

Miguel de Jesús Montemayor R.

The Value of Long-Term Commitment

by Francisco Macias Santiesteban

When Miguel was 4 years old, his father had an idea that would change the young boy's life forever: he remembered the difficulties that he had had with mathematics in high school. From this simple act came a great number of transitions, the benefits of which have just begun to be realized. First, his family decided to find a program that would develop Miguel's skills in such a way that he would not have to undergo the same difficulties as his father—and that's when they discovered Kumon.

The curriculum, the focus on self-learning, and the simplicity of requirements for success: these were what ultimately caused the family to choose Kumon. At 4 ½ years of age, Miguel began to work with the program, starting with 7A. This long-term level of planning, which extends as far as high school for someone who hasn't reached kindergarten yet, is not easy to find; however, it is reflective of the level of commitment demonstrated by this exceptional family. Although they had not decided upon a specific future for Miguel, it was clear that mathematics was the key upon which he would build his future.

At first, they could not imagine what would come later. The whole family went through many of the same phases that other Kumon families experience. There were difficult stages during which Miguel wanted to quit (such as when he was on Level C and could



not memorize some multiplication tables), times when learning seemed to be slow, and finally, the moments of reward, such as Level H, which he enjoyed more than most. Throughout this process, the family's patience and dedication, together with Miguel's qualities, proved to be the formula for great success.

Since childhood, Miguel has shown a strong affinity for assembling things and connecting small plastic pieces. When he started junior high school, he participated in different courses, particularly "Desafío Tec," organized by the prestigious Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey. Here, students assembled a vehicle operated by using solar cells and other devices aimed to promote

sustainable development. Today, Miguel is not sure what he plans to study in the future. He is drawn to engineering. What he is certain of is a career with robots. This is his true vocation. In school today, his favorite subjects are physics, mathematics, and English. He enjoys it when classmates ask for his help. He gets the best grades in his class, and he likes to help classmates, not only those who are his friends, but others "who may soon become friends," as he tells us.

Don't think that life for Miguel is limited to pencils and screwdrivers. Over the last year, this exceptional young man has become committed to many extracurricular activities, including volleyball at his school and guitar

THOUGHTS BY TORU KUMON

Acquiring the ability to think does not mean being taught many times or how to solve problems, but rather acquiring the wisdom to tackle problems using the best of one's abilities.



Kumon Students

Welcome aboard the SS Kumon! Our cruise will take us to locations around North America where we will meet Kumon students who are succeeding in Kumon and in life.



We hope that you packed sunscreen because our first stop is Hawaii where we meet Kasie Apo Takoyama who attends Michael Ueki's Kumon Center of Kuhului.

Kasie Apo Takoyama, 12, recently attended the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. where she met with students from around the country to study leaders of the past, social advocacy and government policy. Less than one percent of Young Leaders between the sixth and seventh grades attend this prestigious event.

Ms. Kuba, a sixth grade math teacher at Kamehameha School, nominated Kasie because she recognized her strong academic and leadership abilities. At school, Kasie studies advanced math and has competed on her school's mathematics team for three years. She consistently places on the Headmaster's List and volunteers her time tutoring fifth grade students in math and science.

Kasie's father, Ken Takoyama, attributes much of Kasie's discipline and self-motivation to her early start in education. Before entering kindergarten, Kasie's parents enrolled her at Kumon of Kuhului. Through daily practice, Kasie built solid learning skills, excellent study habits and self-confidence.

Kasie loves studying robotics and aspires to work with technology. Her interests and achievements also extend to the arts. In her spare time, Kasie enjoys playing the piano, painting, dancing the Hula and the Japanese "Obon."

Kasie says, "Kumon helps me stay on track. During the summer, other kids hang out and forget everything they learned in school. Kumon makes learning easy and fun!"



Grab your sunscreen as we enter the warm, sunny state of Florida to visit 11-year-old Sheela Ranganathan and Instructor Shuko Saito at the Kumon Center of New Tampa.

Sheela will make history when she participates in a student panel at Kumon's "International Instructors' Conference" in Tokyo, Japan. The sixth grader is among a select group of students across the world invited to participate in the event, which also celebrates Kumon's 50th anniversary.

