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

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My name is Yui Ito. I am a teaching assistant at E.E. Waddell Language Academy in Charlotte, North Carolina. I think North Carolina is an unfamiliar destination for most Japanese people. Before I came here, my impression of North Carolina was a place with many hurricanes. But now my impression has changed, North Carolina has very beautiful nature and the people are charming. Charlotte is an important city for banking. Charlotte is called “The Bank of America City”, because Bank of America is headquartered here. There is even a Bank of America stadium!

Let me introduce my school.

Waddell Language Academy offers a unique educational experience. Have you ever heard of “language immersion”? I didn’t know much about it before I came.

The school is a public K-8 magnet school in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) District that offers students the unique opportunity to become fluent and literate in a second language. Waddell Language Academy offers second language immersion instruction in Chinese, German, French, and Japanese. From the first days in Kindergarten, students are immersed in a new language. This produces students who are proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a second language. Students are taught in the second language for all or part of the instructional day.

At the middle school level, students continue to study in their immersion language and can begin an accelerated course of study in a third language. There are also options for students so that they can choose from a wide range of traditional elective courses as well as those that emphasize different languages and cultures.

I have a very good opportunity to learn about immersion programs as well as gain valuable skills as Japanese language teacher. The classroom next to us is French immersion class and the one across is a German immersion class. The teachers are from other countries so it is also very nice to work with

them. I'm learning lots of things from the students and teachers every day.

I am a teaching assistant for 4th, 5th, and 8th graders. Earlier this semester, I surveyed the students to learn about their motivation and their interests in Japan and Japanese culture. The survey showed that my students want to know more about Tokyo so I chose Tokyo as a topic for this month. I hope I can motivate my students to learn Japanese and improve their Japanese language skills.

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