



# The Comet

The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

Volume 16 | Issue 3 | March 2013

★ Celebrating 15 years ★

## ➡ In this issue...

- ▶ ISA results...p. 2
- ▶ Ways to help your child if bullied...p. 3
- ▶ MYP personal project exhibition...p. 6
- ▶ MUN near east scrimmage...p. 7
- ▶ Inquiries in Grades 2 and 3...p. 8
- ▶ Spotlight on clubs...p. 10
- ▶ Middle school spelling bee...p. 11
- ▶ Library news...p. 12
- ▶ Art news...p. 14
- ▶ Karuta at KIST...p. 15
- ▶ Middle school brain bowl...p. 16
- ▶ Alumni reports...p. 17, 18

*“Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance.”*

—Will Durant

## From the Head of School .....

The cold weather is gradually coming to an end. I hope you are all enjoying the change in season.

In the playground at school, there is a plum tree blossoming silently. Have you noticed it? Our campus is indeed not large; however, if you look around carefully, you will find many different kind of plants. In April, the cherry trees will bloom, followed by the azaleas in May. Other varieties of trees and plants will flower progressively throughout spring including pine trees, cypress, ginkgo, podocarp, Chinese citron, crabapple, cycad, wisteria, grapes, pomegranate, date, Juniperus chinensis, and finally, the tallest tree on campus, the paulownia with light purple flowers will blossom at the beginning of summer. Are you able to locate where these trees are on campus?

Greenery and flowers allow us to feel a deep sense of relaxation and security. I hope you enjoy the seasonal changes we see in the trees and other plants on campus over the coming months.

It has already been two years since the Great East Japan Earthquake struck the Tohoku region. I still remember how desolated the area was when we visited there to help the tsunami victims. At that time, I was utterly speechless. Those memories and experiences remind me daily that the life and environment I enjoy now should never be taken for granted.

I try to appreciate every moment of my day-to-day life. I refresh my mind and soul by getting in touch with nature and replenishing myself with its gifts. I strive to be a person who can express appreciation by helping others. This year, similar to last year, we participated in a moment of silence on March 11 to commemorate the lives of the victims of the earthquake and those who are still suffering, and for the speedy recovery of the affected areas. By remembering this day, it is my sincere hope that each and every member of the school community will consider these points with a new outlook.

Finally, we are currently incorporating new initiatives in many different areas in order to further improve the school's programs in the next academic year. Our explanation sessions for parents held in February were very well attended and I was delighted to receive many positive comments from parents. Please remember that I am always open to receiving any comments or proposals you may have, so please feel free to contact me directly.

**Yoshishige Komaki**  
Head of School

## DATES TO REMEMBER



### March 2013

- 15 (G1-G12) Clubs program ends
- 20 Student-led conferences
- 23-31 Spring break

### April 2013

- 1 School resumes
- 8 (G1-G12) Clubs program resumes
- 12 (G10) DP subject options evening
- 15 School photographs (New and absent students)
- 17 (G6-G10) Math field day
- 24-25 (G5) PYP exhibition
- 26 (G12) Last day of classes
- 29 School day

### May 2013

- 2-22 (G12) DP examinations
- 3-6 Golden Week vacation
- 16 (W) Free dress day
- 22-23 Concert rehearsals
- 24 KIST on Stage (School concerts)
- 24 (G12) Semester 2 reports issued
- 29-31 (G9-G11/EIC) Semester 2 examinations
- 29 PTA annual general meeting
- 30 (G4-G5) Track-and-field event
- 31 (G1-G12) Clubs program ends

### June 2013

- 1 Family Day
- 3 School holiday
- 5 (S/EIC) SRC dance
- 6 (G12) Graduation rehearsal
- 7 (G12) Graduation ceremony

## ISA Results

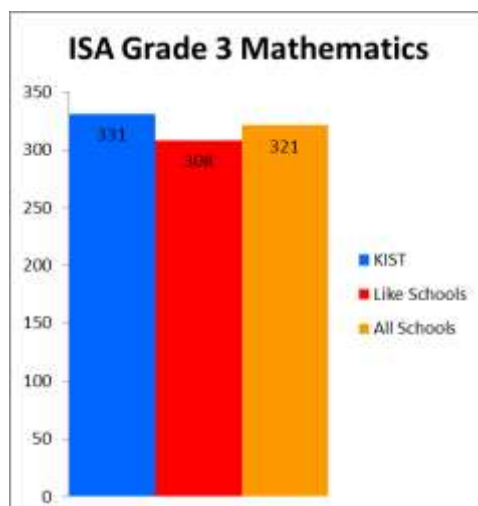
In October of this school year the International Schools' Assessment (ISA) was conducted with our Grades 3 to 9 students. The individual results for this assessment were sent to all students with the Semester 1 report. We have graphed the averages of each grade level in order to compare our results internationally. The averages were compiled from the test results of over 31,000 students from 122 schools in 50 countries. The summarized graphs of the overall results in terms of averages for each grade level have been forwarded separately with this edition of *The Comet*.

The graphs have been arranged to include the results of KIST students (in blue), the results of schools who have a similar ratio of students learning English as an additional language (in red) and the results of all schools (in green) as in the example below.

One of the major purposes of giving the externally graded assessment is to guide the improvement of teaching and learning at KIST. Based on the data we received from last year's ISA results we have been making steps to improve the teaching and learning of reading in the Elementary School. This year all Elementary School teachers took part in a professional development workshop led by internationally-known education consultant Carrie Ekey on the Reader's Workshop. In order to support this program we have purchased an extensive volume of grade-appropriate books for each classroom's library. Based on this year's data we will focus on the teaching and learning of writing. Professional development opportunities for the upcoming school year will include aspects of the Writer's Workshop.

The addition of literacy resources in classrooms, ongoing professional development in the area of reading, and professional development opportunities we are planning for next year, we expect to see our students learn and progress even further.

**Kevin Yoshihara**  
Elementary School Principal



## New Faces

Over the last few weeks, we have welcomed a number of new staff members to our team. On behalf of the school community, we wish you all the best in your new positions at KIST and look forward to working with you.



**Christie Chung** has joined the Elementary School as a new K3 teacher.

"Hello, KIST members! I'm Ms Chung and I came to Japan last summer from New Jersey. I'm very happy to be here at KIST as everyone I've met here so far has been caring and supportive! I look forward to the remaining school year with my wonderful K3B family!"



