonderful experiences. I remember spending more time playing with friends than studying! School events such as the Music Festival, sports festivals, and theatrical performances were a huge part of student life, and we practiced for them with great enthusiasm. When I look back now, however, the most valuable thing I gained was lifelong friendships. Many of my closest friends today are still the classmates I met in elementary school at Tamagawa. Those friendships have lasted for decades, and I treasure them deeply.

When you first became mayor, what was the biggest challenge you faced?

Every city has many challenges, but I believed the most important issue was making sure citizens' voices were truly heard. Too often, plans had already been finalized before residents had the opportunity to give meaningful feedback. I wanted to create a process where citizens could contribute their ideas from the beginning, allowing the city and its residents to work together. Listening carefully and finding common ground leads to better decisions for everyone.

What does a typical day as mayor look like?

Every day is different, but I usually arrive at City Hall around 8:00 a.m. Before work officially begins, I walk around the building to greet staff members. I can't speak with everyone every day, but I make it a point to see familiar faces, thank people for their work, and stay connected with the team.

My schedule is filled with meetings, visitors, and community events. One of the most challenging parts of the job is giving speeches to large audiences, but I've learned that communication begins with something much simpler—a greeting. That's why I also visit local elementary schools to welcome students each morning. I hope to encourage children throughout Machida to develop the habit of greeting others with kindness and confidence.

***Since becoming mayor, have you discovered any new strengths in yourself?***

I'm still at the beginning of my journey as mayor, so I think there is still much to learn about myself. Rather than deciding my strengths on my own, I believe the people I serve will judge my work over time. My goal is simply to do my best every day. And I have one final message for students: when you turn 18, make sure you vote. Your voice matters.

You once dreamed of becoming a doctor. What helped you achieve that goal?

By the time I was preparing for medical school, I knew I needed to study seriously. More importantly, I had already discovered a study method that worked well for me. I developed my own routine during junior high school and continued using it. Everyone learns differently, so my advice is to find a study style that suits you as early as possible. Once you discover what works best, learning becomes much more effective.

What advice would you give students who hope to make a positive impact on their communities?

Always begin with a clear goal. Imagine your goal is to climb a mountain. There are many different paths to the summit. It's important to choose a route, but if you become too attached to a single approach, you may overlook a better path. Listen to different perspectives, discuss ideas with others, and be flexible enough to change your approach when necessary. Success comes from keeping your eyes on the destination while remaining open to new ways of getting there.



My own goal is to make Machida a city that its citizens are proud to call home—a place where everyone can truly say, "I'm glad I live here."

Do you have a message for the students of Tamagawa Academy?

We are living in a time of rapid technological change. As artificial intelligence and digital technologies continue to advance, many jobs will evolve. That's why communication skills will become more valuable than ever. Technology can replace certain tasks, but it cannot replace genuine human relationships.

I believe Tamagawa Academy provides an environment where students naturally develop those communication skills. The education I received here, especially during my elementary school years, became the foundation for who I am today. I am truly grateful for my time at Tamagawa, and I hope all of you will continue to grow, embrace new opportunities, and make meaningful contributions to society.



As our conversation came to a close, one message stood out above all others: leadership begins with listening, meaningful change starts with a clear vision, and every strong community is built through genuine human connection. Reflecting on his journey from Tamagawa student to physician and now Mayor of Machida, Mayor Inagaki reminded us that success is rarely a straight path—it is shaped by curiosity, perseverance, and the willingness to learn from others.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Mayor Inagaki for sharing his experiences and valuable advice with the Tamagawa community, and we hope his words inspire our students to embrace communication, serve others, and become the leaders who will shape the future!

Tamagawa's MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Tamagawa Music Festival is more than a celebration of musical talent—it is a testament to perseverance, collaboration, and personal growth. In this issue, Mr Suzuki and Ms Takahashi share their reflections on what makes this cherished tradition so meaningful, highlighting the lessons students learn both on and off the stage and how the festival embodies Tamagawa's philosophy of whole-person education.



This year's Music Festival, I had the opportunity to teach and conduct the Grade 6 and Grade 9 choirs. Conducting the Grade 9 choir, in particular, came with a great deal of pressure. It is a long-standing tradition for each graduating class to perform the same piece every year, and it was also the very piece that I sang when I was a Grade 9 student myself. When rehearsals first began, I often found myself wondering, “Will we really be ready by the performance?” My first priority was simply helping the students become confident with the music, and we worked through each challenge together, one step at a time.

During the final two weeks before the performance, I spent a great deal of time thinking about what it means to make music as a conductor. There is no single “correct” interpretation in music; every performance is shaped by the vision of the conductor and the unique character of the students performing it. Even when the piece is the same, the result can be completely different. On the day before the concert, I spoke to the students in the Chapel. I told them, “This grade has incredible potential when every single person gives their very best. But if even one person chooses not to give their all, that potential cannot fully reach the audience.”

I believe that a choir is not created by 200 students following one conductor, but through the accumulation of one-on-one connections between the conductor and each individual student. As a young teacher, I do not yet have the profound words or years of experience that many of my senior colleagues possess. However, I believe that speaking honestly, using words that were true to myself, reached the students' hearts. Their wholehearted commitment on the day of the performance was, to me, the greatest evidence of that.

