



# THE NEWS BEAD

AN E-NEWSLETTER FROM JAMS - WHERE SUCCESS REALLY ADDS UP!

February 2010



## WELCOME TO THE NEWS BEAD!

Much is happening at JAMS this month! We've had students recognized for their abilities at their schools, had a chance to display the power of abacus at the Mochitsuki Festival and we're preparing for this year's Fun Event, and we're planning to offer Saturday classes for new students. Please be sure to review all of the announcements and read the stories in this issue of the News Bead. Enjoy!

美和子  
Miwako

Sensei Miwako

## Announcements

### Saturday Classes Coming Soon!!

Beginning in April, JAMS will offer Saturday sessions for new/beginning students. Classes will run from April 3 - May 22, and two time slots will be offered: 9am - 10:30 and 10:30-noon. These sessions are for beginners/new students only and seating limited to 15 students per class. Call for more information on tuition and to register your child today!

### Spring Closures

JAMS follows the Beaverton School District Calendar for all major holidays:  
<http://www.beavton.k12.or.us/home/departments/community-involvement/district-calendar/>

#### Upcoming Closures:

Monday 2/15	Presidents' Day holiday
3/22 - 3/26	Spring break
6/11 & 6/14	Fun Meet weekend (Note - These days will not count as make up as we will be at Fun Meet all day on the 12th and 13th)

### Planning for 2010 Fun Meet Under Way - And We Need Your Help!

We're still working out the details for this year's Fun Meet. The

event will be held on June 12 (Abacus Camp) & 13 (Fun Meet). Please keep your eyes on The Bead for updates!

*If you would like to be a part of the Fun Meet Planning Committee, please let Sensei know as soon as possible.*

### Notice to Parents and Students : Noise Level in the Hallway

We've recently received some complaints from other tenants in our building about the noise level in the hallway before, during and after classes. Please be aware that there are other schools and businesses in the building. We all need to respect that by keeping the noise level down and not running through the lobby or hallways while waiting for class to end or for our parents to pick us up.

### Follow JAMS on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn...

You can now follow JAMS on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Here are the links:

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Portland-OR/Japanese-Abacus-Math-School/290954474061?ref=ts>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jamsportland>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/abacusmath>

We encourage you to join our Facebook Fan Page and if you're so inclined, submit a testimonial there. Thanks and we'll see you in the networks!

### A Special Letter to Parents...

I have been thinking about how I can approach your children, my students, to keep their skills alive and to encourage them to use their skills in their daily lives - not just as a way to quickly calculate math problems.

I shared this thought with my friend Jin Chen in San Jose, and has always been very supportive and involved with JAMS through our annual competition. She also has given me the privilege to observe her classes and how she conducts her class.

Many of Jin's students continue with Abacus classes through high school, and I want my students to gain the advantages of doing so as well. Many of Jin's students used and listed Anzan

(Mental Calculation Skill) as a Special Talent on their resume when applying to universities such as Stanford, UCLA, UC Davis, and Harvard.

My goal in teaching Abacus has never been to teach a skill that is used as a novelty, but to teach Anzan (mental calculation) as a life skill that students can benefit from throughout their lives, well beyond their school years. I sincerely want every student I work with to take this skill into their future and to realize the confidence it will bring them in every aspect of life.

With that goal in mind, beginning next term, I will start to focus more on Anzan (mental Calculation) than Abacus work. Of course, Abacus is basic and is the foundation of Anzan, so every child will learn that skill. However, your child, as an Advanced student, already has that basic of skill and will realize even greater success and skills development using Anzan techniques, without spending so much time on Abacus practice.

With that in mind, if you and/or your children would like to take Abacus Exams to achieve higher levels, please let me know and I will prepare them for that.

Of course, I will continue to work on Applied Mental Math (real skill math/story math), such as "Tip Calculator (percentage)," "GMC," "LCM" Fraction, Negative, Decimal, and anything that is school/life related math.

If you have any suggestions as parents or as an expert in your profession, please feel free to share with then with me. I am more than happy to introduce new ideas and concepts. Thank you for your consideration!

美和子  
Miwako

## Testimonials

The greatest message we can send to anyone who is looking into sending their child to JAMS is not what we say to them, it's the words of our student parents and families. Here are some of the latest wonderful testimonials we've recieved...