**Cecille Orquiola** has joined the Secondary School as a new MYP/DP technology teacher.

"Hello everyone! Thank you for the warm welcome. My name is Cecille Orquiola [or-kyo'-la] and I teach MYP and DP Technology, a fascinating subject that you must look up one day. This is my 12th year of teaching K-12. In a previous life, I worked as a commercial artist and I originally taught HS Art. Then I taught various other subjects, including Technology, in local and overseas schools. I'm pleased to join the KIST family and hope to meet everyone over time. I also hope to immerse myself more into the wonderful and creative Japanese culture and language."



**Timothy Smith** has joined the Elementary School as a new Teacher's Assistant for K2.

"Hello everyone. My name's Tim Smith from Birmingham, England. I've been living and working in Japan as a teacher for almost eight years and I'm delighted to now join the KIST team. Please say hello if you see me as I am looking forward to meeting you all. Thank you."



**Makiko Whittaker** has joined the office team as the school nurse.

"Hello. I'm Maki Whittaker, the new school nurse. I have been working at KIST since January 10. Previously, I worked as a nurse in pediatrics, in a neonatal intensive care unit, and in obstetrics and gynecology. I enjoy seeing all the children at school full of energy and hope to create an environment in the nurse's room to care for them and keep them safe."

## Elementary School News

### Elementary classroom libraries

Back in September of this school year, we were fortunate enough to have Carrie Ekey, an internationally known educational consultant specializing in literacy instruction, come and lead a professional development workshop for our Elementary staff. In order to improve the teaching and learning of literacy, she recommended that we expand our classroom libraries.

Through a joint effort with the KIST PTA, we have been able to purchase over 200 new grade-level appropriate books for each classroom. Ms Heard, our PYP Coordinator, orchestrated the book selection and tirelessly processed this amazing volume of books with our librarian, Ms Findlay, our teachers, and many parent volunteers. These books are currently being moved into classrooms for teacher and student use. I would like to thank the PTA and everyone who worked to make this welcome addition to our classrooms a reality. Thank you!

**Kevin Yoshihara**  
Elementary School Principal



## Ways to Help your Child if Bullied

As a parent, one of your major concerns may be what to do if your child is bullied. Bullying can hinder a child's academic, social and emotional well-being. If your child confides in you or you are aware that bullying is occurring at school, firstly immediately give your child positive reinforcement; for example, praise them for being brave enough to talk about it and reiterate that it is not their fault. Listen to your child and ask your child to explain the situation and what happened. You may get emotional and want to immediately help your child, but try to remain calm and listen actively to provide support so they feel heard.

The next step is to get the facts and see if your child was a target of bullying or perhaps they also contributed to the conflict somehow. At that point you can help your child brainstorm ways to respond to a bully. Some parents simply *tell* their children what they should do next time they're targeted by a bully; however, that doesn't do much to boost their confidence in their own ability to handle a situation. Instead of *telling* your child what to do, involve them in *brainstorming* ideas about how to handle a bully. This will make them feel empowered and cultivate self-confidence.

These are some strategies recommended by Mr Fishman that students are familiar with:

**Seek help** - Talk with parents, a teacher or Mr Fishman and get help when you are struggling with a bullying situation.

**Assert yourself** - Stand up for yourself in a positive

manner, try using, "I Messages" for example, "I felt angry when you announced to the class that I failed the math exam, I was embarrassed, please do not do that again."



**Positive self-talk** - After you have been hurt in a bullying situation, it is time to build yourself up and think positive about the situation that occurred and know that you have a choice in what you think and feel about yourself. Quote - "Remember, no one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Eleanor Roosevelt

**Go see Mr Fishman** for assistance - He can provide additional strategies and support.

**Report the incident** to Mr Yoshihara or Mr Rothkopf.

These strategies and recommendations will be helpful, but staying connected with your child and keeping the lines of communication open are paramount in maintaining a positive relationship with your child as well as establishing trust so your child always feels comfortable seeking your help as a parent.

Feel free to contact Mr Fishman for a meeting to discuss isolated bullying situations that you may need additional help and assistance.

**Benjamin Fishman**  
Student Welfare Counselor

## PYP News

### Elementary assemblies

This year the Elementary School implemented student-led assemblies. These assemblies are an opportunity for students to share, celebrate and demonstrate their learning. Each class is responsible for presenting an assembly to the rest of the Elementary students. Students are directly involved in the organization, planning and preparation of their assembly and are responsible for leading and facilitating each assembly.

Approximately two times each month the school gathers together to hear about the learning that has been taking place in other classrooms. So far we have had classes present skits, speeches, PowerPoint presentations, books and songs. They have shared about their units of inquiry, the learner profile, the attitudes, recess rules, literacy and maths. We have also had some excellent musical performances including recorder, ocarina and piano.

The assemblies have been a great way for the Elementary School to build a community and to promote school spirit and pride. Students are showcasing their presentation and communication skills, as well as showing confidence and enthusiasm. They also give our students the opportunity to develop their listening skills.

Assemblies occur most regular Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m. Our next assembly is **Tuesday, March 19**. Please feel free to stop by. Parents and siblings are always welcome.



### Elementary SRC

The ESRC has been working continually throughout the year to solve problems and to provide the students in the Elementary School a voice. The ESRC has taken on the challenge of organizing recess games. The ESRC wanted to give students some more ideas of what to do at recess. They organize games three times a week which includes setting up the equipment and teaching the game. They have been working together to solve problems and to make the games better and better each week.

The ESRC has organized and led Octopus Tag, Duck, Duck Goose, Turtle Tag, Cops and Robbers and Clone Tag, just to name a few. The games have been a great success. They are helping the students have fun on the playground and are providing opportunities for students to engage with students they might not normally play with.

Many thanks to the ESRC for all of their time and effort they have put in to organizing the games.

**Elizabeth Heard**  
PYP Coordinator



## Secondary School News

### PTA helping create music

Last year an even greater cooperation with the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) became quite evident with their support of such events as Mother Tongue Language Day, Model United Nations, Winter Concert and the Parent/Teacher get-togethers to name just a few events. The PTA has been meeting regularly and sending minutes to all parents via school e-mail, but the full picture of how learning is affected is not always fully appreciated. I wanted to take this opportunity to formally thank the PTA for their generous support of the Secondary Music Program. Last year the PTA approached me with a "Principal's Wish List" and approved much needed musical instruments for the music department.

The items pictured were all donated by the PTA.



### Alumni benevolence

Continuing on a musical theme, earlier this month one of our 2011-2012 graduates visited our school and gave a totally unexpected donation to our music department. Cameron Bauer donated one of his older electric bass guitars and a new electric guitar. Many will remember Cameron as a budding young musician and we sincerely



appreciate his generosity and happy to see such a good heart matched with his musical talents. Pictured are two of our Grade 12 DP music students with the new additions.