Haruto Suzuki



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Tamagawa's Music Festival



Alone, we cannot
create harmonies;
Alone, we cannot
achieve growth!

MICHIKO TAKAHASHI

I have always loved the word "resonance." It means so much more than just music resonating in a hall. To me, it embodies the way we connect with others—by sharing our hearts, supporting and learning from one another, embracing our differences, and growing together. This is why the Music Festival is my favorite event of the school year.

What truly moves me about the Music Festival isn't just the final performance on stage. It is everything that leads up to that moment.

"It's okay if you can't sing perfectly right now. What matters is the effort you put into trying to grow."



The Music Festival shouldn't just be a stage for those who are already talented; it should be a stage for those who have the courage to challenge themselves. I watch students who started out lacking confidence, only to find their voices through daily practice. I see them naturally recognizing each other's growth, cheering each other on with smiles, and saying, "You did your best!" This mutual respect is the greatest gift this event gives our students.

More than anything, I hope that when my students graduate, they will look back and feel not just that they love music, but that they are glad they challenged themselves alongside their friends.

Music can be enjoyed alone, but true inspiration is born when we align our hearts with others. Just as there are harmonies that cannot be created alone, there is growth that cannot be achieved alone.

At this year's Music Festival, I witnessed each student trusting their peers, supporting one another, and pushing themselves to new heights. It is my sincere hope that this experience will remain a treasured memory that colors their lives for years to come.



Department focus: LANGUAGE A



A.O. (G8)

English Language and Literature

In our English Language and Literature class, we have been reading a book called “The House on Mango Street”, which is a realism, coming-of-age book made of vignettes (small stories). This book is narrated by a girl called Esperanza and is about her experiences living in a lower-class neighborhood and encountering surprising events in Chicago. In “The House on Mango Street”, Esperanza encounters many not-so comfortable situations while transitioning from a girl to a young woman

The House on Mango Street" has been a very intriguing topic for me since I normally don't read realism fiction books. It has helped me learn many things about the world, including how a society's beliefs and stereotypes affect the people in it in both negative and positive ways.

We've mainly used Learner Profile Attributes and ATL's such as “Open-Minded” and “Communication”. In our English class, we answer questions and analyse the book in groups, which helps us to use our social skills by interacting with our classmates and learning new perspectives that we wouldn't have found out otherwise. Working in groups really encourages us to think about the topics further and share ideas.

In our English class, we regularly practice writing PEAEL paragraphs throughout the year. Writing these paragraphs has been really challenging, but it has helped us learn how to improve our writing, expand our vocabulary, and analyse a topic really deeply. I am really happy since I can improve my writing. All things considered, I have really enjoyed learning in English Language & Literature, and I'm excited to learn more about this and other units.



L.W. (G10)

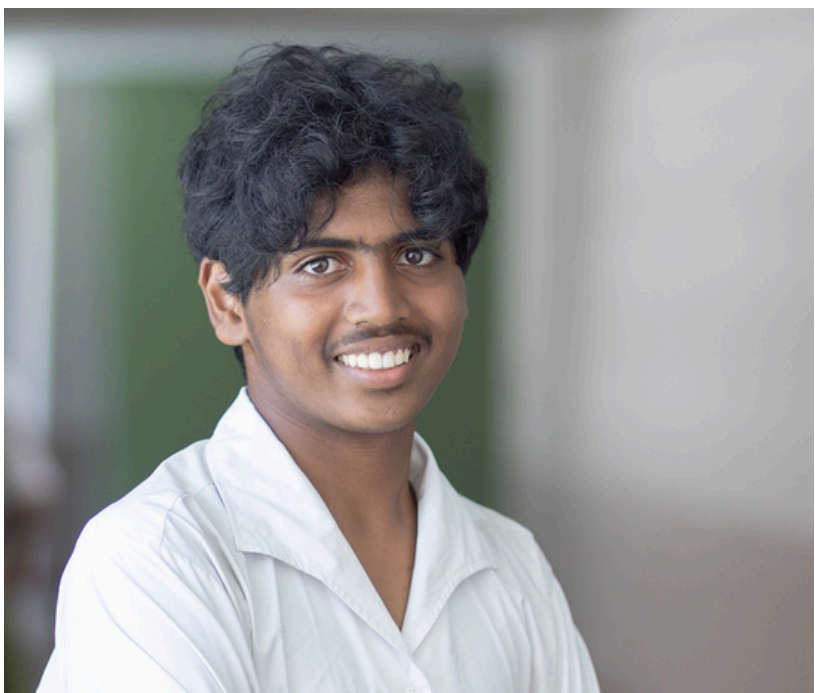
English Language and Literature

This month, as part of our unit on rhetoric and propaganda, we studied and practiced writing speeches for our latest assessment.

To prepare, one of our lessons focused on analysing propaganda techniques used in the Russia-Ukraine war. For example, we examined an Instagram reel from Ukraine's official account that used a technique which manipulates public opinion by presenting only one side of an argument. This lesson gave us a useful revision of propaganda techniques we'd studied previously, and also taught me a lot I didn't know about how heavily both sides' media coverage relies on propaganda.

We then put this into practice by writing our own speeches and presenting them to peers for feedback. Here, I used the social ATL skill to receive peer feedback so I could improve my speech-writing skills. I also drew on creative thinking skills by incorporating propaganda techniques of my own to make my speech more engaging.

