

**Graduation**  
**Grade 6 Teacher Miyuki Kadono**

At the time of their entrance ceremony, there were but four students. Now, there are twenty-two. This month, they come finally to their graduation ceremony.

In preparation for graduation, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students reflected on the past six years and wrote down their thoughts and memories in a graduation composition. Many students wrote about the importance of doing one's best and never giving up during the various school events.

At the sports festival, everyone was having the hardest time making the "tower" for the group gymnastics. "We want to do it!" was the feeling as practice proceeded. But even on the last day of practice success was still not in hand. Everyone was worried as the day of the sports festival came. Cutting through the tension, a roaring applause could be heard, and the triumph under pressure will not soon be forgotten.

The cheers were boisterous and encouraging and spirits were high while heading to the combined swim meet. Three schools came together for this meet, but Higashimachi had the fewest number of participants. Yet, despite the small number, shouts and cheers were the loudest in the Higashimachi section, until the shouting voices became hoarse.

In the midst of the construction at school it was impossible to properly practice for the combined sports meet, and it was among these unfavorable conditions that personal goals were set for the competition. Practicing as hard as possible with what was available. Long jump, high jump, hurdles, softball throwing, and the 100 meter relay; thanks to the guidance of numerous teachers at practice, four students placed into the top 3 for these events. During the closing ceremony, Higashimachi's name scrolled across the digital scoreboard again and again. The joy at seeing classmates' names appear on the screen showed the students what it means to feel the bond of friendship.

Hearts poured into the school performance, the students made their production of "Run, Melos!" Everyone gave their all and was responsible for the various roles and jobs of the play. As the final curtain closed, an unexpected cheer rose up from the audience.

After much anticipation, the class trip to Nikko in winter finally came. The trip was an excellent conclusion for the six years of study at school. Many memories were made together in those mountains.

"Friendly" "Decisive" "Trustworthy" These were the objectives made by the students to guide them through this year, for which only 19 days remain. We look forward to an excellent graduation ceremony, and an exciting new start in junior high school.

**☆72 First Graders☆**  
**Grade 1 Teachers Shizuka Muramatsu · Naoko Kashima**

The first time we met the students was on April 6<sup>th</sup>, at the entrance ceremony. Bright and sunny, it was an excellent day for the first day of school. From the very beginning, watching them as they sat for the first time in their chairs in the classroom, it was a day of excitement, and as their homeroom teachers we wanted to show them "school is a fun place!"

Not long after the beginning of school, school lunch began too. First it was milk only, then milk and bread, and then little by little the other parts of the menu were added until they were eating the same meal as the other grades. Throughout the year they have learned what the right amount of food to eat is, and have tried eating things that perhaps were not their favorite food.

There were many events at school, too. In spring at the sports festival, we could see the students growing learning quickly, as they had to practice and remember about each of the events, like the races, *tamaire*, and dance performance. For the school performance the students showed how much they have grown with their big voices and acting on stage. Certainly those families watching felt moved as they remembered a time when they felt the same.

Looking back on the year, there are many things that the students can do now that they could not do before. Things like writing while holding a pencil properly, writing letters large and clear, and even eating foods they don't like. Perhaps not all of these things make sense to their young minds, but it has been an important and productive year for them. As March draws to a close, please take a moment with your children at home to look back on the year and praise their achievements. They truly have worked hard.

Before we realized it, telling each other about the great things that happened in our classes became a daily routine for us teachers. As an educator, watching the classes grow is one of our greatest joys.

Moving forward, we hope that the students will continue growing up healthy and happy, while remembering the importance of kindness and helping each other.