### Chess club parental organizer

In other news, Mr Gupta (parent of two G8 students) helped revive our Chess Club and has agreed to supervise the club in the upcoming 3rd season of clubs. As with all clubs, a parent can help but must contact the appropriate Area

Principal to ensure appropriate structure and scheduling which includes working with a teacher. Mr Gupta approached me early in semester 1 and we were able to begin the club during the 2nd club season. Thank you Mr Gupta and English Subject Area Coordinator Ms Cahill for your efforts!



### Textbook exchange 2013

Textbooks are indeed costly and the secondary school trialed several textbook exchange ideas that worked very well last year, receiving positive responses and, as such, a more encompassing exchange will be offered this June. The basic idea is to offer an opportunity where students moving on to higher grade levels or graduating can sell their textbooks to other students moving up grade levels at a used market rate in which there is need. This should be of interest to students moving from Grade 5 to Grade 6 and subsequent movement between Grades 6 to 10 and of course Grade 11 students moving to the DP.

The school developed a suggested pricing scheme, but all sales will continue to be between the seller and buyer in which the school does not take any responsibility. Last year, our trial DP Book Exchange was conducted after school as to minimize class disruption. We plan to do something similar, as below, but expand this model to include not only DP textbooks but also

MYP mathematics and science textbooks the last week of school.

The 2013-2014 Textbook/Digital Supply List will be updated by the middle of May and this will be distributed to all families via e-mail before the actual textbook exchange. It is important for families to check the updated textbook lists as they are subject to change. Even if a particular textbook is no longer being used, parents may still find value in older textbooks for additional support as appropriate. All sales will be final in which the school is not involved directly with any purchases between parties taking part. Please stay tuned for more details.

### School e-mail for parental notifications

Over the past two years KIST has moved to digital distribution for most school updates and parental communication from teachers. Are you using your school Office 365 e-mail account? If not, you may be missing important messages from the school, as this is our primary way of sending important official updates regarding all areas of the school. School e-mail accounts are accessible via smart phones which many families find convenient. Kindly contact our IT office directly if you need assistance or have questions regarding username/passwords. If you are on campus and need help getting your smart phone configured properly, please ask our IT support staff, who are located in the main school office, for assistance.



**Stephen Rothkopf**  
Secondary School Principal

The DP Book Exchange will work as follows:

Seller	Buyer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place a yellow sticky on the front of each book you are wishing to sell.</li> <li>• The asking price in general should be 50% or less of the general retail price for a new copy.</li> <li>• Place an envelope in the back of the textbook with the seller's full name and desired price.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sure to check if the books you are purchasing are on the current book lists for 2012-14.</li> <li>• Older editions may still be applicable. DP subject teachers or representatives will be available to consult during this Book Exchange.</li> <li>• Select a book for purchase and put the correct amount of money in the seller's envelope.</li> <li>• A KIST staff member will verify the amount in the envelope and the collect it on behalf of the seller thus transferring ownership of the textbook.</li> </ul>

## MYP News

### MYP personal project exhibition

Decorating a dorm room for students..., improving your basketball skills..., building your own aquarium...; these were just some of the 37 interesting, challenging and creative personal projects that were presented by Grade 10 students at our 5th annual MYP Personal Project Exhibition held on Friday, March 1 in the school gym.

An amazing variety of different projects presented by authors themselves revealed the biggest KIST success—educated, knowledgeable and successful young people with creative ideas and great plans for future. This year's personal projects showed a vast variety of interests, skills and talents connected to each and every IB learner profile attribute and reconfirming the view of education as a continuous inquiry cycle.

With the guidance of their supervisors, all students succeeded in satisfying the personal project objectives and experiencing the final MYP educational task. But what is more important, through the personal project process, Grade 10 students showed themselves and their community that they are ready for all the exciting challenges their future educational choices might put in front of them.

**Vedrana Pavletic**  
MYP Coordinator



## MUN Near East Scrimmage

This year's Model United Nations scrimmage was held on December 8, 2012. We were very excited to host it at KIST, and to collaborate with delegates from St Mary's International School, Kinnick High, Yokota High, Zama High, Yokohama International School and Tamagawa Academy. We started off with a welcoming speech in the gym, where we, as the co-secretary generals, officially opened the conference. We also conducted a discussion for the delegates with two guests: Mr Tom Duval, an official with the US embassy and Mr Rock Cheung, outreach manager for the US-Japan Council's Tomodachi Initiative. Both men had MUN experience themselves and shared their extensive experience of applying MUN-skills in the real world.

Following the opening ceremony, the delegates spent the day in one of four UN Councils. Each student worked as ambassador, representing the interest of their country in debate. In addition to the country delegates, **Kouta** (G10B) served as co-chair of the Security-Council.

Each council discussed and debated a range of issues:

### General Assembly

1. Dealing with territorial disputes in the South China Sea
2. Protection of the Arctic and Antarctic

### ECOSOC

1. Measures to reduce the number of people who suffer from hunger
2. The return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

### Human Rights Council

1. Valuing, respecting and supporting the lives of indigenous peoples
2. Measures to prevent violence against women in areas of conflict

### Security Council

1. The situation in Syria
2. The dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands between China and Japan



Throughout the day, all students enjoyed the caucuses, while adhering to MUN procedures. We saw great enthusiasm from all KIST students who participated, and many new friendships were formed. This was a particularly successful conference, as each council passed at least one resolution by the end of the day. After the caucuses in the five different councils, we all came together in the gym at the end of the day for each council to share what they had accomplished.

Many thanks to the students who helped as administrative assistants and to the Yearbook photographers who worked hard during the day's events. We hope more students will participate in MUN next year and make it even more successful!

### Ria and Monica (G12A)



## Inquiries in Grades 2 and 3

The past few months have been very busy in the elementary school. The end of the semester, holiday celebrations, field trips, new units of study, influenza, goodbyes and introductions, have all come and gone. Grades 2 and 3 have been no exception.

In Grade 2, we are currently exploring the effects of electricity on modern technology. Students have researched sources of energy and how they are used to produce electricity. The students are also learning how to use the scientific process to test the conductivity of different materials. In addition, we are refining our comparison and contrast skills by supporting sides to the "War of the Currents" between Thomas (Direct Current) and Nikola Tesla (Alternating Current). The unit will be capped off by a trip to a science museum.