Finally, we practiced our public speaking skills by delivering our speeches for the assessment. Although nerve-wracking at first, I thought presenting in front of an audience was important, as it gave me experience with presentational skills — something we don't get to practice as often. I also think this was valuable because public speaking is an important life skill, useful well beyond the classroom in situations we'll encounter throughout our lives.



A.R. (G10)

Japanese Language and Literature

In our Japanese L&L class, we are studying "A Hanging" by George Orwell. We are analysing different aspects of the literature work such as its theme, historical background, different techniques and changes throughout the story. We are currently preparing for our exams for analysing the main message Orwell is trying to state throughout the work. We focus on understanding, not on the surface, but deeper on the author's stylistic and purposeful choices to understand.

What I enjoy about Japanese class is gaining new perspectives and views about the main messages and themes about a piece of work. In addition, I enjoy discussing the meanings behind each story and seeing how different authors express their ideas. It is interesting to think about the messages each text conveys about human nature and society.

For Japanese class, I believe that the best trait that fits us are thinkers. As stated before, we don't only think on the surface, but dig in deeper so that we can understand the work in detail. Furthermore, we identify several aspects of the work, and connect it to the main themes or author choices. Another trait that fits us are communicators. We actively communicate and share our ideas in class. Overall, I believe that our class can be represented as Communicators and Thinkers.

S.C. (G12)

English Language and Literature

In Grade 12 English Language and Literature class, our focus has been on preparing for key assessments such as the Individual Oral, Paper 1, and Paper 2, as well as completing our mock exams. Paper 1 challenges us to analyze unseen texts, 2 for HL students by exploring how authors use stylistic, structural and textual techniques to shape meaning and influence audiences. Paper 2 requires self-management skills and critical thinking, as we must compare two previously studied works in response to an unseen prompt.



A major component of the course has been the IO, where we analyze a literary and a non-literary work through a chosen global issue and present our analysis in 10 minutes. This assessment develops communication skills, as we present our ideas clearly and respond to questions under pressure. Although it can be challenging and nerve racking, it builds confidence and prepares students for future academic and professional environments.

Through the course, we engage with a wide range of genres, including poetry, plays, documentaries and podcasts. Studying iconic works like *The Things They Carried* and *Death of a Salesman* has strengthened my ability to think critically and interpret meaning behind the author's use of stylistic devices. These experiences acquire numerous ATL skills, particularly creative thinking, communication and organization, as we learn to organize ideas, analyze thoroughly, and express our interpretations clearly and effectively.

Through English class, I have come to enjoy how the assessments and works we study transform the way I engage with texts. It encourages me to move beyond surface-level understanding and become more active and analytical when reading or watching movies, both in and outside the classroom. By studying feminist poetry and a wide range of global issues, I have developed a broader understanding of themes such as sexism, racism, patriarchal structures and materialism. This has helped me to become more open-minded and critically aware of the world I live in.



From MYP to DP: Choosing the Path Ahead

As our Grade 10 students complete their final year of the MYP, they are also beginning an exciting new chapter as they prepare for the DP. Choosing DP subjects is an important milestone, and throughout the past few months, students have had many opportunities to explore their options and make informed decisions about their future studies.

Beginning in April, subject teachers introduced the various DP courses and levels during IB Core classes. These presentations gave students valuable insight into the content they will study, the types of assessments they can expect, and the interdisciplinary connections between different subjects. This helped students gain a clearer understanding of what each course offers and how different subject combinations can support their interests and future goals.

To complement these presentations, Grade 10 students joined our Grade 12 students for lunch over the course of a week during the G10 and G12 Subject Choice Mixers. These informal conversations allowed students to hear first-hand about the experiences of their seniors who are currently taking the DP courses. Grade 12 students shared their study habits, learning strategies, and honest reflections on the challenges and rewards of each subject, giving Grade 10 students practical advice as they considered their own choices.



On July 8th, students and parents also had the opportunity to attend a DP Subject Choice Event, where they could ask subject teachers questions and receive further guidance about course expectations and pathways. It has been wonderful to see how thoughtfully our Grade 10 students have approached this process. Many have spent time researching universities and academic programs while reflecting carefully on their own interests, strengths, and aspirations. Their commitment to making informed subject choices demonstrates a level of maturity that will serve them well as they begin the DP.

After the summer break, the journey continues as Grade 10 students observe Grade 11 DP classes, giving them an authentic glimpse into the learning environment and expectations of the DP. Following these classroom visits, students will complete their second and final subject choice survey before beginning the DP Soft Start on December 4th. We are excited to see them take these final steps toward the next stage of their IB journey and look forward to supporting them as they transition into the DP.



