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



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The program in Japan was the best experience of my life. I learned so much from this trip and I believe that I have become a better person. For someone who has never been to Japan before, I had the chance to visit many cities and even two different regions of Japan. Not only did I have the chance to visit the cities as a tourist, but I was also given the chance of living with a Japanese family, which also was an amazing experience. Before this trip, I hadn't met many Japanese people so I really didn't know much of how they would react to foreigners. This trip gave me the opportunity to experience first hand, the kindness of the Japanese people. Another thing I admire about the Japanese is their willingness to pick themselves back up and move forward even after a disaster such as the tsunami. They've instilled me the importance of admiring the non-materialistic things in life because they themselves have the power to smile even with just rubble around them. Before I had been to Japan, I was already persistent on learning the Japanese language. But now I am fired up now more than ever to continue this path of becoming a translator that I have begun to walk on.

Two other things that I was also unsure about before this trip was participating in the JET Program and also whether or not I actually wanted to permanently live in Japan. As of now, I have no doubt in my mind that I want to try my best to become accepted into the JET program. I believe it will be another spectacular experience in my life and I want to be able to contribute to the country that I love. It would make me happy to know that I could make a difference in the lives of the youth of Japan. As for living in Japan, I think the JET Memorial Invitation Program has proved to me that I can survive in Japan on the Japanese I know now. However, I definitely plan to improve my Japanese before I return so that I may be able to create better relationships with the people around me. I plan to take classes in college and even search for a Japanese club. I also realize that I may be faced with more difficult situations like paying bills or in the workplace where I may encounter Keigo. This is all the more reason why I need to keep working

on my Japanese. Before the JET program though, I plan to study abroad as it is required of my major. My first choice of course, is Japan. And now I have an advantage since I have already visited the country and have gotten a feel for it.

As I was presenting my slide show to my study group, some of them had questions about the current tsunami situation. For example, one of the questions was about radiation. I was asked if within Rikuzentakata the radiation levels were safe to be around. I also remember before going to Japan, my government teacher asking me the same question, if it was safe to be going to those tsunami affected areas. I am assuming, most Americans do not know that the radiation levels are at a safe level. Americans are not being kept up to date of Japan's current situation and I believe this needs to change. The only coverage I have seen recently about the tsunami was only about how the remains of some boats from Japan were washed upon American shores. I will do my part to share the information that I have learned about Japan's current situation, but I also wish that there would be news coverage on it as well. If more coverage takes place, then more Americans would want to step in and lend a helping hand. Even if three other members beside myself have already been to Japan, I showed them stuff that tourists don't normally see everyday. As for the ones that haven't been to Japan yet, I am sure that my efforts have also sparked a fire within them and I know they will keep passionately studying the Japanese language as I have been doing.

As for the legacy of Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson, I feel proud to be carrying on and picking up where they left off. It is my goal in life, to become like those two American teachers, and truly offer up everything I have to the country that I love. They have inspired me to follow in their footsteps and keep their legacy alive. Even if I face hardship in my Japanese classes like Monty Dickson did, I will act as he did and I will not give up. If I am chosen to be apart of the JET program, I will imitate them and put my heart and soul into my teaching.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Japan Foundation for a trip that made me enough memories to last a lifetime. I will never forget this experience and I will use what I learned from this trip and apply it to everyday life. This trip was a great stepping stone in strengthening my relationship with Japan and I will continue to help this bond flourish.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"CAR! DANGER"

EVEN WARNING SIGNS IN JAPAN ARE CUTE!

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2012 Japanese American Leadership Delegation

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Andrew Juarez

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Andrew Kim

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Anna Lee

2012 JET-MIP Essay: Anna Mai

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