Grade 3 has just finished their unit of inquiry "How we express ourselves" which proved to be informative as well as entertaining. This provided a wealth of artistic outlets for the students to explore. The summative assessment task involved creating a dance connected to a self-written song while presenting artwork as a backdrop for their presentations. Throughout the unit, students strove to demonstrate how culture is conveyed through various mediums. Learning experiences included an excursion to The National Museum of Modern Art, where the students were able to view a variety of paintings and sculptures.

In line with our inquiries, we were lucky to have visitors that demonstrated a very special form of a martial art called capoeira. This is related to fighting arts like karate or taekwondo except that it is set to music and appears to be more of a dance than a protective skill. The instruments were very distinctive and produced a wonderful accompaniment to the stylized movements of the dance. The students got a chance to join in on the movements at the end of the presentation.

### Anthony Theilen

Grades 2 and 3 Team Leader, Grade 2 Teacher

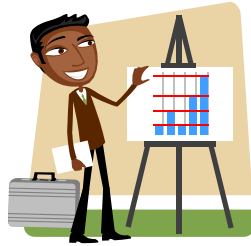




## DP News

### Grade 11: Extended essay presentations

On Friday, March 1, Grade 11 students gave presentations in small groups that outlined their Extended Essay (EE) topic and research conducted so far.



The EE is an in-depth independent research assignment where students are given the opportunity to explore an academic topic that interests them. The EE is a compulsory aspect of the IB Diploma as it develops student skills of research and time management and their intellectually curiosity. Ultimately, students produce an essay of between 3,000 and 4,000 words on a research question that they develop themselves from their chosen topic.

Grade 11 parents can help support their son/daughter by finding out about the EE on Moodle. The DP Extended Essay Moodle page has all the resources that parents need to support their child. Students will also show their parents their EE presentations on March 20 as part of their SLC Portfolio.

The next important deadline in the process is in the middle of May when students need to have completed a first draft of their EE for verbal feedback from their supervisor.

There are some fascinating topics and research questions and we look forward to hearing what the Grade 11 students find out!

**Mark Cowe**  
EE Coordinator

**Ferdinand Licuanan**  
Teacher-Librarian

### Grade 12: DP mock exams

In the middle of February, Grade 12 had one of their toughest weeks at KIST! They took their IB Diploma mock exams which are designed as another assessment to give them an awareness of their academic performance, but also to give them practice for their final IB Diploma examinations which take place later in the year in May. Students had exams for six days in a row, some of which lasted for four or five hours. The final exams in May should seem much more manageable compared to this experience.

The Grade 12 mock exams will also be an important part of the Grade 12 Semester 2 report. Parents will also be informed of their child's mock result, either by directly accessing the school's information database system PowerSchool or by receiving a brief paper report with all the mock grades.

G12 parents can also ask their son/daughter about their final exam schedule as each of the students already has their individual schedule for their different examinations in May. Unfortunately, there is no Golden Week holiday for G12 students as many of them will have exams on Friday, May 3 and Monday, May 6, but they can celebrate the end of two years hard work at the end of this month when they will be finished with regular classes after their last exams and can look forward to graduation!

**Mark Cowe**  
IB Diploma Coordinator



## Calendar 2013-2014

To assist families planning overseas trips, the dates of school vacation periods for the 2013-2014 school year are listed below. Families are asked to make arrangements accordingly to ensure that students are back in Japan ready to start school after each vacation period on the correct date. The complete calendar will be distributed in June.



**First day of school:** August 19  
**Autumn break:** October 27 – November 3  
**Winter vacation:** December 14 – January 6  
**Spring break:** March 22 – 30  
**Golden Week:** May 3 – 6  
**Last day of school:** June 11

## KIST on Stage



This year, due to venue availability issues, the school concerts, "KIST on Stage", will be held at Funabori Tower Hall on **Friday, May 24, 2013**. Attendance is compulsory for all students. The day will be divided into three sections:

**Lower School Concert (K1 to G1):** 10:30 - 12:00  
**Elementary Concert (G2 to G5):** 1:30 - 3:30  
**Secondary Concert (G6 to G12):** 5:00 - 8:00

Auditions for the Secondary Concert and for the special performance items for the Elementary Concert will be held soon after the spring break. Students should see their music teacher for more information.

Further details about the concerts will be distributed to all families in May.

## Spotlight on Clubs

### Zumba club

The Zumba club, which is led by Mrs Zornosa, is a Latin inspired club that provides an opportunity for Elementary students to learn basic dancing skills of salsa, merengue, bachata and cumbia. Besides learning how to dance, students have been learning how to identify the different beats of Latin music and expressing themselves by making up body movements using the different types of rhythms.



### The return of an old friend

Chess Club is back in KIST this term thanks to the efforts of the dedicated and very knowledgeable Mr Gupta. With it comes one of the few opportunities that a Grade 6 student has to not only be equal with, but also to trounce, a Grade 12 student. The sighs fly with the pieces. It's a supportive, friendly and quietly combative environment that welcomes students of all ages and abilities. Some students have played for years, some only for weeks. Games are played, tactics discussed and puzzles agonized over to help develop students' strategic awareness. Above all it's fun and not at all threatening. All are welcome to Room 201 on Fridays at 3.30 p.m.



## Secondary SRC

The Secondary SRC has had another busy and exciting few months, as we've just hosted a winter dance, the Snow Ball, and released our first issue of the new student-run newsletter, *KISTeens*. We are also busy revising and amending the constitution, and writing and submitting proposals for new aspects of student life. We meet twice a week, every Friday after school in the art room, with the whole SRC (20 members), and once a week beforehand with the executives for planning purposes.

The winter Snow Ball dance was a big success, with over 130 attendees! We made **30,507** yen net profit, which we hope to use towards the outcome of our current proposals.



(Photograph courtesy of Azzam)

The full financial report, prepared by our Treasurer, **Min** (G11B), can be found in the SRC page on Moodle under the Secondary Blog.

The Snow Ball dance featured many events including student acoustic performances, a limbo game, and a Dance King and Queen competition. We served food and beverages, and our pizza and hot dogs sold out halfway through the dance!

We also released our first issue of *KISTeens*, the first newsletter, which was e-mailed to all the students and features articles about student clubs, activities and events, C&S and CAS opportunities, and more. We also have a printed copy in the art room, so feel free to stop by and read through it.

