

SEPTEMBER, 2013: BREEZE ISSUE #71

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



ALLYZA MAY CONCEPCION

*Valley Catholic High School
Beaverton, OR*

When I first found out I made it into this program, I was so surprised I felt my heart had stopped. It finally hit me a week later that I was going to Japan, which had been my dream since I was in sixth grade. The first few weeks after I had received the acceptance email were exciting, but as the days got closer to the trip, I started to become a little nervous. I wondered if I would get along with anyone and if I would be able to meet the program's expectations. The moment I stepped off the plane along with a couple friends I made at the orientation in LA, I had already forgotten my worries, in fact if anything, I felt like I was refreshed by the Japanese air.

On the first day we arrived at the institute in Kansai, although I was a bit tired from the long hours we spent on the plane, with the addition of the Osaka heat, the hospitality everyone at the institute gave me and the excitement my friends and I had from all our plans made me forget about my exhaustion. The longer I stayed in Japan, the more I felt welcomed. Before arriving in Tohoku, I thought that the region would be quiet after all that happened in regards to 3.11. Instead, I arrived in Tohoku with some of the most hospitable people I had ever met. Their kindness towards us and their enduring genuine care for each other touched my heart and I will never forget the bonds and friendships I had made.

I truly believe that being a part of this program is one of the best ways to experience Japan firsthand. What makes this program special is that the participants not only get to visit different regions of Japan, but they also get enriched with the study aspects of the trip while being immersed in the country's culture through school visits and home stays. Another reason why this program is special is because it is proof of how Ms. Anderson's and Mr. Dickson's dreams and legacy can be brought out to reality.

The new knowledge and new experiences I attained on this trip not only increased my motivation for learning even more Japanese, but it also increased my motivation in going beyond that by helping stabilize the Japanese programs in my area. In Japan, we learned that one of the best ways to keep a good relationship between countries—in this case, America and Japan—is to teach each other's languages in each other's countries. That way we can build stronger bridges and bonds with each other. With that being said, during my two weeks in Japan, after listening to some of the stories and experiences that former and current JETs presented, I have also become interested in becoming a JET.

When I shared my stories of Tohoku with my family and friends, they were surprised. Some of my friends even stopped me partway through my story and asked twice for confirmation of facts. Two other Oregonian representatives and I have also shared our stories and adventures with the Consulate General of Japan in Oregon over lunch; we also got some of the same reactions from the other guests who attended. My teacher and I have also become more motivated in attempting to keep our Japanese program while advertising Japanese so we can keep the Japanese programs in other schools.

From bonding and brainstorming with Japanese high school students over lunch, enjoying quality time with my two wonderful host families in Sendai and Osaka, and riding my bike towards Osaka's sunset painted Rinku Town with a couple of two other JET-MIP participants I am thankful I was able to become great friends with, I will never forget my amazing experience in Japan and I will continue trying to live out Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson's inspirational dreams and legacies.

To Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson, I would like to say that I am proud of your dedication and I am so honored to be part of your legacy. I hope that I can fulfill both of your dreams with my utmost effort and I cannot thank both of you enough for this opportunity to experience Japan in person. I feel so blessed that I was able to meet the kind people that you worked with; the inspiration that they have gotten from the both of you inspires me to work harder and become a better Japanese language student. Although I did not get to know the two of you personally, I feel like our passion for creating a stronger international bond can connect us. We will never forget what you have done for everyone you impacted and for Japan. Thank you so much, Rest in Peace.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"MEMORY"

Foundations from houses that were washed away by the tsunami surrounds this large fishing ship that washed up in Rikuzentakata on 3.11..

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2013 JET-MIP Essay: Ida Caproon

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Jing-Ting Chen

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Juliana Choup

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Allyza May Concepcion

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