



## Writer's workshop

During March and April OMF has run an online workshop for non-fiction book writers, about 40 have participated. Wendy had the privilege of being asked to teach during one of the sessions.

She gave the writers insight into the world of editing and instruction on some of the most common errors that editors see, in the hopes that the writers could work on eliminating some of those errors themselves. With participants from around the world, it was impossible for the workshop to be held at a perfect time for all. It was late on a Friday evening, Japan-time, which was quite a challenge!

Wendy regularly writes a column for the *Japan Harvest* magazine about writing and she's taught about it at the

retreats and workshops she's organised over the last ten years. However this is the first time she's taught about writing and editing to OMF missionaries exclusively. We praise God for all that she's learnt since the first OMF writing workshop she attended in 2010.

## Trusting God

We've all found ourselves with a lot of uncertainty these last twelve months. The Marshalls have not been exempt from that. This pandemic has caught us in the midst of a life-change—from having all our boys under our roof, to having them all transitioned to an independent life away from us. That is not an easy transition for anyone, but for those of us who live outside of our passport country, it can be even trickier.

We would love to visit Callum in Australia this year, but we're unsure that will happen. Douglas will graduate from high school this June, and we had an idea of what the months after that might look like for him, but we aren't sure any more. We find ourselves unable to make many of those long-term plans that OMF missionaries are fond of. We find ourselves very much cast upon our heavenly Father, having to trust him that he's got the future secure, even though we can't see what that might be.

Please pray with us that we'll rest in God's arms and wait for his leading—trusting that God will provide all that we (and our boys) need.

## COVID-19 update

The state of emergency ended on March 21 and the next day school went back to the usual starting time (8.30). Other than that there has been little change in our daily lives. Our Japanese church is still holding online-only worship, though hopefully that will change later in April.

On April 1, the 7-day average of new cases in Japan—2,105.

Compared to:

- UK—5,518
- US—65,600
- Australia—13

It looks like a fourth wave of infections might be beginning, hot on the heels of the end of the third wave.

New visas are still not being processed, so this is holding up a number of short-term and new long-term workers from joining us here in Japan.

## Skiing keeps spirits up

Our grade 12 class has not been able to do its annual ministry trip to Thailand. This is appropriate in the current situation, but it has been a year of "things not going to plan" for our seniors. They were looking forward to milestones and rites of passage. Most have had to be cancelled.

On March 26, after a couple of frenzied weeks of organizing, we were able to send the seniors on a day trip of skiing. They travelled on two buses (to spread them out), and were not allowed to eat or talk loudly while on the road. Not sure how they managed, but Douglas reported a good day, with students skiing, snowboarding, sledding, and generally enjoying each other's company. It is not something we usually do, so it was a joy to be able to give them something unique in the midst of all the cancellations. It even snowed!

The parents of the seniors have organised a banquet for the week after graduation, and it is hopeful that graduation might be in-person, with parents allowed to attend! Please pray that might be possible, even though it is a small thing in the larger circumstances.

We have one more staff position to fill for next year, please pray for God's provision. We are also applying for visas for two other new staff coming from overseas. Please pray that borders will open sufficiently for embassies to process those visas, and for travel to be available to bring them. There is an instructor exemption potentially available.



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**Instagram:** [omf\\_japan](https://www.instagram.com/omf_japan)  
**OMF Australia:** [www.omf.org/australia](http://www.omf.org/australia)

## On the home front

Thank you for your prayers in March. We were thankful to finally get copies of *Beneath the Surface* prayer booklet shipped to Australia and sent out to all who have given financially in the last 12 months.

We're awaiting news of how others can order copies (it turns out to be much more complicated than we'd hoped).

March was as quiet as the previous two months, in terms of social opportunities. However, **Wendy** was able to participate in an online women's retreat (replacing the usual three-day retreat).

**David, Wendy, and Jamie** also enjoyed a very social time during our camping trip at the end of the month. Two of Jamie's close friends joined us and we camped with our usual camping buddies (marking five years of camping together!) **Douglas** enjoyed a quiet time at home without the rest of us, but he also enjoyed the Senior's ski trip the week before (as mentioned on page 1).

Online meetings at night seem to be creeping into our schedule, with both **David** and **Wendy** having meetings after 5pm (and one as late as 11pm) several times in March.

**Jamie and Doug** have been training for track and field events, and we've just heard that some meets will be held during April and early May, though parents will not be allowed to spectate.

We were pleased to hear that **Callum** was able to borrow a car to drive to Wendy's parent's house for Easter, his first long solo drive!

The cherry blossom season was early this year and has provided much pleasure over the last 10 days or so. Spring is always welcome here, and is in full-bloom now.

In Christ,  
David & Wendy



## Prayer points

- Continue to pray that God would provide us with all we need to continue to work in Japan.
- That we'll be able to trust God for all that's to come, especially in this time of transition from having boys at school to post-school life.
- For God's guidance for each of our boys for the future. And for motivation to do the best they can in their current studies.
- For wisdom to be the best parents we can be in this time.
- That Japan's COVID-19 situation would not develop into a fourth wave.
- That Japan's borders will open to people holding new visas.
- For new staff for CAJ's school year starting in August.
- For those struggling with mental health (and those who support them)—for the peace that only God can give.
- For *Beneath the Surface*, that we will be able to set up the processes so that it is available to be ordered outside of Japan (paper- and e-copies).
- For OMF missionaries who are writers: that God would guide them in the projects he's given them.

## Praise points

- That Wendy's been able to grow in writing and editing skills over these last 11 years.
- That the CAJ seniors could go on a ski trip.
- For our relaxing camping trip.
- That Jamie and Doug can compete in Track and Field this season (they weren't able to last year).
- For Callum who seems to be doing okay after losing a friend in February.

### Photos on this page:

Top—Grape Hyacinth in a neighbour's garden, Phlox along the roadside, camping next to Lake Hinuma. Right—two swans and our friend Mark in front of our campsite.



## Coming up...

### April

3 Wendy's birthday (BBQ with friends)

8, 15, 17, 23, 24 Track meets (both boys, but parents can't attend)

12 OMF prayer day and member's meeting

28 Jamie's 16th birthday

### Special request:

The school is encouraging family and friends to send a special note of congratulations to our year 12 graduates. We'd love it if you sent Douglas a note. You've prayed for him over many years, and he doesn't know many of your names, but this would be an encouragement. Send a letter/card no larger than B5 size. No packages, nothing of value (e.g. gift card).

Send letter/card to:

Douglas Marshall

Christian Academy in Japan—Graduate Letters

1-2-14 Shinkawacho Higashikurumeshi,

Tokyo, Japan, 203-0013

These need to arrive before May 22. Mail from Australia to Japan has been unreliable in the last 12 months, so please be sure to send it early!