



TOSHIMAGAOKA TIMES



PROFESSIONAL EDITION, DECEMBER 2017

Calligraphy club gives impressive performance

The calligraphy club gave an eye-catching performance on the school grounds on October 14, 2016. It was the first such performance by the club.

Calligraphy club members wrote the lyrics of the song “Yume” (Dream) by the Funky Monkey Babys. During the performance, as a recording of the song rang out around the area, 12 students from the club used a big brush to write on large hanshi writing paper.

All 12 students wore the same clothes and wrote each phrase as the audience shouted encouragement. They not only wrote the characters beautifully, but also moved their bodies dynamically. Students and teachers watching the performance from the ground and classroom windows were moved by the wonderful performance.

Kato Honoka, the president of calligraphy club, said, “The song used in the performance represents a message that if you have a dream, go get it.”

According to Kato, the members had mostly worked on individual productions before and had little chance to interact with members from other grades. Some members



Taken by Nakamura Koichi

The calligraphy club's performance in October 2016.

had wanted to participate in a “group production,” so Kato suggested they do a calligraphy performance.

However, many people disagreed with her proposal because the club had a long tradition and had never done such a performance. This made the plan difficult to carry out. When the members went through difficulties, they were encouraged by the lyrics of the

song. Finally, they were able to overcome their struggles and achieve success.

“I deeply appreciate the teachers and seniors who sometimes advised us, the colleagues who stood by my side, and the juniors who followed me. I hope our performance can give courage to others,” Kato said.

This year, the club will hold another calligraphy performance. The students have started preparing for the upcoming performance.

| | | |
|------|-------|------------------------|
| a.m. | 7:00 | School gate open |
| | 8:10 | Homeroom |
| | 8:15 | Unshin sewing |
| | 8:30 | 1st period |
| | 9:30 | 2nd period |
| | 10:30 | 3rd period |
| | 11:30 | 4th period |
| p.m. | 12:20 | Lunch break |
| | 1:10 | 5th period |
| | 2:10 | 6th period |
| | 3:10 | Homeroom |
| | 5:00 | Club activities finish |
| | 5:20 | School gate closed |

Club activities in Toshimagaoka

All students at Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School are required to join at least one club.

Look at the chart showing the time schedule at Toshimagaoka. The time available for club activities is until 5 p.m. from April until the school festival, and until 4:40 p.m. after the school festival until March.

There is only about an hour for club activities after school.

In addition, some club activities require practice in the morning and during the lunch break.

Despite this, clubs at Toshimagaoka take part in a variety of contests and tournaments and have achieved many excellent results.

By Ogawa Chihiro, Miyata Waka and Mori Yoko



Taken by Nakamura Koichi

The completed masterpiece.

“Toriren” inherits the awa-odori spirit

Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School has 49 clubs students can join. The awa-odori club is one of the school's most unique clubs.

Awa-odori, a kind of traditional Japanese dance, originated in Tokushima Prefecture in Shikoku. Throughout the dance's 400-year history, men have expressed braveness and humor and women have expressed elegance through its moves.

In 2001, a teacher from Tokushima Prefecture came to Toshimagaoka and established this club. She taught and spread her love for the tradition of her birthplace. The next year, student members of the club took part in the “Awa-odori contest in Otsuka,” which is held in Tokyo. The club still participates in that contest each year. In 2008, the club



Taken by Fukunaga Haruki

The awa-odori club “Toriren” performs at the school festival.

Yearly awa-odori club performance schedule

| | |
|-----------|--|
| April | Welcoming event for first-year students |
| July | Toshimagaoka school tour |
| August | Awa-odori contest in Otsuka |
| September | Toshimagaoka Junior and High School introduction event |
| November | Torisai school festival |

featured on the NHK program “Nippon Necchu Club,” which prompted a surge in the number of members.

This awa-odori club is known as “Toriren” and the members practice on Mondays and Wednesdays. “It is a rare opportunity to experience

awa-odori in Tokyo. Come and join us!” one of the members said. All 45 members have become close friends and create a homely and welcoming atmosphere. They think of awa-odori as a spirit inherited from their elder members.

The members say they feel satisfied when everyone can perform perfectly and when they make the audience happy. They synchronize their moves to create unity, and some members even dance at home to refresh themselves or sometimes keep rhythm without noticing. This indicates that awa-odori is a big part of their lives.

We believe their love, tradition and spirit will undoubtedly be passed down to younger generations.

