

SEPTEMBER, 2013: BREEZE ISSUE #71

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



JULIANA CHOUP

*Long Beach Polytechnic High School
Long Beach, CA*

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

After a long and difficult process, I was chosen to participate in the JET Memorial Invitation Program to go to Japan from July 8 to July 23 of 2013. As expected, this trip was a life changing and inspirational experience, as well as to my friends, whom I have told my stories. In addition to the many emotions this journey has impacted on me, it had also influenced the path I want to take in terms of the Japanese language.

As many of the participants of the JET-MIP would say, this experience was astoundingly amazing or amazingly astounding. In the beginning, I was nervous that I would have to be with thirty-one other students who I do not know very well. However in the end, I met two girls who can now be considered my close friends as well as the other students being well known classmates. This trip had given me about every kind of emotion possible, such as excitement, happiness, sadness, and embarrassment. Each and every day, everyone in this program was ecstatic and filled with excitement for what was to come. During the activities with the Japanese students, our individual home stay families, and within us, everyone had a great, fun, cheerful time. Even though there were some embarrassing misunderstandings, everyone just laughed it off and worked around it. It was truly inspiring to witness and experience that. After the exciting activities and creating the deeper bonds, it was disappointing and heartbreaking to separate from the new friends and our home stay families, who we spent a few hours to a day or two with. To put it simply, even though this program had created some sort of sadness, it had also established new and deeper bonds between individuals as well as producing a new viewpoint within people, such that what they have seen have inspired them to do something. For example, what we have seen would be what used to be houses, as well as various amounts of temporary homes, and damaged buildings. The sight of this was depressing and heartrending. However, the people of the community continue to smile and work hard into rebuilding and moving forward, rather than to grieve onto the past. We were lucky to perceive and consider their actions to heart, inspiring us in a different way.

Though this experience has affected me, it has also inspired many of my friends to whom I have told my story. In response to the description of the Tohoku region, such that many homes and buildings are demolished, yet people are still continuing to do their best, my friends have said they have found the people of Tohoku highly inspirational and that even if a challenging event comes in their way, they will

either overlook or analyze it to move forward into the future. In addition, it has inspired my friends to want to visit Japan, especially the Tohoku region, and learn more of their stories, whether it is related to March 11 or not. Other than the stories about the Tohoku region, my friends were inspired by how clean the air and environment was in Japan and how everyone, foreigners included, did a part to keep Japan clean by separating trash and recyclables.

Due to the many fun, yet sad events during my experience in Japan, it had allowed me to widen my options for my future involving the Japanese language. For example, after hearing many stories from other JET members, I am considering participating in the JET program by being an assistant language teacher (ALT). I have been inspired by the JET members, their stories, as well as the encounters during my Japan trip. Furthermore, I have not changed my desire to continue learning the Japanese language and culture in college. Also, I plan to find any sort of way to assist any Japanese related programs or events that will occur in the future. It is understandable now that after going to Japan, one would want to pursue a passion to get them closer in engaging in the Japanese culture.

To end my reflections about the Japan trip, I would like to say a few words to Mr. Monty Dickson and Ms. Taylor Anderson, the two JETs who have lost their lives during the earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011. I would like to say that you "senseis" are two of the most amazing people I have heard about in my life. I have heard the stories about you two, and may I say that you inspire me. In those stories, you two were really "genki," purposeful, hardworking, and fun to be around. Even if a challenging event comes your way, you do not let it bother you, and you continue to move forward, and I admire that. In addition, to Taylor, I love how you push people to go out and have fun, not wasting one second of a day. And to Monty, I really admire how silly your pictures and videos are; you really seem like an interesting person. So, to end this, Mr. Dickson and Ms. Anderson, I would like to say thank you, for being a part of and making a difference for some Japanese people's lives, engraving your feelings for Japan in the hearts of the JET-MIP 2013 members, and leaving a beautiful legacy for the JET program.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"LIVING WITH NO REGRETS"

Though a disaster has happened, little children continue to keep their chins up. At the old Watanoha elementary school, the students there have painted inspirational messages and drawings after the tsunami and earthquake.

Breeze #74



Breeze #73



Breeze #72

Breeze #71



Japanese Language Program Report: Whitney Nakayama

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

Breeze #70

Breeze #69



Breeze #68



Breeze #67



Breeze #66



Breeze #65



Breeze #64



Breeze #63



[Headquarters](#)

[New York Office](#)

[Center for Global Partnership](#)

[Volunteer](#)

[ボランティア募集](#)

[Japan Related Links](#)

[Job Openings \(Updated\)](#)

5700 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 100

Los Angeles, CA 90036

P. 323.761.7510

Annual Report

© 2019 The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

Web Design.