TRIAL LESSONS

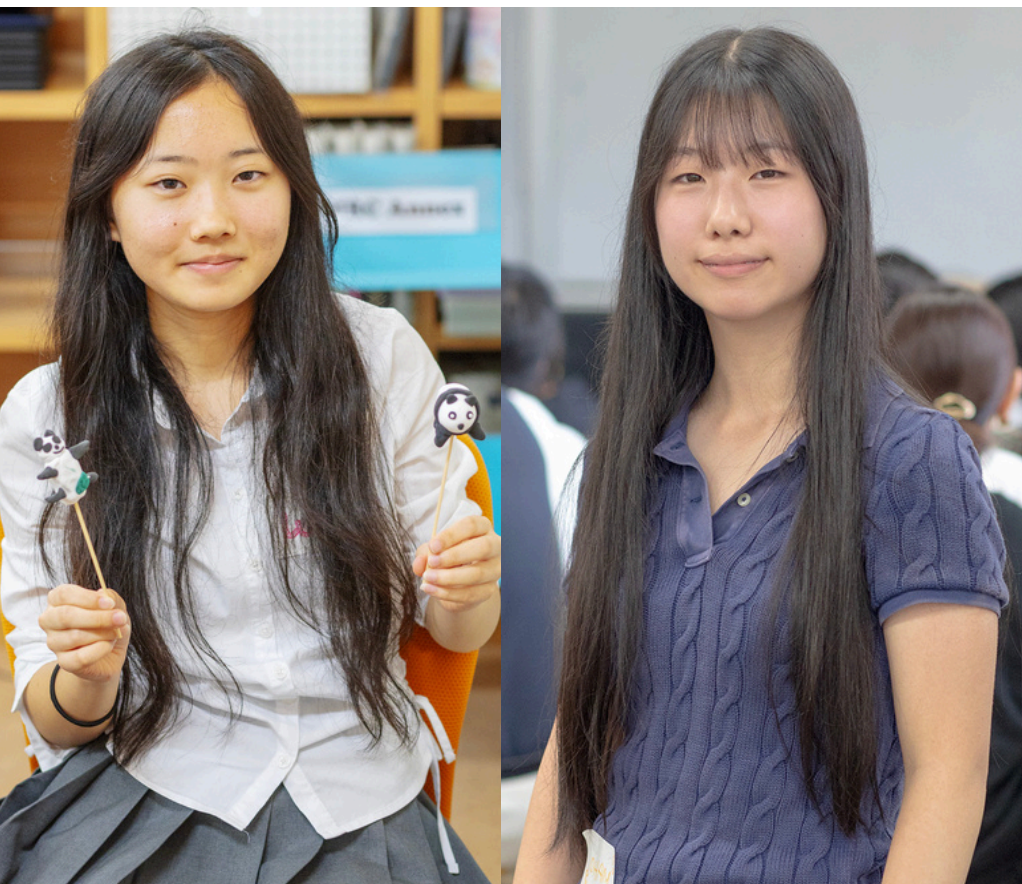
Discovering the Joy of Learning
at Tamagawa

On Saturday, July 18th, Tamagawa Academy opened its doors for a dynamic day of Trial Lessons, inviting prospective students and parents to experience our vibrant community firsthand. Classrooms came alive with hands-on discovery, creative problem-solving, and meaningful connections.

In Home Economics, busy hands and bright smiles transformed everyday ingredients into lifelong practical skills. Families worked side by side, Japanese indigo herbs were cut and pressed into dyes to colour handkerchiefs.

Over in the Science lab, young investigators donned safety goggles to explore fascinating experiments. Wonder filled the air as hypotheses were tested, sparks of understanding lit up eyes, and participants actively dove into inquiry-based learning.

Meanwhile, the Math session showed how numbers can come alive. Interactive puzzles and collaborative challenges brought mathematical concepts to life, showing visitors how engaging critical thinking can be.



What truly stole the show, however, was the incredible dedication of our student volunteers. The student helpers were fantastic, they engaged in long conversations with families and truly showed off the high quality of our school. Thank you to everyone who made this inspiring event a success!



Riding to Success

K.U.

With skill, confidence, and determination, K rode to an outstanding result at the Kanto Selection Competition – Yamanashi Eventing Cross Country. His performance earned him 4th place overall in Japan and **1st place in the Under-18 category**, showcasing the dedication and resilience required to excel in one of the world's most demanding equestrian disciplines. We are incredibly proud of this fantastic achievement!

You've achieved remarkable success in international equestrian competitions while balancing your studies. How difficult is it to pursue both your academic goals and your passion for equestrian sport?

It's just by always focusing on one thing each time, If there's horse riding today, I'll just focus on that first and then do school work after. The key is that thinking about everything at once only creates more stress, so I try to stay present and complete each responsibility step by step.

Traveling to compete against riders from around the world must be an incredible experience. What have these competitions taught you—not only as an athlete, but also as a person?

These competitions have taught me that success is not always about winning. Competing on a big stage can feel extremely pressuring, but I have learned that pressure does not have to take away the enjoyment of the experience. I cannot control every result or everything that happens during a competition, but I can control my preparation, attitude and effort. Instead of fearing what might happen, I try to accept the situation and do my best. I have also learned that achieving a goal requires consistency and small improvements every day.





Success in equestrian sport depends on the partnership between rider and horse. What is the most important lesson your horse has taught you, and how has that influenced your life at school?

The lesson that taught me the most between me and my partner is to understand one another. Sometimes it could be frustrating not having good results, but I will not give that frustration to my horse. Horses cannot explain how they feel through words, so riders must be patient, observant and willing to understand their perspective.

This has also influenced the way I behave at school. People may not always clearly express what they are feeling, so I try not to judge them too quickly. I have learned to communicate patiently, control my emotions and consider the situation from another person's point of view.

