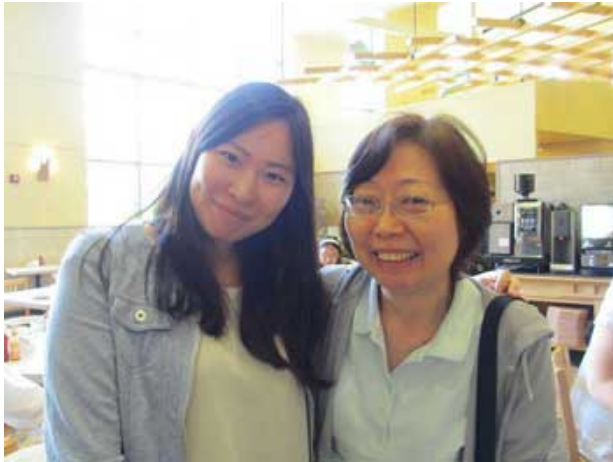


DECEMBER, 2013: BREEZE ISSUE #74

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



2013 J-LEAP REPORT BY HITOMI KOMEDA

*Tigard High School
Tigard, OR*

Hello. My name is Hitomi Komeda and I'm currently working as a Japanese language assistant teacher at Tigard High School in suburbs of southwest Portland in the state of Oregon. Tigard is very beautiful and has many parks as well as trees and forests that are iconic to the Pacific Northwest.

Tigard High School (THS) is a public high school that has approximately 2100 students, and 170 of them are taking Japanese this year. There are three foreign languages offered (Japanese, Spanish and French) which is not common in Japanese public high schools. THS operates on an alternating day schedule with four 90-minute classes daily. The schedule for students taking foreign language classes is unique in that class is held every day, rather than every other day. This gives students the advantage of concentrated learning and finishing one level in a single semester. We offer Japanese levels 1 to 5, Independent Study and IB (International Baccalaureate). Our school is an authorized IB school and is one of the first schools to offer IB in Oregon State. Students have a choice to take an IB exam which provides an internationally accepted qualification. Earning an IB certificate in Japanese is exceptionally challenging but worth the effort to those who plan to go to college.

This semester, we have 3 Japanese classes including two level 2 classes, and a combined class for levels 4 and 5. I participate in all classes and assist my lead teacher Roberts Noriko sensei. This is her 24th year teaching at THS. I am so grateful to be working with a very experienced and professional teacher. Noriko sensei is very powerful and passionate about teaching Japanese. She has a very interesting teaching method and I am learning from her every day. Each class is extremely well organized and involves lots of physical movement to reinforce the lessons. This keeps students focused and attentive.

THS offers Japanese National Honors Society (JNHS) and an Anime club. Both of them are lead by students who have a great interest in Japanese. Through JNHS, I have experienced the annual Homecoming Parade and a Halloween event. Those events give me a chance to share Japanese culture with other students who are not taking Japanese and also to people in the community. We also receive students from Japan every year; they come to America as a school excursion to participate in a week-long program.

home stay. JNHS welcomed them during a school assembly that included students from all of the foreign language classes. It provides them cultural exchange opportunities by seeing よさこい踊り (Yosakoi dance), American high school cheerleaders, dance team, brass band and so on. An upcoming big event is Japan Night. This annual event is organized by JNHS students, and it is open to the community. Many demonstrations such as tea ceremony, kendo, Japanese food, artifacts, and calligraphy will be offered. I am looking forward to participating and helping out at such a big event.

In only three months, I've had many chances to talk about Japan such as helping out at an Origami workshop in the local library with students, as well as teaching Japanese culture in a local church with my host family. Unexpectedly, adults seemed more interested than the kids. This made me realize that I am very far from Japan, but I have had many enjoyable and precious opportunities here to share my knowledge about Japan. All of these experiences reinforce the value of my time here. I'm so thankful for those of you who provided me with this opportunity here in the United States. I believe my experiences of sharing Japanese culture with people from the United States sow seeds of interest and cross cultural understanding that further strengthens the exchange between Japan and the U.S.

One of the most interesting parts of teaching Japanese is the mutual benefit to both teacher and student. Teaching Japanese is not just about teaching the language or culture. I think teaching is always related to learning. When I teach students something, I always learn something from them in return. Learning is always interesting. Instead of building a stereotype, I would rather learn and gain new knowledge about the things I don't know such as American culture, the way of thinking, as well as improving my teaching method and unaccustomed style. For this point I'm in a great environment and gain new knowledge every single time I interact with people around me.

The potential of all our students is truly enormous and by opening their minds to a foreign language, I hope to be able to expand their worldviews and perspectives. Students with this type of skill and mindset will definitely have an advantage in their future academia and career. Therefore, I will do my best to support those who are willing to learn and provide them with any resources that I have about Japan.

Breeze #74



Japanese Language Education Update 1

2013 J-LEAP Report: Kanae Higuchi

2013 J-LEAP Report: Hitomi Komeda

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Nanette Jackson

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Kapil Kanhai

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Sean Kim

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Kelly Kratz

Breeze #73



Breeze #72



Breeze #71



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.