

**Dr. Hue, December 2011**

**Fulfillment of True Chadwick Education Here at Songdo, Incheon**

This is a place where children of different ethnicities play in the vast playground and a handful of “Little Einsteins” pull out their laptops and concentrate on their group project.

It’s hard to differentiate if we’re in Korea or in another country at this international school, Chadwick International.

Chadwick International, the second campus of Chadwick School in California, was established in Songdo in September 2010. A total of 480 students are enrolled in this school currently and it has the full curricula for students in all age groups: from pre-kindergarten to high school, the latter of which will be opened next year. International schools are being established in Korea one by one, but many say that Chadwick International is the number one international school in which parents from Gangnam want to send their children to.

On the morning of my visit to Chadwick International, the first person I met was Mr. Jeff Mercer, the headmaster of Chadwick International, who was greeting the students coming out from the school bus. I was impressed as I saw the students sharing jokes with the headmaster without reservation and headmaster Mercer smiling at the students as if they were his friends.

Headmaster Jeff Mercer is responsible for the overall academic programs as well as the operation of the school of Pre K-12. He is a person that has put a considerable amount of effort for both Chadwick campuses, Chadwick School in California and Chadwick International in Songdo, to be operated as a “One School, Two Campuses.” Headmaster Mercer spent 6 months in California and another 6 months in Songdo last year to help develop Chadwick International to what it is today.

“I believe it is most important to connect the two campuses and incorporate into one, sharing the same values and culture of Chadwick School as well as a similar curriculum and not just using the name of Chadwick.”

Chadwick’s idea of education today is based on a global view of education that was promoted by Margaret Lee Chadwick, the founder of Chadwick School, in 1935. Mrs. Chadwick stressed, “Once a child has grasped the concept of ‘we’ as meaning old and young, rich and poor, of every color and all nations, he or she would find himself or herself at home in the world.” One of the reasons that Chadwick decided to establish its second campus in Songdo is that Chadwick

School believed Songdo could be a great location to foster global leaders.

“We are very proud to put Mrs. Chadwick’s educational philosophy into practice in Songdo. A majority of faculty members at Chadwick International have a wealth of teaching experience at other international schools around the world. We have implemented curriculum and educational programs based in part on International Baccalaureate (IB), which is an internationally recognized curriculum. This enables us to provide very high standard education in comparison to not only with international schools in Korea and around the world.”

Although headmaster Mercer’s father was a doctor, members of his family including his mother, his uncles, and aunts all worked as teachers. After graduating from UC Berkeley, he received a master’s degree in teaching at Duke University and started his first teaching job at Chadwick School as a history teacher, which was 16 years ago.

While working as Chadwick Middle School Director, he played an integral role in the operation of the school and the development of educational programs. In other words, headmaster Mercer is a “Chadwickian” who has incorporated Chadwick’s ideal of education deep within himself.

He has many good memories of Chadwick during the past 16 years, which made it difficult for him to elaborate in just a few episodes. “I still think about when I helped to coach the girls’ basketball team and we made it to the state championship. The reason I am still touched by this is because we had pride as being members of Chadwick, a place where we could build long lasting friendships with our students.”

Headmaster Mercer has lived in California for a long time, but he decided to settle in Korea with his twin sons and wife. The reason for this decision is not simply because he became the headmaster of Chadwick International, but because he wanted to realize the school’s ideal of education even here at Songdo. How does he describe his ideal state of education? “It is to help children learn and develop through experiences.”

“Because I’ve been at Chadwick for 16 years, my educational philosophy was formed at Chadwick. I believe that we need to instill in them courage, creativity, passion, and integrity so that they can thrive in an increasingly complex world.”

After meeting CI students beaming with confidence, I was able to easily understand Chadwick’s true education, in which headmaster Mercer elaborated on and talked about. I was impressed with seeing the children fully concentrating on their studies in a class with a free atmosphere. I

was surprised when I was told that the students made boats last month with card board boxes during their science and math classes to study buoyancy, in which they actually rode these boats across the swimming pool and competed to see which boats would reach the other side first.

“We want to teach our students to have the uniqueness of Chadwick to a point that when people look at Chadwick International graduates, anyone would know that the students were educated at Chadwick. I hope that the students of Chadwick International will remain to have that curiosity as they go out into the society after graduation as ‘Life-long learners’ and live their life as leaders incorporating our five core values in every aspect of their own lives. This is the goal of Chadwick.”

From his words, I anticipate in the possibility that the best international school that will be recognized globally may just have been started in Korea. And, when looking at Chadwick’s five core values--honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion--which are written in various places around the school, I thought that we can’t ask for anything more than hoping that our children will keep these values in their mind and advance onto the world.