By Chiba Sarii, Watanabe Hilary, Shinada Ayaka and Matsuoka Riona

Three key principles of Toshimagaoka

At Toshimagaoka, we follow three key principles: “Dogijissen,” which means to do morally good things; “kinbendoryoku,” which means to work hard; and “ichino-sennen,” which means to focus on what you can do best. These principles were proposed by the school's fourth principal and the third governor, Futaki Kenzo. The current principal of Toshimagaoka, Takehana Shino, says students should uphold these three concepts all the time.

Takehana believes that while it might be difficult to always act

with a strong sense of morality, students must try hard to do this. Students cannot accomplish anything without working hard. If you can't do one thing, look for another and focus on it.

How does the school put these ideas into practice?

In the first year of junior and senior high school, students have a class to learn good manners. There also is a class that teaches students how to prevent bullying every year. Through these classes, students learn what is morally good or bad.

The ability to concentrate

and work hard can be learned through unshin sewing, which we do every morning. During unshin time, we sew a white cloth with a red thread and relax our minds. Furthermore, every Toshimagaoka student must belong to a school club. Dedication to unshin and club activities helps students learn to focus on a certain task.

Takehana hopes students will find pride in what they do and who they are, through the three educational ideas. “Every student has different talents. However, many students are not used to speaking about their opinions to society, and they are not confident when they do so. They should be more confident when they speak up,” Takehana said.

Takehana decided to establish some programs designed to give students more confidence. One such program for first-year and second-year junior high school students gives them the opportunity to study abroad for three months.

“Though the students don't know the real value of their

education now, they will realize how precious it was after graduating,” Takehana concluded.

By Ieuji Rinako, Iwasaki Mayu, Watanabe Momoka and Iwai Miuna



Taken by Fukunaga Haruki

Staff writers interview Principal Shino Takehana.

THE TOSHIMAGAOKA TIMES

Published by a group of 21 students of Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School, a private girls' school in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, in cooperation with the not-for-profit Global Education Information Center (GEIC) and The Japan News.

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Bringing technology into the classroom

Computer technology has developed rapidly over the past 20 years. Almost every student at Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School has their own cell phone and access to the internet. Students belong to the generation that uses social media frequently, which some people consider to be a negative. However, Toshimagaoka is positive about students using the internet for school work. In an interview, Mr. Kurimoto, a math teacher in charge of computer classes at Toshimagaoka, explained how students can effectively use the internet.

One idea is to let students use cell phones at school. This will make it easier for students to study certain things such as science experiments, and they can watch videos related to class at home. Also students can use their phones to search on the internet. If a student cannot understand something, they can go online and solve

the problem quickly. However, some students might play games or send text messages during break time. Allowing free access to the internet also could result in important information such as private data being leaked.

Toshimagaoka is supportive of the idea of introducing information technology such as cell phones and tablet computers. Some Toshimagaoka teachers observed other schools at which each student was provided with an iPad. This helped the teachers learn about the advantages and disadvantages of introducing devices in the classroom. The teachers also acquired information on this issue from several companies.

Mr. Kurimoto said if the school provides an iPad or laptop to each student to use in class, the school must be able to manage those devices so information such as homework and textbook content does not leak to a third party. In addition, students must be responsible and manage their time while



Taken by Fukunaga Haruki

Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School's computer room.

using the devices at school. Nevertheless, the teachers cannot ignore the advantage that it will be easier to issue homework online, thereby saving a lot of paper.

Recently, Toshimagaoka started allowing students to look at some school information on the internet and access information in their free time. In addition, electronic blackboards have been used in classrooms of the junior high school since

the beginning of this year. These two developments have been very useful for students.

When future generations that are familiar with studying on computers at elementary school enter Toshimagaoka, they might feel uncomfortable with the methods we use now. We need to carefully consider the best timing for changing the system.

By Ozawa Mio and Sakajiri Yuna

“Collaboration” dishes add colorful touch to cafeteria menu

The student council sought the opinions of students and has carried out a “cafeteria collaboration” menu six times since April 2016. Some clubs and “Academic Day” were involved in deciding what dishes should be on this special menu. “Academic Day” is an event in which students voluntarily try several tasks unrelated to their studies at school. The dishes included chicken pizza and rice casserole created by the cooking club, and a bowl of rice topped with a pork cutlet, which was served in the play the drama club performed. In addition, as part of the school’s support for recovery efforts after the April 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes, the student council



Taken by Fukunaga Haruki

One of the cafeteria collaboration dishes looks delicious.

reproduced some dishes from the Kumamoto region. All collaboration menus were very cheap and tasty, and were so popular that they sold out.