The SRC has developed several proposals, which if approved, will be posted on the Secondary Blog. Proposals are written by SRC members and then reviewed by the Secondary Principal who then presents them to the school's management team for approval. Our most recent approved proposal is in commemoration of the 3/11/11 Tohoku earthquake, to donate funds raised towards earthquake relief (specific charity/etc. yet to be decided). Students and teachers are asked to donate 200 yen if participating and wear the colors of the Japanese flag (red & white).

Also, we encourage and welcome any students to start dialogue with SRC members with any more ideas, suggestions, or comments they may have, at any time!

**Monica** (G12A)  
SRC President



## Middle School Spelling Bee

KIST middle school students spent the month of January studying for the annual middle school spelling bee. Language teachers designed special assignments to work on vocabulary, pronunciation and general use of spelling in everyday writing. Each grade level held their own formal spelling bee to select participants for the school-wide competition.

The students selected were: **Emiri** (G6A), **Ikumi** (G6A), **Jin II** (G6A), **Igor** (G6A), **Rachel** (G7A), **Kunthu** (G7A), **Amina** (G7B), **Lae Eun** (G7A), **Akshara** (G8B), **Hardik** (G8A), **Saachin** (G8B) and **Amartya** (G8A).

The spelling bee was held on Friday, February 8 during the school day, and 5th grade students joined the middle school students and parents to watch. This year the competition was especially difficult, each of the 12 spellers made it through the first three rounds. Emiri finished in 5th place making it through to the 10th round. Lae Eun finished 4th making it to the 13th round. Amina was 3rd place and fought very hard all the way to the 16th round. The final two rounds were both 8th grade students, Akshara and Saachin. The atmosphere was tense in the gym as both students continued to spell each difficult word perfectly. They completed 25 rounds against each other.

The judges used every word on the list provided by Scripps Spelling Bee, including words like **ichthyosaur**, **geosynchronous**, **thermotropism**, **quintessense**, **deluginous** and **oscilloscope**. Finally, at round 41, the judges had to ask for a dictionary to be brought in, and the final, winning spelling word was **segregationist**.

The winner of the KIST Middle School Spelling Bee was **Saachin**. Saachin's parents were in attendance. We are all very proud of his effort and the dedication that all of the participants showed in improving their English language skills.



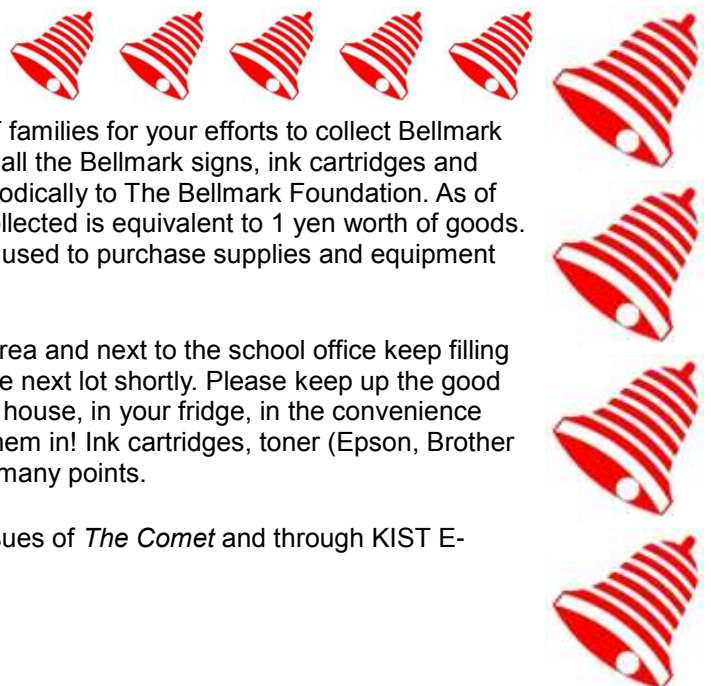
## PTA Bellmark Committee

The PTA Bellmark Committee would like to thank all KIST families for your efforts to collect Bellmark signs from your everyday products. We gather and count all the Bellmark signs, ink cartridges and Tetra Pak cartons you bring to school and send them periodically to The Bellmark Foundation. As of December 2012, our point total was **27,430**. One point collected is equivalent to 1 yen worth of goods. When we have a large enough amount, the points will be used to purchase supplies and equipment for our school.

As the Bellmark collection boxes in the school entrance area and next to the school office keep filling up thanks to your good work, we are preparing to send the next lot shortly. Please keep up the good work and continue to look for Bellmark signs around your house, in your fridge, in the convenience store, in the supermarket and in your office... and bring them in! Ink cartridges, toner (Epson, Brother and Canon only) and Tetra Pak cartons in particular give many points.

We will keep you updated about the progress in future issues of *The Comet* and through KIST E-Communications.

**PTA Bellmark Committee**



## Library News

### Oooops! We did it again...

The 2nd **International Mother Language Day** on February 21 was a big success. With lots of concurrent activities, the celebration included the participation of elementary and secondary students, parents and several embassies. The celebration started with a national costume parade in the morning in which elementary students wore colorful traditional costumes and waved national flags on the field. The Arts and Culture Exhibition inside the MPR included artwork created by elementary and secondary students. The exhibition also showcased crafts lent by parents and our friends from the Cameroon, Canada and Mexico embassies. Meanwhile, the multimedia display of dances from around the world and new items in the World Languages collection was popular with students.



This year there was more participation of secondary students, who volunteered as MYP and DP speakers to teach 10 words of their mother-tongue to elementary classes. Likewise, we also had more parents who were able to spare some time to read stories to the elementary students in German, Danish, Turkish, Spanish and Hindi. Students were very interested in hearing the stories told in another language, then explained in English. In the LMC, the secondary school students had the opportunity to see a demonstration and play "Karuta", a traditional Japanese card game. This game is becoming increasingly popular in Japan and is a great way to connect with language and culture.

All of the participants received a certificate as a token of appreciation, and the winning entries of the artwork competition received an iTunes card. These were kindly sponsored by the PTA Library Committee. The winners of the secondary school artwork competition were: **Sara** (G7A), **Seo Yeon** (G7B—represented by her sister, Chae Youn) and **Makoto** (G12A).

Again, many thanks to the PTA Cultural Connections Committee and the Library Committee, parents, secondary students and school staff who volunteered their time to help out with this great event. Students really enjoyed connecting with their own and other's languages, and celebrating cultural diversity at KIST. You can view photographs of the national costume parade, arts exhibition, parent-storytelling and MYP/DP speakers on the Elementary Library Moodle page.



