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



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The JET Memorial Invitation Program was more than what I had hoped. The trip and the experience is something that I will never forget and will always hold in my heart. To study and learn about the Japanese culture, language, and to physically see various sights (the Tohoku region and various monuments). Hearing many of the peoples' stories not only opened my mind, but it allowed me to create bonds and meet many individuals. It allowed me to create ties with the people, and the country.

I will say, when we arrived, I was so nervous and scared. Why; I always doubted myself when it came to speaking Japanese, and since school had ended, I did not have much practice with speaking. Then I became overwhelmed when everything was spoken entirely in Japanese. I was always hesitant when it came to talking and heading outside the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute, Kansai, but that slowly changed. The teachers were excellent, and gradually I was able to grasp further understanding of the language. The setting is not the same as your typical Japanese classroom. The groups are of course smaller so that the teacher can focus on each individual and help them if necessary. Very little English is spoken and I enjoyed that. At times I felt discouraged. It is a little frustrating when your vocabulary is not extensive, but the teachers help guide you along through the learning process.

The institute provides a friendly environment for learning and interaction with others. There are other various groups that come to the institute and many that come for studying. Since a lot of people came from different countries, we got to learn about each other's backgrounds. Along with that, the faculty provided great assistance and put forth a lot of effort to ensure everyone enjoyed their stay. When you have trouble or have questions, they were happy to assist in any way they could. When I had forgotten my key card to my dorm, I panicked a little because I wouldn't be able to access my dorm, or for that fact, even enter the cafeteria and elevators. The front desk was able to provide a spare card for me which saved me from my worries. Even though the stay at the dorm was short, returning after our travels made it seem more like home; being in Japan felt like I was at home.

I believe that this whole trip has helped me decide on what I want to do in my near future. I was very indecisive and it was frustrating. Hearing a lot of stories and seeing pictures from a lot of past JETs re-opened my eyes and allowed me to see various possibilities of what I can do to and to further my

education in Japanese language, as well as culture. I eventually want to pursue a career in Japan and live there.

When I returned home, adjusting to everything was a little difficult. It seemed like the whole trip was surreal. Before we traveled to the Touhoku region I had imagined that there would have been a lot more construction and for there to be more housing and buildings. Unfortunately, things did not seem that way. I took a lot of pictures and have told many of my friends about what I had seen and my interactions with the students. They were all amazed by how happy everyone looked in the pictures and how lively the atmosphere seemed. I told them that even though the tsunami caused a lot of destruction and many of the towns are still in the process of recovery, the people there are still in high spirits. They remain strong and hopeful, but one of the things that they worry about is that due to damage, wreckage, and reconstruction of the landscape, they will not have many tourists as they used to and people will continue to move in search for opportunities. I found myself in tears seeing the landscape, hearing the stories, and visiting where Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson had lived and taught.

Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson, Thank you for everything and for allowing us to have the opportunity see where you both had taught, lived, and influenced the lives of many. During our visits we were able to meet so many great people and create friendships that it almost seems unreal. We were also able to see different sides of Japan that people would not have imagined it to be. Thanks to you two, not only has my dream come true, it has encouraged me to possibly pursue being a JET ALT. This experience has also taught me that anything is possible as long as you put forth your best and never give up. You two will never be forgotten and will continue to live on in the hearts of many.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



“Our Return”

The sun shined a brightly as if it were welcoming us all back from our Tohoku travels. Even though the sun is setting, Japan is truly the land of the rising sun.

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Breeze #73



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2013 Group Tour Report: Steven Johnson

2013 J-LEAP Report: Amiko Nishijima

2013 J-LEAP Report: Hiroko Maekawa

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Ariana Foster

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Lian Eytinge

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Rebecca Cook

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