You are so much vested in our kids, for that I feel gratitude to you and thank you for making our kids part of your life and thinking of them as your very own.

-- Roveeda Ahmed

My son started taking abacus lessons in September and I was really amazed at how quickly the lessons moved. He learned so fast and it is really helping much more than his math skills. It teaches him focus and discipline and even stronger - problem solving skills. I didn't expect this as I did not know how the abacus worked. But I am learning along with him and it is really so impressive. He can do math problems on the abacus that I have to check with a calculator! My daughter is in pre-kindergarten and she started lessons in December. In just

one month, she can do problems like  $5+2$  in her head as she "sees the beads." It is just so impressive! I really appreciate the opportunity to send my kids to JAMS. I feel that it will really improve their math skills above and beyond what my school district is doing. Thank you, Miwako sensei!

-- Jill Burkres

We feel fortunate to have access to Sensei Miwako and abacus training at JAMS. We have two children enrolled at JAMS and we are at the end of our first term, and they are already capable of doing mental calculations quickly and accurately. However, our primary reason for enrolling them in JAMS was not so they could calculate at lightening fast speed. We were intrigued by studies that substantiate that abacus and anzan training (blind calculation) develops the ability to mentally visualize imagery in a "simulated act of seeing in your mind's eye."

We are already witnessing improvement in both of our kids with memory skills, as they memorize spelling words and long piano pieces almost instantly. They are beginning to process complicated information quickly and logically and we've observed a recent boost in our daughter's creativity. We've also seen sharpened concentration and comprehension skills in my son who is in second grade. Our only logical answer for all of these recent developments is the rigorous abacus training they have been doing on a daily basis for the last 6 months. I would not think twice about recommending this to anyone who has children. I personally feel it should be taught in our public school system beginning at Kindergarten.

The JAMS program is superb, and Sensei Miwako is a loving teacher who has a passion for teaching abacus and motivating the children to develop their mental gifts."

-- Danielle Cox

JAMS has been absolutely wonderful for our daughter. It is incredible to watch her develop her math skills at a phenomenal pace-- but it has been even more fantastic to see how she is developing her abilities to concentrate and focus, skills that have carried over to all of her studies. And every time she comes home from class she proclaims JAMS to be her favorite activity of the week. After class one day she even said to us that when she grows up she wants to be an Abacus Teacher like Miwako!

We really credit Miwako's patient, understanding and insightful teaching style with the progress we have seen. Although our child has only been in JAMS for one term, and even though she was only adding single digit numbers when she started, believe it or not I now have to check her JAMS work with Microsoft Excel because she can now outperform me in mental calculation! JAMS is just phenomna!

-- Leila Hardy

## In the Community

### Oregon College of Arts & Crafts

On February 2, Miwako Sensei taught a group of students at the Oregon College of Arts and Crafts (OCAC). The students enjoyed the session and were amazed at how learning abacus could change their lives. They've asked Sensei to come back to teach more often!



I wish that I had learned this skill as a child. Yet, the improvement I saw in the short time Miwako spent with my college math class I believe that learning the abacus now is an essential piece of my education. Thanks again! -- Jocelyn Amy, OCAC Student

### Mochitsuki Festival

JAMS appeared at the Mochitsuki Festival on January 31. We had an opportunity to demonstrate Abacus and our students didn't fall short on impressing the crowd with their skills. Thanks to Leila, Sofia, Abe, Lydia and the parents who made sure we had a great turnout!



### Oregon Homeschool Education Network

On Saturday, March 20 from 9a.m.-4p.m. JAMS will be at the Oregon Homeschool Education Network conference at Tigard High School. Stop by if you are attending!

### Abacus Art

Abacus isn't just a practical tool, but it can be beautiful as well...



## A Student's Story...

### Clark's Got Abacus

*From the Jesuit Crusader*

January 2010

**Junior Clark Huey's unknown talent is grabbing the attention of many people.**

by Alyssa Hudson, '11

What's two plus two? Most people can answer that question pretty easily, but how about 32 plus 64 and 78 plus 25? For many, those questions take a little bit more time, but not for junior Clark Huey, who has a unique hobby – he participates in an after-school abacus class.

