

## The Azabu Elementary School Newsletter, October 2017

This is my first year at Azabu Elementary School. No one day passes without appreciating the support I feel from parents, local and related people. I look forward to reading, sports, seasonal and other school wide events in October. In the previous newsletter I expressed the importance of caring the Nature that we are blessed to have at Azabu School. In this newsletter I would like to draw your attention to the special cherry tree that we call "Grew's cherry tree".

On October 19th, 2011, the Grew's cherry tree was proudly planted in the special spot in the school playground, in front of the Kindergarten sand box.

The planting ceremony took place as part of the school's 135 year anniversary. There is a plaque explanation next to the tree. Thanks to then principal, Yoshiharu Suzuki, who sent me some information about the tree as well as the NHK published DVD, I have some more details to share with you.

In June 1942, the late Ambassador from the USA, Joseph Grew, asked for Kanzan-kind cherry tree and planted a young cherry tree in his official residence as he and his wife prepared to leave Japan due to the outbreak of the war between the countries. Six months before the planting, the USA and Japan were at war with the Pearl Harbor attack by the Japanese military force. They planted the cherry tree with hope for peace when the tree grew tall and blossomed as the pendulum of a clock moved back.

When war ended, the cherry tree was split by Ambassador Reischauer, who came and looked after the tree as the second generation, which still blooms in spring at the American Embassy garden. Later it was split again and it is the one we have in our school. So it is the third generation from Ambassador Grew, which keeps telling us Grew's message of the hope for peace and friendship between the United States of America and Japan.

In 2011, Ambassador John Ruth decided to donate the tree to the Azabu School Alumni Association as he heard a wish of one of the Azabu School graduates, to tell the story of the tree to his school students. The school community gladly accepted the tree as part of the 135 year anniversary of the school.

The school body prepared a banner that said, "Thank you for the cherry tree. We will love and care for it always." On the day of celebration, we were honored to have the presence of Ambassador Ruth and hear him speak, "Today I am happy to have the opportunity to plant the tree as I wish for peace between America and Japan. I was glad that so many students spoke to me in English."

All the students and teachers who attended the ceremony already graduated or gone but some of the students who were in kindergarten may remember the day. Some parents remembered the honorable day and said that when it was planted it was very small. They were glad to see the tree grew so fast.

I am sure that we will look after Grew's cherry tree as it keeps growing with hope for peace.

With thanks for your continued support,  
Yasumasa Kuroda, Principal of Abazu Elementary School