The cafeteria is always crowded not only with students but also teachers. The menu changes every day, so they can enjoy eating there all the time.

Next to the cafeteria is a shop and some vending machines. The shop sells many kinds of foods, with bagels, muffins and fried chicken being especially popular. Students can use the microwave oven at the shop to heat their food. The vending machines sell cupped custard pudding, yogurt and drinks. Some students even hope they will be able to buy desserts such as ice cream there in the future.

We writers hope this loved cafeteria develops further. We think it is necessary to plan events like “collaboration menus” and make the cafeteria even more attractive than it is now.

By Kubota Mirei and Watanabe Iori

School facility

Toshimagaoka's little-known secrets

Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School has tall and complex school buildings. They have been rebuilt and enlarged in the past, and one building is eight stories high. Now, almost 2,000 students spend time in them.

Toshimagaoka was founded in 1892 as a sewing school for girls. It gradually became larger, and its name and location changed three times by 1924. Unfortunately, it was damaged during World War II. After the war, it moved to Ikebukuro and was named Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School.

One little-known fact about the school is that the buildings are quite tall. This can be a disadvantage for students.

For example, it takes quite a long time to walk to a music room in a different building. You must go downstairs to the underground level, walk along a long hallway, and climb upstairs to the fourth floor. We conducted an experiment to calculate how long this takes.

According to our experiment, reaching that music room takes nearly five minutes. Considering there are only 10 minutes between classes, this is relatively long.

Students often complain

Results of the experiment to walk to music room

| From | Walk with | Normal steps | Quick steps | Rushed steps |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Main building 5F | | 4 min 17 sec | 3 min 10 sec | 2 min 03 min |
| Main building 8F | | 4 min 57 sec | 3 min 52 sec | 2 min 47 sec |
| Memorial hall B1F | | 1 min 19 sec | — | 48 sec |

(Experiment conducted by Inoue Emi and Kanda Reina)



Taken by Kanda Reina

The view from the eighth floor.

about this, but they also seem to be happy after hurrying to their destination.

Indeed, “Although Toshimagaoka is a school in the city and we only have a small space to exercise, we have physical strength. This is because we climb a lot of

stairs every day!” is a popular joke among the Toshimagaoka students.

In Toshimagaoka, these positive students spend their time with joy in these tall, complex school buildings.

By Inoue Emi and Kanda Reina

Toshimagaoka in ‘owl town’ Ikebukuro

Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen Junior & Senior High School is in Higashi-Ikebukuro in Tokyo's Toshima Ward. What is special about Ikebukuro? Ikebukuro is famous as an anime hub, but we will focus on another interesting point of this district.

Look around Ikebukuro and you will see many symbols featuring owls.

For example, there are owl drawings on walls, pillars and the ceiling in Ikebukuro Station, which many students use. Many different symbols featuring owls also can be found at parks and temples.

“The Statue of Ikekukuro” is especially famous. It is used as a meeting spot in the large and crowded Ikebukuro Station. Also, there is the “fukuro koban,” a police box that looks like an owl. The koban is near the East Exit of Ikebukuro Station. The design idea was gathered from elementary to junior high school students in



Taken by Kaibara Yumemi

The “fukuro koban” police box near Ikebukuro Station.

2005, and the koban was rebuilt in a unique design in which the building's exterior walls were painted to resemble an owl. This owl is always watching over Ikebukuro to keep the peace.

Why are so many owl symbols in this area? The owl is the ward bird of Toshima. This is because the ward's shape looks like an owl flapping its wings and the Japanese word for owl, “fukuro,” resembles

a common abbreviation for Ikebukuro, the ward's main district.

In Higashi-Ikebukuro, there is a theater called “OWL SPOT” that is operated by Toshima Ward. Of course, the theater is named after the relationship between Ikebukuro and owls. The theater's logo looks like an owl and owl-themed signs on a nearby road guide people there. That road, Green Avenue, also is



Taken by Kaibara Yumemi

A sign of the “OWL SPOT” theater in Ikebukuro.

known as “Owl Street.”

Toshimagaoka students walk along “Owl Street” to school every day. The owls are a symbol of wisdom, so they encourage Toshimagaoka students to work hard – one of our school's three main principles — to acquire more knowledge.

By Kaibara Yumemi, Katano Kina, Takahashi Shu and Nakamura Miho