

A New Start !

Hello Matsuzawa community. I'm honored to be able to serve as president of the PTA this year. We have an increasingly international community here at the school and it has been suggested to me to also include my thoughts here in English, which I am more than happy to do.

My name is Joe Congdon. My wife, Felicity, and I have four children. Our middle two currently attend Matsuzawa Elementary.

Our school has a uniquely long tradition and history, one that extends over 135 years. I have been amazed by the number of people I meet in the neighborhood who grew up in this area, attended the elementary school, and now send their own children to the same school. As I reflect on this, I have learned a few key lessons about our area. There is a great deal of local pride in the school. For multiple generations, families have relied on the school for more than just education. The school serves also to help in character formation and community building, often leading to relationships that will last for a lifetime. This is one of the aspects of our local community that originally attracted me and my family to this area. I am thrilled that we can now participate in, and benefit from, this rich culture.

After three years of challenges due to the Corona Virus, I am thankful that the danger is beginning to wane, and along with them the restrictions that necessarily followed. This presents us as a community with a great opportunity to make a new start! My hope is that this year we can come together to grow as a community. I look forward to this new opportunity we will have this year to restart some of the traditions that have so long been ingrained in our community.

More than ever, it is integral for us to garner help from parents in serving our students as they adjust back to a more open life. I welcome and invite your help as we will have many needs for volunteer opportunities at various school and PTA events in the near future. The big sports day (taiiku gakushuu happyoukai) coming up in May will a great opportunity to jump in for those who would like to help. Both preservation and change are needed as we look to the future and I count it a genuine privilege to serve our community in helping us move ahead. If you see me at the school or around town please do take time to say hi and introduce yourself.