### What else is coming up?

Forthcoming events for students include the Sakura Medal Book Challenge, Sakura Art Contest and Sakura Book Trailers. These contests will be organized by the librarians and teachers from many international schools in Japan. If you are interested in joining these activities, check-out the Elementary and LMC Moodle pages.

Important dates of upcoming activities:

**March 22** – Due date for Sakura art entries. Submit your artwork to Ms Anna (Elementary Library) or Mr Andi (LMC).

**April 12** – Due date for Sakura voting forms. For secondary students, use the pink Hungry Readers booklet and look for the dropbox in the LMC.

### Marketplace for textbooks

The LMC will be setting up a 'marketplace' for secondary students to buy and sell used textbooks. This will be a chance for you to buy and sell used textbooks to save money. We will be distributing more details on this activity in coming months.



## Staff 10!

In this month's *Staff 10!*, we are pleased to present **Ferdinand (Andi) Licuanan** who joined KIST in 2011 as our teacher-librarian.



*Mr Andi posing in front of the welcome banner on International Mother Language Day.*

### • Tell us something interesting about your hometown.

Manila is the place where I was born, raised and educated. I grew up in a neighborhood where kids play on the streets, climb trees and enjoy snacks with friends anytime of the day from a sari-sari store (a small-scale retail business usually owned by a family). My house is only 10 minutes on foot to my school and 10 minutes by jeep (a popular type of local transportation) to Malacanang, the Philippine President's official residence. I always go back to Manila whenever I get the chance especially on occasions like feast day, Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations. These are the exciting days I always look forward to when I am working overseas.

### • What is your favorite place in the world?

Norway ranked first (its third year in a row) in the happiest countries of the world based on Forbes (2013). It is also my favorite place in the world where I plan to visit someday. I would love to see the aurora borealis (the dancing Northern lights of Norway). I've always dreamed of lying down on a rooftop to witness the beauty of the night sky while eating buttered popcorn and listening to the music of Enya. This natural phenomenon gives me hope, and inspires me spiritually by appreciating the wonder of nature.

### • Who would you like to meet if you had the chance and why?

Michael Jackson – I grew up listening to his music. Given the chance to meet him, I would tell him how thankful I am for his contribution to music. His numerous top-of-the-chart songs and struggles in life were my inspiration to live and achieve my dreams when I was still young. I felt connected with the messages of his music.

### • Do you have any special skills or talents?

I have talents in singing and dancing. I keep them balanced ever since I was kid. I joined chorale groups since elementary and a dance club in high school. While in college, I was a dance choreographer and a director of many college events. I think those were the places I learnt my talents in singing and dancing.

### • Please share a little known fact about yourself.

I am the youngest among 8 other siblings. Yes! I come from a big family. I have 6 sisters and 2 brothers. I have so many wonderful memories when the whole family was seated together including my in-laws, nephews and nieces on our long dining table. It's like a feast every lunch and dinner time.

### • What is your most prized possession?

I am a sentimental person. I always treasure gifts given to me by my loved ones and friends on special occasions. I kept them back home in Manila and some of them are still displayed in my room. Those objects are my most prized possessions that remind me of love, friendship and how important I am to those people around me.

### • What words would you use to describe yourself

My friends would always describe me as smart, understanding and an achiever. That is also how I see myself.

### • If you could live your life again, would you do anything differently?

I am happy the way it was. All the past experiences I have had in my life whether good or bad have brought me to the place where I am right now. And I am satisfied with that.

### • Is there anything you are trying to learn/improve about yourself at the moment?

I am taking my Master of Education right now. I know this will help me professionally as the teacher-librarian. One of my greatest fears is being left behind in technology by my students. These studies will improve my knowledge and skills in teaching and learning for 21st century learners.

### • Do you have any special message for your fans

This world we live in is a big place for all of us. You just need to find your own spot and live a happy life. No need to compete, envy or judge someone. Remember these words: Dream. Believe. Survive and Be Happy.

## Office Updates

### Bicycle parking for parents

The bicycle spaces to the side of the school entrance are for parents and children who are picking and dropping off students and for parents who have other duties at the school only.



Recently, some parents have been leaving their bicycles at the school while they go to work or run other personal errands. For such situations we kindly ask that you use the public parking spaces at the train station. The school parking spaces are limited and should only be used for short-term visits such as picking up children or when visiting the school to complete School Support Program duties.

### One-way traffic agreement



The road outside the school entrance is extremely narrow, but officially it is not a one-way road. As we have mentioned in previous issues of *The Comet*, however, there is an informal agreement between residents and businesses in the local neighborhood such as the supermarket and drug store that promotes the road as being one way.

At the end of school each day, there are often traffic hazards involving oncoming cars and parked cars outside the school gate. To ensure a safe environment for all, KIST families are also asked for their cooperation in adhering to the one-way policy travelling in the correct direction as follows:

**All vehicles should enter the road off Kiyosubashi-dori near the Comfort Hotel and exit onto Kiyosumi-dori near Akafudado.**

### Student absences

Families are reminded that absence notifications should be e-mailed directly to the school office at [info@kist.ed.jp](mailto:info@kist.ed.jp), not to class teachers.

### E-Communications

Official school notices distributed via E-Communications are sent from the [contacts@kist.ed.jp](mailto:contacts@kist.ed.jp) address. Please be aware that this is a **sending address only**. Any messages you send to this address will not be received by the school. All general e-mail should be sent to [info@kist.ed.jp](mailto:info@kist.ed.jp).

## Art News

### Artscape 2013

As it is the beginning of March, we enter Artscape season. This will be KIST's 6th year participating in this event. A selection of outstanding student art between Grades 5 and 12 will be on exhibition for 3 weeks beginning March 1. All students, parents, staff and community members are cordially invited to support KIST's student artists and art department by visiting the exhibition between the dates shown below.

Artscape is a celebration of the creative accomplishments and inquiry of students from international schools across the Kanto Plains region. Over 300 works of art are on display ranging from 2D work to 3D work, and even some video! The National Children's Castle (Kodomo-no Shiro) on the cusp of Shibuya and Omotesando has been the Artscape exhibition venue for many years.

We are graciously invited once again to show student work at this prestigious event. Admission is free, however, venue hours are specific.

#### Artscape 2013

March 1 - 17, 2013

Opening hours:

Tuesday - Friday 12:30 - 17:30

Saturday/Sunday 10:00 - 17:00

Closed Mondays

National Children's Castle, Aoyama

<http://artscapekanto.com>

### DP visual arts exhibition

April 5, Room 201, 5-7 p.m., KIST Gymnasium

On behalf of Grade 12 Visual Arts students, I would like to invite all students, parents, staff and community members to the 2013 Exam Exhibition of student artwork. There is a delightful variety of very well crafted work from 10 of our student artists this year. Early evening of Friday, April 5 will be the only day available for viewing the totality of the 2 years of work students have created, in the school gym. All are cordially invited to an informal reception to view the student artwork between 5 and 7 p.m.