The **Value** of **Long-Term Commitment**...continued from front

lessons. Asked whether Kumon has played a role in these interests, he responds with a resounding "Yes."

"Kumon has shown me how to focus, which helps me to concentrate on class material, or on whatever activity I am doing. Kumon is part of my routine. This is one of the many benefits of this kind of discipline: the habit of daily study, which is reinforced by daily practice."

Miguel became the first Kumon student from Mexico to complete the curriculum, and he's the first to solve all the worksheets. Furthermore, his mother was careful enough to save all of them. We asked her what she

felt when seeing all the solved worksheets over the years, and she commented that "it's so much excitement, because it's so much hard work and not everyone does this. It is worth so much." His father added, "I am so proud because it is a day-to-day effort, to see a dream we had since he was in kindergarten crystallized. When [I] see it done, I think about all we had gone through. It's like the satisfaction of a marathon runner when he sees the kilometers he ran behind. Today, it is a reality that all I visualized—he, at 14, is doing."

At the end of the conversation, we asked the Montemayor family for some advice for the parents and students studying via the

Kumon Method. Miguel began, and said, "To the students, if they feel they are stuck, cheer up, and ask the Instructors. They are going to help them a lot." His parents added: "Kumon is going to make things easy for them at school so they can have extra time to do other productive things. Throughout their lives, what's most important is the discipline they are developing. That is what is going to help them go forward in life."

Of course, when we asked Miguel if he is going to send his kids to Kumon when the time comes, he laughs out loud and says, "Yes."



Sail to Success

Sheela began Kumon at five years old and completed the math and reading programs before entering middle school. She is the first student in North America to graduate both programs at such a young age.

“Sheela is one of a few students around the world to reach this incredible accomplishment while enrolled in elementary school,” said Kumon President Kazu Shibata. “It is quite rare for such a young student to have the skill, ability and commitment to achieve this goal. Because of this, she has been invited to participate in our global celebration and panel discussion.”

In addition to her academic interests, Sheela enjoys playing the piano and tennis, and studying Indian vocals and dance. She is also a fan of mystery books. Her life goal is to be a surgeon.



Our next destination is Maryland, home of blue crabs, Terrapins football and Donna Capuano's Kumon Center of White Plains/Waldorf where Rebecca Light shows us how summer dedication pays off.

Rebecca Light recently advanced to the enrichment reading class at Eva Turner Elementary School after participating in Charles County's prestigious gifted student education program, “Summer Enrichment Reading.”

“Rebecca has always had an enthusiasm and love of learning,” says Instructor, Donna Capuano. “I am so proud of her academic accomplishments.”

When she started Kumon in August 2006, Rebecca was below her grade level in both math and reading. Less than two years later, she is studying in her school's most advanced math and reading classes.

“Rebecca's attitude towards learning has completely changed since starting Kumon,” says her mother, Chung Light. “Rebecca has never missed an assignment; in fact, she even took over a month's worth of worksheets when she went out of the country on her vacation.”

“Math was always fun, but Kumon has given me a confidence in reading that I didn't have before,” says Rebecca.

Currently, Rebecca consistently places on Kumon's Advanced Student Honor Roll.



We hope you packed some mittens because our last stop is Orangeville, Ontario to meet Rose Marie Ferrao, a student at the Kumon Center of Orangeville, and her Instructor Carol Cozzolino.

Rose, a long-time Kumon student, recently received Kumon's “G by 5” award, honoring students who study Level G before the reaching the fifth grade.

“Rose is an excellent example of the Kumon program in action,” explains

Instructor Carol Cozzolino. “She embodies our philosophy of building better learners. She is currently studying above her grade level and is experiencing tremendous academic success. We are very proud of her and congratulate her on her achievement.”

“Kumon helped me become confident,” Rose says. “I know that I can reach whatever goals I set in life.”

Rose joined Kumon in 2005 and was motivated to study by her older sister's success. She is also a top student in her school's French program.

