

Interview with Frederick T. “Ted” Hill, Head of School at Chadwick International

“The best education begins with experience; we emphasize the process of learning from mistakes.”

Interview by Senior Editor Seon-hwa Jang



Songdo International City of the Incheon Free Economic Zone was designed as a base city when the Incheon International Airport was established in 1986. Approximately 28 years since the first construction work began in 1994, Songdo has now transformed into a global city, 17 times the size of Yeouido in Seoul. Jointly developed by POSCO E&C and Gale International, a real estate developer based in New York City, Songdo is now in the process of becoming a global city and future city with around 200,000 local and foreign residents.

One of the key aspects of city development is culture and education. In Songdo International City, there is an international school that offers education for students from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12. It is also one of the few international schools

authorized by the Korean Ministry of Education. This school is Chadwick International.

Chadwick International is the very first overseas campus of Chadwick School, an independent school located in California, U.S. It was founded in 1935 by Mrs. Margaret Chadwick, a visionary educator who pursued well-rounded education. Since then, Chadwick School has aimed to positively influence education by realizing Margaret Chadwick's progressive educational philosophy. In 2023, Chadwick School's second overseas campus is scheduled to open in Ecopark, Vietnam.

In the early 2010s, the New Songdo International City Development LLC (NSIC) proposed opening an international school in Songdo. Frederick T. Hill, Head of Chadwick School in Palos Verdes, California at the time, recognized that this opportunity would enable Chadwick School's first overseas campus to be located in a new environmentally friendly town, with complete authority over school management and the potential to carry out the school's progressive education.

However, there were also concerns about opening Chadwick School's first overseas campus. "Rather than hesitating, we asked ourselves what Margaret Chadwick would do," said Mr. Hill. "As educators we believe in the possibility of positive impact through education and we reached the conclusion that Margaret Chadwick would have seized the opportunity to provide Chadwick School's education to students in Asia without hesitation," Mr. Hill added while reflecting on the decision.

Fortune Korea asked Mr. Hill about Chadwick School's ability to consistently fulfill the need for nurturing young talents even during the Great Depression in the 1930s and how he is currently overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Raising global citizens who solve social problems

"Margaret Chadwick, founder of Chadwick School, always taught that the ability to understand and solve the problems around us with courage and intelligence was more important than college admissions," stated Mr. Hill. He added, "The founder's spirit still exists today and remains the same at Chadwick International."

Mr. Hill, who has worked at Chadwick School for 24 years, explained there are five core values at Chadwick in line with the founder's spirit – Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Fairness and Compassion. “Our core values are applied to all activities and experiences on campus regardless of size and are upheld by all faculty members and students,” said Mr. Hill. He added, “Sharing our core values with our community members, which include students, faculty members and parents, is part of our efforts to become global citizens who can lead with ethical guidelines and learn through self-evaluation.”

As long as Chadwick International continues to share the core values, they will be at the foundation of how all Chadwick community members solve problems. This is the main reason why teachers from 20 different countries around the world and approximately 1,360 students and parents from 43 different countries can work together toward the same goals.

Every time Chadwick International greets a new student from a new country, it holds an event to display the student's national flag on campus. Not only the student, but also the student's parents and the country's Ambassador to Korea are also invited to the event. The country's national anthem is played at the event and attendees learn about the country. Such effort is made to show a welcoming heart and to avoid the new student and family members from feeling left out. “Everyone who is connected to Chadwick International must have a sense of belonging within the community, which acts as an opportunity for better understanding and emphasizing our value of solidarity,” said Mr. Hill.

Chadwick International's core values were also huge assets to overcoming the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. “At a school where teachers, students and parents are coming from many different cultural and social backgrounds, the core values are a management philosophy that enable us to respect the opinions of our members and clearly apply our values to our decision making,” explained Mr. Hill.

