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A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE



2016 J-LEAP REPORT BY ERI KANDA

*Glenbrook South High School
Glenview, IL*

Hello. My name is Eri Kanda. I have been working as an assistant Japanese teacher at Glenbrook South High School, which is located in Glenview, Illinois, 40 minutes away from Chicago.

Glenbrook South High School (GBS) is a public high school which serves approximately 3,000 students. I am a member of the world language office. The GBS World Language Department offers six different languages which are American Sign Language, French, German, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and Japanese. Teachers at this school are very

kind and friendly. We sometimes say Hello in our own language to each other like *Nihao*, *Bonjour* and *Konnichiwa*.

GBS has a lot of fun events throughout the year like field trips, home coming week, Glenbrook musical etc. I already attended a few fun events including lip dub and a football game. Lip dub is a video made to showcase the variety of clubs and activities available through GBS. For Lip dub, GBS partnered with Glenview Youth Services, a local organization that offers counseling and therapeutic support to students in the community. During the football game, students collected money to donate to Glenview Youth Services. The football game was played at Many people, including students, parents and community members, came to watch the g

and had BBQ making it very festive. Finally we watched the Lip dub movie that the students made. The video was premiered on a large screen set up on the track around the football field. All of the lights were turned off in the stadium as the video started. I was impressed by how much fun they were. I look forward to attending a lot of school events in the near future.

There are a little over 90 students learning Japanese language and culture dispersed from Level 1 to Advanced Placement. We have a Japanese exchange program with Ritsumeikan Moriyama High School in Shiga, Japan. GBS hosts Japanese students in March every year, while we visit Ritsumeikan Moriyama every other year. GBS Japanese learners have a good opportunity to speak Japanese in context; and it is one of the reasons they study Japanese.



The main goal of our Japanese classes is to function in an authentic context with language and culture skills. Students are expected to use their cultural knowledge to engage in conversation, increase reading and listening comprehension and make oral and written presentations. In order to achieve our goal, we speak Japanese as much as possible and my lead teacher Makita-sensei and I prepare various activities. In the beginning of class we always do warm-up activities such as singing songs, doing *Siritori (word game)*, and viewing online resources. After that students have conversations in pairs, work on online activities on the computer, provide listening exercises, and do some activities using textbooks.

My roles as an assistant teacher include walking around the classroom to support students, showing an example with the LT, grading class activities and homework. The lead teacher and I teach Japanese in small groups because it is easier for students to practice Japanese; they can have a lot of opportunities to speak Japanese. I definitely speak Japanese to the students in the class. Some students will be confused, especially level 1 students, but they are trying to speak Japanese to me. If we cannot understand each other the first time, we use gestures, pictures, and some easy words. Most of the AP students speak Japanese to me; even level 1 students try to speak in Japanese using the words that they already learned. One of the rules in our class is to always give a proper greeting so they say *Ohayougozaimasu (good morning)*, *Konnichiwa (hello)*, *sayounara (good by)* in the classroom. When I see my students in the hallways or at school events, they greet me in Japanese. This makes me very very happy.

GBS has over 80 clubs. The Japanese club activities include art work such as origami, cooking, fun games and community service by fundraising. We will participate in the homecoming banner painting and parade in Glenview. The club members made *onigiri* as one of the club activities. They made rice balls with various flavors; and enjoyed talking to each other. It was a good opportunity to learn different cultures and having a nice conversation. I hope that more students will come to Japanese club so they can enjoy Japanese culture.

One and half months have passed since I came here and I have enjoyed teaching our students and working with the teachers. I am very lucky to be able to work with Makita-sensei. I really appreciate Makita-sensei, Glenbrook South staff, and my lovely host family. I learn American culture and English through my host family and school work. I would like to obtain new knowledge through the teachers of the local Japanese teachers organizations and various workshops. I also want to learn how to teach Japanese from my lead teacher; and to become a teacher who can make my students smile.

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