Many parents hope their children will discover a passion they can pursue wholeheartedly. Looking back on your journey so far, what advice would you give to younger students who are trying to balance school with a dream outside the classroom?

My advice would be not to give up on a dream simply because balancing it with school feels difficult. There will be times when you feel overwhelmed, fall behind or question whether you are good enough. However, you do not need to improve everything at once. Focus on taking one small step each day!





Teenage Business Contest Japan

E.I.

E.I. (G11) participated at the Teenage Business Competition Japan National Final, where her team earned an outstanding 3rd place. Selected as one of the Top 10 finalists from more than 128 schools and participants from over 10 countries, she demonstrated creativity, collaboration, and entrepreneurial spirit! Read her story below:

The real starting point of Nichinan Bridge is my grandfather's story. His house in Nichinan had been sitting empty for months after he passed, with no local buyers and no clear path forward. Watching a home full of memories slowly become just another vacant property in a shrinking town was what first made me ask: why is it so hard to connect a house that needs someone with a person who needs a home? That question became Nichinan Bridge: a platform that connects foreigners who want to relocate to rural Japan with available properties there, and guides them through the entire journey of moving in and building a life.

Japan has over 9 million vacant homes, many in rural towns like Nichinan in Miyazaki, where the population is shrinking and properties sit empty with no local buyers. At the same time, there are thousands of foreigners who genuinely want to move to rural Japan. Often with a dream of wanting to live quietly, start a small business, or both, but have no idea how to navigate the process. The visa rules are complex, the forms are in Japanese, and even after moving in, starting a business involves layers of permits that nobody explains.

Nichinan Bridge solves this end-to-end. We match properties with the right people, help them through every step of the relocation, and support them in setting up their business once they arrive. We also use AI credit scoring to assess eligibility for micro-loans, so that the cost of moving and starting a business does not become a barrier.

The most challenging part was the Q&A after the presentation. The judges asked very sharp questions including inquiries about our financials, our legal model for handling properties with untraceable owners, and how we planned to scale. Some questions we had prepared for, but others pushed us to think on our feet in front of an international audience. It taught me that a strong business idea is only half the work and that you also need to deeply understand, or at least try to understand, every corner of your business, because the judges will find the corners you haven't thought about yet.

My co-founder and cousin M flew in from Monaco for the competition. We come from quite different backgrounds and perspectives, which I think actually made our project stronger. When I focused on the Japan-side of the problem, the properties, the legal framework, and the local context, M brought a more international lens, thinking about how the platform would feel to someone arriving from Europe or South America with no knowledge of Japan at all. Having those two perspectives in the room meant we caught things neither of us would have seen alone. It was a really natural collaboration, and I am grateful we got to do this together.



HANDBELL CLUB

H.K. & L.F.

What does it take to create beautiful music with just the ring of a bell? In this special interview, L.F. and H.K. take us behind the scenes of the Handbell Club, sharing their experiences, favourite memories, and the teamwork that transforms individual notes into a harmonious performance.

How long have you been in the Handbell Club?

L: I have been in the club for 4.5 years

H: I have been in the club for 3.5 years.

Why did you choose to join the Handbell club?

L: I was interested in handbells even though I had never heard them so I thought I would give the club a try.

H: I was invited by Luica and have stayed ever since.

L: There were not enough members!

How many members are in the club now?

L: There are eight members. They include students from Grade 7,8,10 and 12. The Grade 12 students lead our sessions. Tamagawa alumni join us for our festival performances. We have friends with the other students in the club and feel part of a team.

All of the members of the club are girls. Do you advise boys to join?

L: Yes, they will have fun and they can help us carry the heavy bells!

How often does the Handbell Club meet?

H: We meet three days a week. We practice for one and a half hours after school. This changes to four days a week in the build up to festivals, when we also meet on Saturdays.

