

## JANUARY, 2013: BREEZE ISSUE #63

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



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Throughout my time spent learning Japanese, Japan seemed to be an unreachable destination- something I heard about daily, but would never get to see in person. Up until the moment I stepped outside of the airport in Osaka, I did not accept the fact that I was actually in Japan. From that point on the trip was eye-opening, and I am very grateful for being one of the students chosen to experience this perspective changing trip.

Perhaps the most eye-opening element of our travels was the time spent in the Tohoku area. Seeing a disaster area, yet listening to the incredibly positive outlook of the survivors originally surprised me, but now provides inspiration. The strength, dedication, and overall character of the people living in the tsunami-affected areas truly amaze me. I was always surprised by the welcoming and inviting nature of everyone I met- I never felt as though I did not belong.

While in the Tohoku area we had the opportunity to participate in the High School Summit. We were challenged to discuss what we, as students, could do to aid tsunami recovery. Not only was the subject matter difficult, but we also spoken in Japanese, while the Japanese students spoke in English. Although it was an extremely challenging experience, I was amazed to see and hear the results. Within my group's discussion we realized that the media coverage of the recovery process has become very limited in America. It then became clear that person-to-person communication was an extremely effective way of building relationships, and at the same time, spreading the news of damage recovery. The High School Summit showed me that I can influence tsunami recovery simply by sharing my experience with my friends and family, and by maintaining the friendships and connections I made in Japan.

After completing study trip in Tohoku, we returned to the Institute. It felt as though I was returning to my home in Japan. I loved my room and now I often find myself missing the view from my window. The classes were both informative and engaging. Overall, I enjoyed the dorms, amazing cafeteria, and friendly s

believe that everyone in the Institute was genuinely interested in Japan- I enjoyed meeting so many people who share my interests. I am very grateful that I had the opportunity to stay at the Institute.

One of my favorite aspects of life at the Institute was the freedom to explore on my own. I found myself looking forward to the afternoon so I could check out a bike and go exploring. From riding my bike down small residential streets, to interacting with store-clerks, I felt like I was experiencing true Japan. Challenging myself to engage in my surroundings gave me the opportunity to improve my language skills, and build my courage. I truly believe that I will be a more outgoing person in the future because of my interactions with the people in Japan.

Returning to Osaka also exposed me to other aspects of Japan; I received the opportunity of experiencing Japanese culture first-hand through home-stays, discussions with students, and free time to explore. Overall, the trip challenged me to speak Japanese, interact with my surroundings, and immerse myself in Japanese culture. The more I experienced Japan, the more I grew to love and appreciate what I was seeing.

Throughout my time in Japan, I loved having the opportunity to speak Japanese. I was frequently challenged to express myself, a fact which will definitely encourage me to continue in my Japanese studies. Someday I hope to return to Japan, and I want to be able to further communicate and interact with people. Not only do I hope to continue learning, but I also hope to encourage others to study Japanese. This trip helped me to engage in another culture- an experience which will influence me for the rest of my life. I want to help others have the same opportunity. In the future I hope to keep sharing my experience in Japan in order to encourage others to think about global exchange.

The theme of bridge-building was continuously present in our travels. Throughout the trip we often reflected on the legacy of Taylor Anderson and Montgomery Dickson. To me, the stories of these two teachers seem to be the ultimate example of bridge building. Their devotion to their students, Japan, and forming connections encouraged me to think about what I can do to build a bridge between Japan and America. After speaking with people who knew Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson, it is clear that their connection with Japan impacted many lives. I hope that their connections with Japan can be preserved in the future through continued exchange between Japan and America.

I am very grateful to the Japan Foundation and everyone who sponsored my trip to Japan. I made many wonderful memories, met new friends, and grew as an individual. I know this trip will create a long-lasting impression on my life.

## **NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION**



### **"JAPAN THROUGH MY WINDOW"**

Physically traveling through Japan seemed to make the theme of bridge-building all the more literal.

Breeze #74



Breeze #73



Breeze #72



Breeze #71



Breeze #70

Breeze #69



Breeze #68



Breeze #67



Breeze #66



Breeze #65



Breeze #64



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