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



2016 J-LEAP REPORT BY HINA OISHI

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Hello! My name is Hina Oishi, and I am working as a Japanese assistant teacher at two high schools here in Oregon - Lake Oswego and Lakeridge High School. My lead teacher is Stewart-sensei, and she is the BEST! We not

only teach together as best buddies, but also hang out together outside of school. (Because we just miss each other!) Here I'd like to introduce our fun class activities and my energetic students.

INTRODUCING FRESH CULTURE

As a Japanese teacher, my main role is to introduce first-hand Japanese culture to my students. I love the sparkles in their eyes when we learn about Japanese culture together. This year, we covered キャラ弁 (Kyara-ben), 歌舞伎 (Kabuki), お笑い (Owarai), 演歌 (Enka), カラオケ (Karaoke), and 宝塚 (Takarazuka). My favorite part of class is when we think and discuss about cultural difference in addition to improving our students' Japanese language skills. We talked about キャラ弁, the concept of 旬 (Syun) and all the students came up with such a beautiful Bento ideas and sketches, reflecting 旬 perfectly. When we covered 宝塚, we had an exciting discussion about whether it is okay or not to have a musical group that only unmarried women can join. Sharing opinions with other classmates and trying to understand each other's point of view is the critical skill to have in this society. Having open dialogue with high school students is a great part of teaching and I am so happy that I can contribute to developing their character through Japanese classes.

OSHOGATSU CLASS

Before and after winter break, we had お正月 (Oshogatsu) class and taught Japanese traditions related to the New Year's holiday like 紅白歌合戦 (Kohaku Utagassen), 初詣 (Hatsu moude) and おせち (Osechi). Students also made 年賀状 (Nenga jyo) and experienced 書き初め (Kakizome). For 書き初め, each student picked one Kanji letter which describes their New Year's resolution. Listening to the traditional Koto music in the background, students showed high concentration writing their Kanji, and presented it in front of the class afterwards. I was so impressed that every student came up with resolutions full of hope and positive energy. Let me introduce some students' words.

和—I want world peace. 希—I want to have hope. 献—I want to devote myself to study. 愛—I want love and be loved. 新—I want to be challenged. 富—I want to work hard and earn more money. 政—I want to pay attention to politics.



Their Kanji characters certainly showed the strength of our students, and they all seemed very happy and proud of themselves in describing their will and feelings through calligraphy. As for me, my one letter for this year is 肉, because I want to go to gym often and get a lot of 筋肉 muscle!

LET'S SING AND DANCE!

One of the most fun and effective ways of teaching Japanese is singing and dancing! Our level 1 students practiced “ぼくはくま Boku wa kuma” by Hikaru Utada, level 2 students practiced “上を向いて歩こう Ue wo muite arukou” by Kyu Sakamoto, and level 3 & 4 practiced “世界にひとつだけの花 Sekai ni hitotsu dakeno hana” by SMAP. Our students love singing, and they even request singing together out of the blue during class! A lot of students want to go to Japan, and it seems like being able to sing these songs at a Karaoke in Japan motivates them to practice even harder. From next month, we are planning to practice singing AND dancing “恋ダンス Koi Dance” from the very famous Japanese drama. I am so excited to dance with my students because I love dancing too! Also my lead teacher, Stewart-sensei, is the greatest composer, songwriter and singer. She has tons of songs and gestures that cover many genres – from children's songs to rap! Thanks to her songs, our students learned a lot of important

phrases and grammar points by heart and are able to use them. I think Stewart-sensei should release her music DVD and I will definitely be a backup dancer with our fun and talented students!

6 months have passed since I came here to teach in Oregon. I have had such a fulfilling life and teaching experiences every day. This program not only has let me contribute to developing mutual understandings between Japanese and American people, but it also has helped me to grow as a teacher and as a person learning different perspectives and having a wider point of view. I am so thankful for this great opportunity and I will keep growing together with my students!

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