In addition to the exhibition, a selection of work will be displayed around campus following the examination date. I am happy to report that we have two graduates pursuing arts degrees this year, and one pursuing a degree in architecture. The excellent portfolio work that led to the post-secondary aspirations of these students will be on display.

Thank you for supporting the arts at KIST.

**Daryl Bates**

Secondary Subject Area Coordinator—The Arts

#### DP Visual Arts Exhibition

Friday, April 5, 2013

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

KIST Gymnasium

**Artscape** you are warmly invited to the 'opening party'

**2013** opening party  
4pm Friday March 1st

National Children's Castle  
5-53-1 Jingumae Shibuya-ku,  
Tokyo 150-0001

Christian Academy in Japan  
Musashino Higashi Gakuin  
Tokyo Gakuei University International Secondary School  
International School of the Sacred Heart  
K. International School Tokyo (KIST)  
Aoba-Japan International School  
Saint Maur International School  
Nishimachi International School  
Yokohama International School  
St. Mary's International School  
The American School in Japan  
Seisen International School  
Tokyo International School  
New International School

Incredible art by incredible young artists  
please do come and celebrate with us!

sponsors:  
National Children's Castle  
Tophutti Tourist

don't be a square...  
... be there!

National Children's Castle: TEL: 03-3797-5656 / FAX: 03-3797-5676



## Karuta at KIST

On February 21, the Japanese Department and KIST Libraries welcomed guest speakers from the Competitive Karuta Association. This provided a great opportunity for students to familiarize themselves with the Japanese game of *karuta*.

*Karuta* is a game that is traditionally played during New Year in Japan. There are many variations such as *Iroha Karuta*, *Hyakunin Isshu Karuta*, *Hiragana Karuta* and *Toudofuken Karuta* and it is a great introduction to Japanese language and culture while also having fun.

Amongst the games, *Hyakunin Isshu Karuta* (literally - 100 people, 1 poet) has developed into a competitive sport which focuses on testing speed and memorization skills. It has become increasingly popular in recent times due to the popular comic, *Chihayafuru* which is based on players of the game. Bilingual versions of the comic are currently available for loan from the LMC.

The guests on the day were made up of top ranking *karuta* players/readers. Students, teachers, and parents were amongst the visitors who came to watch the practice matches held during lunch break and were surprised at the speed of which the combatants were able to grab a card upon hearing the song.

“ I had no idea that *karuta* was a sport, and to be honest, I didn't take it too seriously. But seeing the visitors here today from the Karuta Association has changed my perception entirely. I now think it's a cool sport! ”

In the afternoon during their Japanese classes in Blocks 3 and 4, G9 and G10 students received an introductory explanation about the game and competing in practice matches, and were even able to try out *karuta* for themselves.

The Japanese Department and KIST Libraries would like to thank the PTA Library Committee and PTA Events Committee for their assistance on the day. Practice sessions are currently being scheduled with the aim of competing at the next International Mind Sports Tournament in August in Yokohama. Those who are interested should contact G10 students, **Kouta** or **Tatsuya**, or ask Kamo-sensei.



## Sports Update

This year, KIST athletes have been busy representing their school at many sporting events.

Basketball season is coming to an end and both of our under 18 (U18) basketball teams ended the regular season in first place position and are getting ready to enter the playoffs. We expect great results and hope to bring back both the boys and girls ISTAA (International Schools of Tokyo Athletic Association) championship trophies. Our U14 teams have been playing very well and are currently holding winning records. The U14 final tournament will be held on March 9. The venue will be announced at a later date.



On February 5, the Elementary School's young swimmers hit the pool at the British School in Tokyo's (BST) Showa campus. We competed in many sprint type races and had a lot of success against some very experienced swimmers from other schools. The BST sprint meet was made up of swimmers from BST, Nishimachi IS, the Montessori School of Tokyo and KIST. Congratulations to all our young developing swimmers. You represented your school very well.

Coming up in March, we will have our Elementary soccer and mini-basketball teams competing against other schools in the ISTAA league in some friendly matches and tournaments.

Please stay up to date with "KIST Sports" by checking our Moodle page for information regarding scheduling of upcoming sporting events.

Go Comets!

**Jay Leroy**  
Athletics Director



## Middle School Brain Bowl

Four of the five Great Lakes border on Canada. Which one does not? Which is greater: 3 cubed or 2 to the 5th power? What is the national flower of Japan and how many petals does it have? Why was Kate Middleton hospitalized late 2012? Can you answer these questions? If so, you can consider yourself brainy enough for Middle School Brain Bowl!

Eleven international schools joined KIST on Wednesday, February 13 to compete in the KPASSP Middle School Brain Bowl competition. Students were put into teams with students from other schools and were able to work productively and make new friends. It was a full day of fun games, group activities and of course the ever-popular buzzer round on stage. By the end of the day, we were all surely brain-fried.

A big congratulations to all students at KIST who were involved; they conducted themselves with maturity and showed great hospitality all day. In particular, congratulations go to **Ellen** (G7A) who placed in the first place team, and **Hikaru I** (G7B) who placed in the silver medal team. **Hee Yong** (G7B), **Nikita** (G7B), **Rachel** (G7A), **Sara** (G7A), **Kevin** (G6B) and **Johnathan** (G6B) are also to be commended for competing on the day.





## College Guidance News

The College Guidance Office is pleased to announce that admission and scholarship offers are beginning to reach us! Many of the current Grade 12s, who have already submitted their college applications to the UK, US, Canada and Asia, are now receiving acceptance notices. We are happy with our many successes of our students and wish them well.

### KIST Spring College Fair

**We will be hosting our first College Fair on March 20, (the same day as the student-led conferences) from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the KIST gym.**

Representatives from more than twenty universities in the US, UK, Australia and Japan will participate in this event (see the list below). At the fair, you will be able to meet and talk with admissions officers, faculty members and alumni members including KIST graduates. This event is mainly targeted to secondary school students and parents, but is open to the whole school, including the elementary school (**parents only, no children please!**) Please take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to gather information about options after KIST education.