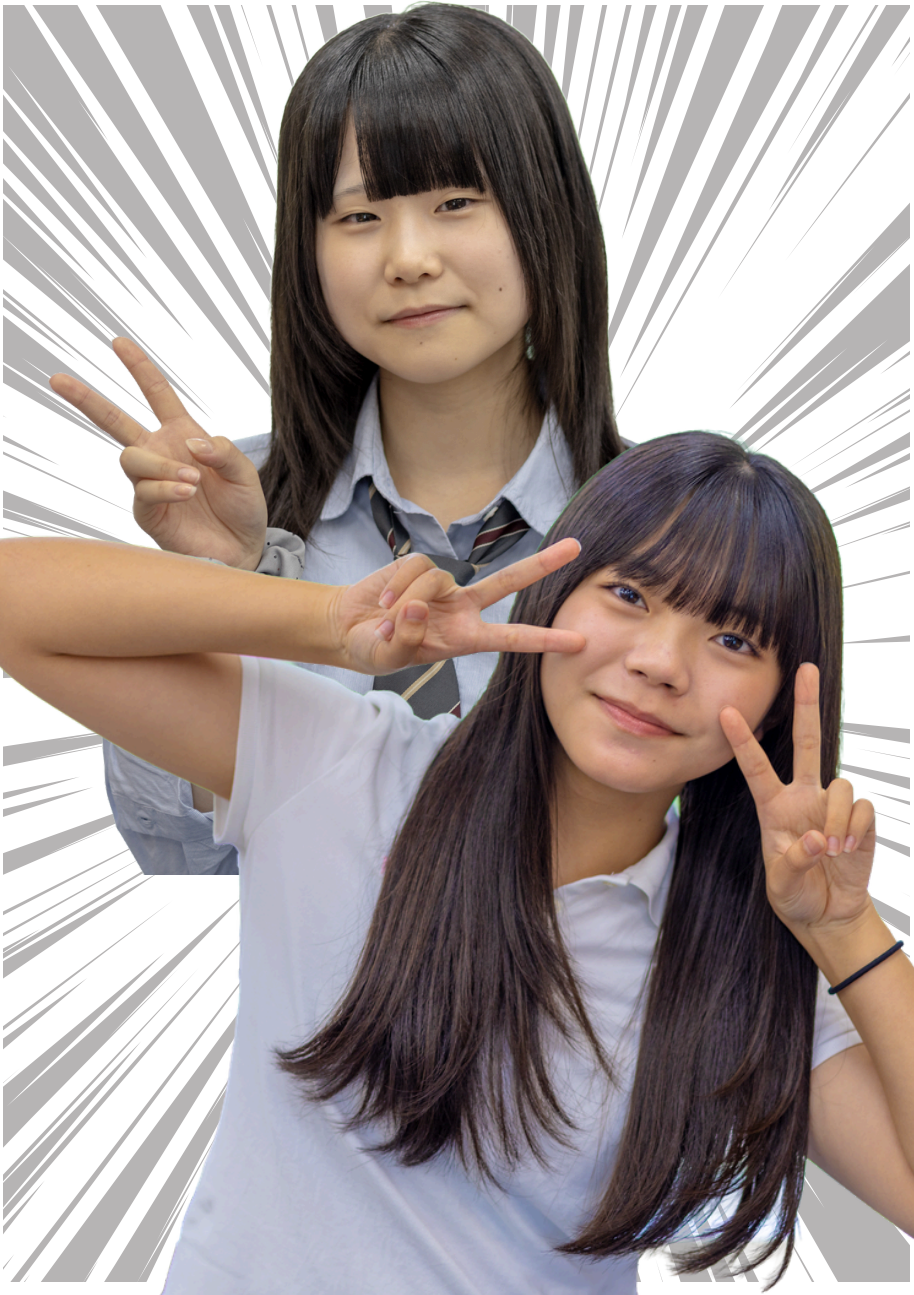
Why do you like playing handbells?

H: I enjoy using many different bells because they each have their own unique sound.

L: I like it because it is not too easy and not too difficult. Everyone can do it.

What types of music do you play in the Handbell Club ?

H: We do many different types of music ranging from classical music such as Amazing Grace which we recently played at the Music Festival to J-Pop and Anpanman songs.



What's your favourite type of music to play?

H: I like playing Christmas music.

L: I like playing faster songs such as J-Pop ones.



What skills do you need to be a good hand bell player?

L: Communication. We need to look at other members as you play. We also need good timing to keep the rhythm of the song correct.

H: You need to play at the same tempo as the other members. We use a metronome to learn the tempo as we practice. We do not use metronomes in our performances so we have to look at each other and listen carefully. We also need to be able to control the bell as we play.



How did you feel on the stage at the recent Musical Festival performance?

H: I was nervous. The music was calm and slow so it would be obvious if we made a mistake. I was very nervous as I made the first bell ring.

L: I wasn't so nervous as it was my third time at the music festival. We had music sheets on the table but could not turn them over so I had to remember the full piece.

How do you prepare for a new piece of music?

H: We memorise the music for the festivals.

L: We sometimes have 5 songs to play. It is hard to memorise them all so we need to look at the music to help us.



Are handbells difficult to learn?

H: No, as you start with only two or three bells. We circle our part on the music sheets. As we get better we try more bells.

Why do you recommend the handbell club?

L: There are nice people, it is fun and it is not difficult.

What advice do you have to people who are considering joining?

L: Anyone can join, even people who have not played a musical instrument and who cannot read music. Experience is important to get better.

H: We need more people as when the Grade 12s leave there will only be 5 people in the club...



SPORTS NEWS

T.M.



What has been the most memorable moment of this baseball season, and why does it stand out to you?

The most memorable moment of this season was competing in the summer tournament with our Grade 12 teammates for the last time. In the first qualifying round, we earned a victory against Tokyo Metropolitan Chofu Kita High School, which was an unforgettable moment because it showed how all of our hard work throughout the season had paid off.

Although we were defeated by Tokyo Gakugei Daigaku Fuzoku Koto Gakko in the second qualifying round, I am proud of the effort our team gave until the very end. Knowing it was the final tournament for our Grade 12 players made every inning even more meaningful. This experience reminded me that high school baseball is not only about winning games but also about the friendships, commitment, and memories we create together.

Baseball is often called a team sport above all else. What have you learned about teamwork, leadership, or perseverance through being part of the team?

This season taught me that success comes from trusting and supporting each other. Every player has a different role, and even those who are not on the field contribute to the team's performance. I also learned a lot from the Grade 12 players. They showed me how to stay positive during difficult situations, work hard every day, and put the team before themselves.