While parents with young children preferred offline classes, those with relatively older children were more accepting of online classes. Each individual's perception toward the pandemic and safety were different. As a result, Chadwick International made huge

efforts to collect various opinions of parents, different age groups of students and faculty members. “Although it may take time, we have to thoroughly hear their opinions because their trust toward Chadwick International may easily be lost if they are excluded from the process,” said Mr. Hill. Communication with parents is a crucial factor at Chadwick International. This is why the school makes efforts to maintain close relationships with the community. It collects opinions of parents with regular surveys and enables parents to directly communicate with Mr. Hill through suggestion boxes. Moreover, Chadwick International listens to advice for school management from the Head Advisory Committee composed of faculty members and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee. “Communication must be interactive, not one-sided message delivery,” said Mr. Hill. He added, “No matter how harsh the criticism, we must be open and ready to hear the opinions of community members that may further improve Chadwick International.”



Mr. Hill’s emphasis on “listening” is key to making students, parents and faculty members take action. “When a problem arises, all Chadwick community members speak up on how they can contribute to the situation and immediately take action,” said Mr. Hill. “I can be the captain, but the captain does not need to take action for all problems,” Mr. Hill said with a smile. His management philosophy for leading Chadwick International is based on teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Mr. Hill has taught students a wide variety of subjects from foreign languages such as French, English, Spanish and Latin to algebra, debate, philosophy, psychology, ethics and writing. Despite his busy schedule as the school's manager, he still continues to teach students. He is also coach of the school's lacrosse team. "Sports is not simply about moving our body. Our five core values, respect, responsibility, honesty, fairness and compassion, are reflected in sportsmanship," said Mr. Hill. "I always tell my students to think how they can apply what they learned through sports in our daily lives, such as at home, to our neighbors and even the local restaurant," Mr. Hill emphasized.

A college degree from a prestigious university is not one of the main requirements to teach at Chadwick International. Teachers must be able to carry out Chadwick International's core values. The same goes for the students.

"Our evaluation standards for our teachers include expertise in their field and the capability to share that expertise. However, what is more important is whether he/she can remain focused on the students, can collaborate with others in the school and has the mind of a creative global citizen," said Mr. Hill.

Learning by Doing, nurturing global citizens who can realize the five core values

One key aspect of Chadwick International's education philosophy is "Learning by Doing." Therefore, the school encourages and supports students so that they can learn from their mistakes. "Margaret Chadwick said the best learning comes from actual experience. She emphasized the need to create the school's curriculum with experiences and the same educational philosophy is applied at Chadwick International," said Mr. Hill. He added, "When we were in school, we used to be anxious over a math problem. Although one math problem is not a matter of life or death, it makes students nervous. Therefore, teachers must encourage students who fail and patiently support them until they can solve the problem on their own. We support students so that the process of failure and success becomes a natural habit." This is Chadwick International's basic standard for nurturing global citizens and the reason why students at Chadwick

International receive questions rather than answers, such as “What do you think?” and “How should we solve this problem?”



Mr. Hill’s leadership does not end at communication based on listening. He listens to the opinions of various groups and openly discloses the final decision. “Chadwick International seeks the truth and speaks the truth. The reason why we make efforts to communicate all opinions is because the truth is a complete defense,” Mr. Hill emphasized. He added, “If it is related to a student or the school, we always look back and seek measures for improvement and growth. Even the tiniest mistake or incident must be public, but we do not criticize those who make mistakes.”

I asked Mr. Hill whether he prefers the role as the school’s administrator or as a teacher. He replied without hesitation, “It will always be being a teacher.” He also stated, “Students at Chadwick International are all talented. Every time I am faced with a complex issue related to school management, I just take a walk and go see the students. They give me energy.”

Mr. Hill’s goal for 2022 is to figure out how to move the Chadwick community in a better direction based on the lessons learned from the pandemic throughout the past two years. He is seeking ways to provide the knowledge he has gained through

delivering online education during the pandemic to other students outside Chadwick International. Expectations are high for how Mr. Hill's propositions based on experience may have a positive impact on not only Songdo, but also Korea.

Mr. Hill stands by the entrance every morning to greet the students arriving at Chadwick International. He wishes to be an educator who carries out an educational philosophy in which students are always at the center in both learning and school management.

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