A recent study published by *Notices of the American Math Society* suggested that American students do not feel rewarded for their academic pursuits. Many students said they felt it was “cooler” to excel in sports than in math or science because athletic accomplishments were more commonly recognized. The study warned that these perceptions and attitudes could cause the number of excellent, advanced students in the United States to dwindle.

Kumon values all the accomplishments of our students whether it is participating in a special program, volunteering for an organization, joining a sports team or playing in an instrumental group. We know that your students do great things every day just by being involved in their school, church or the community and we want to know about their achievements. Parents and students can share their “truly amazing” stories by emailing us at betrulyamazing@kumon.com. Please note that all submissions are private and you will be contacted if further action is needed.



DOB: 04/28/2003
School Grade: K
Starting Level:
 4A Math
 Reading 5A
Present Level:
 Math 2A
 Reading BI
 (ASHR Math & Reading)

Deluksha



DOB: 04/10/2000
School Grade: 3rd
Starting Level:
 Math 6A
Present Level:
 Math F
 (ASHR Math)

Nicole



DOB: 10/27/2003
School Grade: K
Starting Level:
 Math 6A
 7A Reading
Present Level:
 Math 2A
 Reading 3A
 (ASHR Math)

Nash



DOB: 01/12/2003
School Grade: K
Starting Level:
 Math 6A
Present Level:
 Math B
 (ASHR Math)

Rhea

THE FACES OF KUMON



DOB: 05/29/2000
School Grade: 2nd
Starting Level:
 Math 4A
 Reading 7A
Present Level:
 Math F
 Reading EI
 (ASHR Math & Reading)

Christopher



DOB: 09/06/1998
School Grade: 4th
Starting Level:
 Math B
Present Level:
 Math H
 (ASHR Math)

Aneesh



DOB: 06/27/2004
School Grade: PK2
Starting Level:
 Math 7A
 Reading 7A
Present Level:
 Math 3A
 Reading 3A
 (ASHR Reading)

Mei



DOB: 03/21/2001
School Grade: 2nd
Starting Level:
 Math 4A
 Reading 4A
Present Level:
 Math D
 Reading FI
 (ASHR Math & Reading)

Evonne



DOB: 03/12/1998
School Grade: 6th
Starting Level:
 Math 2A
Present Level:
 Math I
 (ASHR Math)

Katharine



DOB: 08/12/2001
School Grade: 2nd
Starting Level:
 Math 4A
Present Level:
 Math C
 (ASHR Math)

Surbi



DOB: 10/13/1997
School Grade: 5th
Starting Level:
 Math 4A
Present Level:
 Math H
 (ASHR Math)

Sujay



DOB: 12/14/1999
School Grade: 3rd
Starting Level:
 Math 7A
 Reading 7A
Present Level:
 Math E
 Reading EI
 (ASHR Math & Reading)

Sajan



DOB: 03/03/1997
School Grade: 6th
Starting Level:
 Math 2A
Present Level:
 Math G
 (ASHR Math)

Vincent



DOB: 11/21/1998
School Grade: 5th
Starting Level:
 Math 7A
 Reading 7A
Present Level:
 Math G & Reading FI
 (ASHR Math & Reading,
 G BY 5)

Brian



DOB: 10/15/2000
School Grade: 3rd
Starting Level:
 Math 7A
 Reading 7A
Present Level:
 Math E
 Reading CII
 (ASHR Math & Reading)

Derek



DOB: 10/29/1994
School Grade: 8th
Starting Level:
 Math A
Present Level:
 Math J
 (ASHR Math)

Karan



DOB: 09/22/1996
School Grade: 7th
Starting Level:
 Math A
Present Level:
 Math J
 (ASHR Math)

Krunal



DOB: 05/03/2001
School Grade: 2nd
Starting Level:
 Math 7A
 Reading 5A
Present Level:
 Math G & Reading FI
 (ASHR Math & Reading,
 G BY 5)

Nathaniel

Interested
 in having your child featured?

Please talk to your Kumon Instructor.



submissions to The Faces of Kumon must include a completed Straighttalk Submission Form and a digital format image. **We will not accept photographs that are mailed in.** The photo should be emailed to Straighttalk@kumon.com. **Applications without a digital format image will not be considered.**

Request a form directly from your Instructor.

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