#### Participating colleges (\*indicates display only)

**USA:** Colgate University, Cornell University, Columbia University, George Washington University, Harvard College, Smith College, Wellesley College

**UK:** British Council, City University of London, \*Regents College, University of Kent

**Australia:** Melbourne University

**Japan:** Doshisha University, International Christian University, \*Keio University (GIGA), \*Lakeland University, Meiji Gakuin University, Okayama University, Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto), Ritumeikan Asia Pacific University, Sophia University, \*Tama University, Temple University Japan, Tsukuba University, Waseda University (SILS)

### Upcoming events (open to public)

#### Education au/in Canada at the Canadian Embassy

[www.canada-ryugaku-fair.com](http://www.canada-ryugaku-fair.com)

Tuesday, March 19th 17:00-19:30

Wednesday, March 20th 11:00-17:30

#### Education UK Spring Exhibition at British Council

Monday, April 1st 17:00-21:00

[www.educationuk.jp](http://www.educationuk.jp)

\*Please see their websites for more details

### Alumni talks

On February 21, one of KIST's graduates, Su Ah Lee (2012), a freshman at Seoul National University returned to KIST to talk about her college experience with students from G9 to G11 during the lunch break. On March 1, Paolo Bangit (2012) from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Beppu and Reo Matsui (2012) from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, also visited the G11 and G12 classes during lunch to share their new college lives.

**(Mrs) Keiko Okude**

College Guidance Counselor

## Alumnus Report—1

*Aditya Dhara is an alumnus of KIST's "Class of 2010." He is currently in his third year at Northeastern University in the USA., majoring in mathematics.*

After graduating from KIST in 2010 and moving to the USA to start my studies at Northeastern University, I went through more changes in my lifestyle than I imagined possible. In a nutshell, I moved to a city 14 hours by flight away from home; encountered a polar opposite culture; and moved into a campus of 15,000 from KIST, which was roughly 400 strong (although growing rapidly). The change was immense but the whole experience has been incredible so far.

Northeastern University has a very diverse program. Even though I am a Math major, I have a course load that spans across the academic spectrum, as a requirement from the university. Northeastern's biggest feature is its cooperative education (or co-op) program. The university trains students in applying for jobs and provides resources to find a 4-6 month long internship in a position that pertains to many majors of study. This allows us to experience the corporate world and work up our resumes even before graduation. From July to December 2012, I had a co-op as an actuary at John Hancock Insurance Company, during which I had first-hand experience with real market annuity data and mathematical models. The experience was invaluable also in that I learned about the various applications of math in finance.

But apart from the serious coursework, Northeastern has many things to be proud of: a proud hockey team, an incredible entrepreneurship program and a sophisticated list of student organizations. I've had the chance to see a hockey game one day and do community service the next (nursing my throbbing throat from all the cheering for the Huskies!). As busy as I am, I still find enough opportunities to be sociable and try the craziest things. One semester I had the chance to be a major role in a theatre show! It was a lot of fun and an experience I'm sure I'd never get anywhere else.

I have to admit, the difficulties of living far from home were pretty daunting, but all the opportunities that became available to me, everything I've had the chance to try, outweighed every such difficulty I've faced. Northeastern has given me a full college experience and I could not be happier to be here right now.

### Aditya Dhara

KIST "Class of 2010"  
Northeastern University



*Students stroke the head of this statue for good luck before exams or sporting events.*

## Alumnus Report—2

*Su Ah Lee is an alumnus of KIST's "Class of 2012." She is currently in her first year at Seoul National University in Korea.*

It has been almost 10 months already since I graduated from KIST and said farewell to my fellow colleagues of the Class of 2012. I am currently attending Seoul National University (SNU) in Korea where I have studied for a semester now. In this short amount of time, so much has happened. I thought that by sharing my experiences while they are fresh in my mind through this article, it would help broaden the views of the school's upcoming graduates on what to expect.

The first thing that dawned on me was the fact that I was about to leave Tokyo, which had practically become my home. Leaving behind my friends, family, home, and the past 18 years of my life, was a very hard and stressful decision to make at the time. The next thing that struck me was the fact that I was about to attend SNU. For the purpose of enabling you to truly experience what I felt about this, I would like give you a very brief background of the school from the perspective of an average citizen in Korea: SNU is Korea's No. 1 university and only the top 2% of high school graduates from all over the country – geniuses, really – get the privilege to attend this first-rate school. I am, by no means, exaggerating nor bragging for that matter. This fact only came to me through enormous stress and anxiety. With these two main problems, I was stuck in a dilemma. I wanted to stay in Tokyo, but I also wanted to receive first-rate quality education that SNU provided. Eventually, trying to convince myself that I was making a long-term investment, I settled with SNU.

Looking back, I was always trying to find reasons to hate the situation that I was in. I hated that I left Tokyo. I hated that I was living alone and had to do everything on my own. I hated my small dorm room. I hated that it was so cold in winter. I hated that the whole school was on a mountain and it was exhausting to move around campus. I hated that my lectures, textbooks and essays were all in Korean. I hated the school buildings. Basically, I hated just about everything. The typical conversations among students were about the world economy, or perhaps a serious debate on Korea's diplomacy. I still remember receiving my first



*Mountain view from SNU.*

scores at the end of the semester... and seriously considering whether to transfer or not (embarrassing, but very true).



*Su Ah (left) with Mr Rothkopf, Mrs Okude and Ryosuke (Class of 2012).*

It was only when I had finally settled down, made a few friends, and had slowly begun to be accustomed to living in Korea and its culture. Yes, I am yet to adapt to Korean society. Yes, my dorm room is tiny. And yes, my GPA is hopeless. But I was taking it all for granted. I didn't see how privileged I was to be in that particular environment that not everyone could experience. It was always daunting for me to think about the laborious work and the level of quality that the school required, but it was later that I realized that having this environment meant a huge improvement in my life. Having high standards as an average expectation is quite stressful, but I have started to feel that I am very much blessed to be in that situation. I am in an environment where people actually know what contemporary issues or events that are happening around the world *and* have constructed their individual opinions about it.

All this time, I had been neglecting every opportunity to challenge and develop myself by confronting these standards. Every time my life offered a chance for me to grow, all I did was complain and slack off. It only requires a little twist of your perspective to really see eye to eye with what you are faced with. Sure, I have bad scores but I have learnt rather to be inspired to practice more, learn more, and achieve more by taking advantage of SNU's aggressive environment. It is the second semester soon, and I have never been more determined to challenge myself in whatever obstacle my university has to offer.

**Su Ah Lee**  
KIST "Class of 2012"  
Seoul National University



*Su Ah talking with KIST students.*