The abacus is a calculating tool that performs the arithmetic process that is used primarily in Asia. However, they have also been used a lot in Russia and by the blind.

Abacuses first appeared in China in the Second Century B.C. Because they are easy to make, they were used in schools until 1990 and are still taught in China.

They are usually made out of bamboo and sticks, with beads that are used for counting. The bamboo makes a frame and contains the sticks. Each stick has a certain number of beads on it, representing different values.

Huey has been participating in abacus for so long that he has reached the advanced level of "Dan." The Dan level is one of the last and most advanced levels of abacus.

He can even do abacus in his head and can almost instantly add, subtract, multiply, or find the square root of any one, two, or even three digit number. In addition, he helps teach abacus classes.

Despite his skill with the abacus, Huey uses a regular calculator while he is in school.

He said that, although he has tried bringing his abacus to school, it was too cumbersome and awkward to take out in math class each day. Also, Huey can do mental math so fast that he usually does not need a calculator.

"Using an abacus helps students to form a visual picture of the problem," said Principal Mrs. Sandy Satterberg, Huey's math teacher. "Learning to form visual pictures helps promote problem solving skills and aids students, like Clark, in solving very difficult mathematical problems." Huey said that the mental abacus helps him out a lot in school.

"I wish I could learn how to do abacus," said junior Tulsee Doshi, "It looks so cool when Clark does abacus. He goes so **fast.**"

But it also has its drawbacks, including aiding in his incredible cheapness.

"I'm obsessive about prices of stuff," said Huey.

In fact, the last thing that he bought was a \$3.00 antibacterial foaming hand soap from Bath and Body Works, and he admits that he only bought it because it was on sale.

Aside from doing abacus and attending Jesuit, Huey also plays flute and piano, goes to a Chinese school where he learns Mandarin, and is an accomplished member of a Chinese yo-yo team. Last year, he showed off his amazing yo-yoing ability in the Multicultural Assembly. All of his after-school activities mean a lot to him.

"If I did not do these things, I do not know what I would do," said Huey.

So the next time your math teacher tells you that you cannot use your calculator on an assignment, try pulling out an abacus instead. You may get some awkward looks, but with luck and a lot of practice, maybe you could compete with Huey.

## In the News

Check out this entertaining and informative video posted to the Daily Motion:

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5xli3\\_japanology-6th-sorobanabacus-1\\_lifestyle](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5xli3_japanology-6th-sorobanabacus-1_lifestyle)

## Perspective

### What Costs \$21.50?

Think about what \$21.50 will buy you these days and how quick we all are to spend that cash. That amount of money will buy, for instance:

- 2 movie tickets and maybe, if you're at a matinee, a candy bar.
- 3 or 4 large cups of Starbucks coffee.
- Two fast food lunches for one.
- 4 12-packs of soda.
- 1/2 a video game (or 10% of a video game console)

Hmmm... Now think about what lasting, positive effect any of these things will have on you or your children. Probably not much, if any at all. There is another thing, however, that also costs \$21.50 that is proven to have an enormous, positive impact on your child. A single class session of Abacus instruction at JAMS. In these tough economic times, this is really something to think about.

Children who experience Abacus and learn the skills involved in mental math are more successful, not just in math, but in most other areas of academics, not to mention an improved ability to focus and concentrate on any task. Have you been considering dropping JAMS classes because of the economic crunch? If so, think about the value Abacus instruction has for your child,

then think about the little things that you might cut from your spending that don't really offer any positive, long term benefit.

## New Teacher Assistant

### Meet Tomomi Ishiyama, Teacher Assistant

Miwako Sensei is pleased to introduce Ms. Tomomi Ishiyama as JAMS' new teaching assistant. Tomomi comes to JAMS with a high level of both Abacus (5 dan) and Anzan (4 dan) skill. Tomomi, who lives in the Tanasbourne area with her husband, learned Abacus and Anzan as a child, and it led to a love of numbers and problem solving. She holds degree in chemical material engineering and worked in the field of optical technology. She is passionate about sharing with and teaching children the power of abacus and Anzan and is looking forward to working with students at all levels. While not teaching Abacus and Anzan, Tomomi also teaches dance, plays piano and enjoys the great outdoors - surfing, golfing, tennis, basketball and snowboarding - as well as getting her hands into a good batch of dough (she loves to bake).



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