If you could send one message to younger students who are thinking about joining the baseball team, what would you tell them?

Baseball requires commitment, discipline, and perseverance, but the experiences you gain are worth it. You will improve not only as a player but also as a person by learning responsibility, teamwork, and how to overcome challenges. There will be difficult days, but if you continue to work hard and support your teammates, you will create memories and friendships that will stay with you long after high school.



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Eye health Awareness

Munetaka Soai, Lead teacher for Grade 10-12

Back in July 2025, Mr. Inaishi shared information about an interesting program from Zoff. At first, I wasn't quite sure about the goal of "eye health awareness," but after talking multiple times with Ms. A.S., a Tamagawa graduate from 2019 who works in Zoff's PR department, I became really interested.

"Health" is one of the core values of Tamagawa Zenjin Education. While people often talk about preventing heatstroke or sunburn, "eye health" doesn't get much attention. However, since IB students use computers for almost every class and often have long commutes, our eyes work much harder than the average high school student. We decided to give it a try with the help of the PE Department, starting with Grades 10–12.

I worked closely with Mr. Takasugi from Zoff, who shared examples from other schools. Most schools used a student committee format, which sounded great. We wanted sunglasses that would look good with our school uniform, but we also wanted students to have the freedom to choose a style that fit them. Zoff provided a huge number of samples - over 120 combinations of frames and lenses!



First, the teachers narrowed them down to about 10 options. After that, the IB Student Council and some fashion-conscious student volunteers helped us pick the final "The Tamagawa 8 Models."



We also launched the "Eye Protection Project" (EPP) committee to get students involved in awareness activities. About 57 students signed up, which was 50% of the target group! Since everyone was busy with their DP coursework, we held our meetings online. In total, 137 people (104 students and 33 staff) joined the EPPC.

The sunglasses were finished in early July, and we held a handover ceremony on July 16th. The committee chairs, Y.K. and S.S., helped us decide on the theme: a "UV Commit Ceremony." It was a Hawaii-themed, lively event.

Keeping with our IB spirit of blending cultures, we had a unique collaboration: S performed a hula dance to "Aloha E Komo Mai" from Lilo & Stitch, but Y used the koto (Japanese harp) instead of a ukulele. It was a fantastic way to celebrate the start of our new project.

Looking ahead, we plan to create a campus UV map and analyze the feedback we receive at the end of October. We appreciate your continued understanding and support for this project!

BACK

Strike a chord for charity

J.E. (article) E.Y. (photos)



J.E. reports on a recent Charity Concert which raised 6,000 yen for the Red Cross.

On July 17th, K.K., M.M., M.M. and I decided to hold a charity concert to raise money for the Japanese Red Cross Society. Alongside our band, K, E and K from Grade 9 also performed to help raise money for the cause.

K, M, and I originally held a charity concert for our Community Project last year and really enjoyed it, so we decided to do another one as it proved a good way to get donations. I think charity concerts are a great idea for Service as Action, as if you are looking to learn how to play instruments or want to perform in front of other people, it is an excellent opportunity to try in front of a smaller audience as well as learn how to play music with other people. On top of that, it allows you to raise money for a charity of your choice, which can directly help people, making it for a good cause as well.

We decided to raise money for the Red Cross Society because we'd like to recognize the national and international crises that occur. Japan provides support to over 90 countries through the Red Cross Society, and it also focuses on numerous different activities, such as providing emergency assistance around the world and working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. From this charity concert, we were able to raise just under 6,000 yen towards this cause.

In general, I'd say we all love being able to play music in front of everyone, especially when everyone claps and sings along with us. Music is about connecting with people, and seeing our practice and hard work paying off while people have fun listening to us is a really good feeling and we love doing it every chance we get. If you would like to try music, especially performing in front of other people, we recommend just getting out there and giving it a go. The first step is always scary, and performing live in front of people is a whole different level of nerve-wracking.

However, if you really want to play music, standing in front of people and showing your absolute best effort is the most you can do, and practice always pays off, so just do your best and practice as much as you can!

If anyone ever wants to join in on a charity concert that we might hold in the future, please feel free to ask us any time!!





Rinkan Gakkou

G6 Summer Camp

From canoeing and mountain climbing to campfires and exploring the historic Nikko Toshogu Shrine, this year's Grade 6 Rinkan Gakkou was filled with unforgettable adventures. In this issue, S.K. and M.O. reflect on how stepping outside her comfort zone led to new friendships, greater confidence, and a deeper appreciation for nature. Their story is a reminder that the greatest lessons often come from the challenges we embrace.

I always had a fear of getting home sick and not enjoying the trip; and that didn't heal this year.

For me, I liked the time when we climbed the mountain. At first, I can guess that we didn't want to climb a mountain. But afterwards, when we were close to the goal, everyone was cheering for themselves, and the people that were tired, so I loved it when I saw the change of their feelings of wanting to climb.

Climbing was very high and was hard to climb, but it was a very good opportunity to grow our strength. At first, I thought that climbing was going to be a very hard sport, but when I reached the top of the mountain, I had a feeling of accomplishment.

Even though I had tough times on the canoe, I thought it was very interesting. When we started canoeing, my partner and I couldn't really cooperate that much. But, after we saw some nature and the destination, we were able to find a way to get in sync with each other's rowing.

