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



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In Washington State, also known as “The Evergreen State,” I always seem to be surrounded by green scenery, which helps me stay calm everyday. Washington is also known for its rain, which runs from autumn to spring. When you think about rain in Japan, you think about the rainy season in June; however, the rain here is much lighter like a shower, so most people don't use umbrellas or raincoats to stay dry like people in Japan. One time, I asked a local person, “Don't you get tired of this rainy season?” They answered, “Yes, we do. However, we have the best summer season, so we can be patient.” They accept this weather and live with this weather. Since I started my new adventure in the State of Washington seven months ago, I too have slowly accepted this weather, and now I am thankful for every sunny day we receive. I am also thankful for all the little things, which I used to take for granted.

Hello, my name is Wakana Hirata and I am currently working as a teaching assistant at Kamiak High School in Mukilteo, WA, under the supervision of Inoue-sensei. At Kamiak High School, we have over 2000 students, and 10% of those students are Korean. Students who are enrolled in the Japanese class are mostly Koreans as well. I believe that my most important job here is to achieve human development through Japanese classes to make our students global citizens in the future. I hope our students will be in a field where they can act a bridge between Japan and their country in the future.

As an assistant, I believe my mission is to add more value to the classes. Students today have many more opportunities to connect with Japan, and it has become much easier to access any information through the Internet. They can easily experience Japanese culture without an instructor, so that is why I need to be able to add value to my classes and try to share my experiences in Japan, which they cannot find online. A couple of weeks ago in class, we made Okonomiyaki, which is my hometown's comfort food. Not only did we make it, eat it and enjoy it, but we also learned about “Perspective.” Why do we have it? I made rubrics, and one of the items on the rubrics was to have the students explain to other teachers about Okonomiyaki, based on what I taught them. A few days later, some students came to me and said th

made the dish at home to share with their family to show what they learned in Japanese class. Also, some teachers talked to me about it. I believe these kinds of activities make understanding Japanese classes better, and that is my mission here.

Everyday, I keep reminding myself why I came here, what I want to do and how I plan to do it. "Like a human radio wave tower, I will transmit information regarding my country." And, "I will move student's emotions." These are my main goals that I plan to achieve over the next 16 months.



Finally, I would like to say thank you to all of the people who are involved with the J-LEAP program for giving me this wonderful opportunity, and I really appreciate it.

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