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



SARAH WADE

*Calloway County High School
Murray, Kentucky*

JAPAN IS AWESOME

I have studied Japanese for four years and going to Japan has been a dream of mine for quite some time. My Japanese teacher introduced me to the JET Memorial Invitation Program, which a former classmate was selected to the year before me. She urged me to apply and I willingly accepted. Before I knew it, my teacher received an email stating that I would be a participant in this year's JET-MIP.

This program began on July 8 and ended on July 26. There were a few goals to be attained on this trip; however, the most important was to figure out how we could build a symbolic bridge, or kakehashi, between the United States and Japan. Before I embarked on this journey, the answer to that question wasn't an easy one. Then we toured the disaster area, talked to high school students like ourselves, and learned the answers

naturally. It is as simple as staying in contact with one another. Additionally, the students from the United States should donate to Japan to build a good relationship. These actions will show Japan just how much we care.

Japan's impact on me will remain with me for life. Having the amazing chance to see Japan and experience it's amazing culture was life-changing. Seeing the disaster area makes me want to be a better person by donating to Japan and helping those people to have a new life.

This program has further motivated me to continue my studies in the Japanese language and culture. I plan to major in Japanese at Murray State University and become fluent. I would like to return to Japan sometime after I graduate, hopefully through the JET program as an ALT. It would be interesting to revisit the devastated areas and see the difference between now and then.

The members of this program were asked to make a PowerPoint presentation to present to our classmates in our own hometowns. At first, I was nervous to present because I was afraid there was no way I could possibly convey the way I felt about the disaster areas and Japan. But, once I began, it became very easy. Every class I presented to was interested in what I had to say and had many questions to ask me.

After each time I presented, I asked the class to write down their feelings about the disaster areas and Japan as a whole. Many of the students simply wrote that they were sad for Japan. They wanted to go to Japan and help in any way they could. Also mentioned was that they were glad to know that Japan still has high spirits and has the will to go on.

However, others felt a little more impacted. For example, one student wrote, "Only now do I understand how badly devastated Japan is from the tsunami." And another commented, "It makes me want to donate and help. Japan could use a lot of help from America." Finally, a student explained, "The presentation was not only informative but also insightful. Hearing about the country and its current situation from someone who witnessed it first hand was an enlightening experience that demonstrated the dire-straits that eastern Japan is experiencing."

I feel that I conveyed my feelings very clearly with this presentation. I have high hopes that the students I shared this with will tell their friends and family about the devastation in Japan. I also have the strong belief that a great majority of America will know about Japan's current situation because there were so many students from around the United States that were accepted to this program. If not for our strong interest in Japanese, we also would have not known the state of Japan.

I would like to thank Miss Taylor Anderson and Mr. Monty Dickson for their complete passion for Japan. I'm honored to have the same interest as such amazing people. I am glad to know that other people have felt the way I do about Japanese. I feel like I have met both of them through this program. Their spirits still live on in Japan, and in my heart.

This trip was a trip of a lifetime. I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to travel to Japan. I made a new family of 31 people that lives all across the United States. I also made many friends in Japan that I have kept in contact with thus far. I hope that this will help to build the bridge between Japan and the United States. In short, many things happened in Japan, from devastated areas, to riding bikes through Rinku Town, to riding 8 different airplanes and making many inside jokes with the others on the trip. It is hard to sum up everything that happened in Japan and just how I feel about it. The best way I can put it is simply this: Japan is awesome.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"BRIDGE"

This was the view from my window at the Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai.

Breeze #74



Breeze #73



Breeze #72



Breeze #71



Breeze #70

Breeze #69



Breeze #68



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5700 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 100

Los Angeles, CA 90036

P. 323.761.7510

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