Oze park was very hard to walk through, but I enjoyed seeing different kinds of nature!

M.O.





Before going to the Rinkan Gakkou, I was a little nervous about having new challenges for me, for example canoeing, hiking, and mountain climbing.

All the time I spent with my friends and teachers was fantastic, but for me, I loved the campfire and the time I spent on the bus. For the campfire, I appreciate my friends that prepared a great time and for the time I spent on the bus, I appreciate my classmates who really livened up the bus.

Also, it was my first time canoeing! When I first heard the instructions on how to canoe, it seemed difficult, but thanks to the help of H, who was in the canoe with me, it turned out to be a really fun experience.

I think climbing Mount Shirane was really tough. After overcoming so many challenges—like stepping over tree trunks and nearly falling off cliffs—reaching the summit gave me a sense of accomplishment. It was so much fun!

Smilarly, although walking through the Oze National Park was hard to walk, I enjoyed feeling and seeing different kinds of nature and also, I learned how to enjoy nature.

I think the campfire was an absolutely wonderful experience. It was a lot of fun to participate in activities with my friends from the secondary program, whom I hadn't spent much time with before. I think I was able to learn communication skills as part of the ATL skills.

At Nikko Toshogu Shrine, I was able to see many famous sights, such as the Crying Dragon and the Sleeping Cat. The Crying Dragon was particularly memorable.

I think I learned various ways of looking at nature (perspectives). I also think I was able to take on challenges I'd never experienced before and learn how to manage my time and have fun.

Sayuri Kaneda

“Every mistake is an opportunity to learn!”

Mr. Linga



Where did you grow up?

I was born on the island of Panay, in Iloilo, and raised in Quezon City, Metro Manila.

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I was inspired to become a teacher because of my Grade 1 homeroom teacher. She was the epitome of compassion and genuinely loved teaching children. Her kindness and dedication inspired me to pursue a career in education.

What subject do you teach and why do you love it?

I teach Mathematics because I enjoy helping students develop their problem solving and critical thinking skills. Math is not just about numbers; it teaches students to think logically and develop perseverance, which are essential skills in everyday life.

What advice do you have for students on how to do well in your subject?

My advice to my students is to practice consistently, ask questions when something is unclear during class discussion, and never be afraid to make mistakes. Math teaches students patience and persistence, and every mistake is an opportunity to learn.

What’s the best thing about working at Tamagawa?

The best thing about working at Tamagawa is the supportive leadership and the colleagues who encourage collaboration and personal growth. I appreciate that the school emphasizes holistic development and places a strong focus on Zenjin education.

What’s your favourite thing about our students?

My favourite thing about my students is their ability to think creatively and critically. They are knowledgeable and demonstrate strong skills in Mathematics. It is rewarding to see them apply their understanding to solve problems, explore new ideas, and develop confidence in their learning.

What’s your favourite school event?

My favourite school events are International Day and Math Day. These events help form strong relationships among students and create a sense of camaraderie.

What made you want to teach in Japan?

I became interested in teaching in Japan because of the many things that make it an admirable country to work in, including its welcoming people, efficient transportation system, unique and delicious foods, and its strong sense of safety.

GET TO KNOW YOUR TEACHER

What is the biggest difference between Japan and your home country?

The biggest difference between Japan and my home country is that Japanese people generally prioritize punctuality, following rules, and maintaining public order; while Filipinos place a strong emphasis on close family relationships.

Which IB Learner Profile trait do you value most, and why?

The IB Learner Profile trait I value most is Principled. As an educator, I believe it is important to model integrity, fairness and accountability.



How do you encourage a global mindset in your classroom?

I will encourage a global mindset in my Mathematics classroom by using real-world problems and examples that connect to the IB MYP Global Context “Globalization and Sustainability.” Students will explore global issues such as climate change, population growth, finance, and sustainable development.

What other countries have you lived in? Please tell us about an experience you had there.

I have taught in the Philippines and Japan. In the Philippines, I taught at the elementary, secondary, and university levels. Teaching at the elementary level honed my classroom management skills and increased my patience with younger students, while teaching at the university level helped me master my art of teaching.

Tell us a surprising fact about yourself.

I love going to beautiful beaches in the Philippines, but I cannot fully enjoy the experience because I do not know how to swim!

What’s your favourite food?

I love tonkatsu with sweet and savory tonkatsu sauce.

What’s your favourite comfort food?

My comfort food is Filipino adobo because it reminds me of home and family gatherings.

What’s your favourite place in the world?

My favourite place in the world is Angkor Archaeological Park because of its amazing architecture, beautiful scenery, and rich cultural history.

What’s your favourite place in Japan?

I love Okinawa because of its natural landscapes and beautiful beaches.

What’s your favourite city you’ve visited?

I love Kuala Lumpur because of its fusion Malay, Chinese, and Indian cuisines, its modern skyscrapers, and its diverse cultures.

What’s your favourite holiday destination?

My favourite holiday destination is Bangkok, Thailand, because of the Thai cuisines, unique culture, and traditions.

What’s your favourite book?

The book that I really like is “Rich Dad Poor Dad” by Robert Kiyosaki because it taught me how to manage my finances.

What’s your favourite hobby?

My favourite hobby is playing badminton.

What’s your favourite quote?

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” by Lao Tzu.

