

DECEMBER, 2013: BREEZE ISSUE #74

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



NANETTE JACKSON

*AJ Dimond High School
Anchorage, AK*

THE JET MEMORIAL PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

The only problem with everyone knowing you're going away on a trip is that all those people ask you how it was when you get back. You'd think that that'd be flattering but it gets tiring after a while. Even though it gets exhausting answering one person after another, every

single answer starts off with the same reply: "it was amazing". And with every answer I give, the more genuine it becomes. When I come upon people who I find are genuinely interested, I spill my heart out into telling them all about my experience. Telling them about all the places I'd been, all the people I'd met, and all the things I'd seen.

Of all the years I've studied Japanese, I'd never in my wildest dreams imagined I'd be able to actually go to Japan. One day I intended to go there but never did I imagine it'd be now.

I don't know what I was anticipating when I was getting ready to go. I don't know that I was even anticipating anything because it felt so surreal. Even though I'd already read the congratulatory email, talked to my teacher, and jumped around letting out muffled screams, I still couldn't believe it!

But then there was getting there. If you don't already know, I missed my flight in Seattle. That being said, I had a lot of first-time experiences on this trip. Unfortunately, I missed the first day of orientation but when I got up for breakfast the next day, everyone welcomed me with open arms. After orientation and several flights, we finally made it to Japan.

As exhausted as we all were, you couldn't tell. Anyone could tell that we were tourists by all the cameras that were pressed against the glass of the bus windows. Instead of joining everyone else in capturing our first ride through Japan, I just sat there and soaked it in. I remember thinking, "Am I really here?" I still couldn't believe it. Once we all got settled, we were welcomed by staff from the Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai, where we were staying in Osaka. I don't know if everyone was just tuckered out from a long few days but I felt bad for some of our teachers because only a few of us were laughing at their jokes. But that was only the first day.

Every day following the first was an adventure; I learned a myriad of new things. I learned that Japanese hospitals have closing times. I learned that I could successfully talk to a native Japanese person on my own. I learned that every single person in a shop would greet you when you enter. I learned that since I'm very tall, it is to be expected that people will stare and Japanese boys will try to talk to you, in English.

Some of the experiences I grew the most from would have to have been from the homestays, the school visits, and our trip to the Tohoku region. Looking back now, I feel childish about being so nervous for my homestays because I had such great experiences. Both of my families really made me feel a part of the family. I got to participate in activities such as making homemade takoyaki and creating bracelets at a castle! We laughed, joked, told stories, and watched TV together. Just as any regular family would. And as any family would, I plan to stay in contact with them for the rest of my life.

The school visits were a blast! Each school, grade, and class was different. Some schools would be filled with kids who were shy at first and then there would be schools that had kids who were super outgoing from the get-go. But all the kids who we met wanted to get to know you and stay in touch. Currently, I've been keeping in touch with about 6 kids on a daily basis. But overall, I've made around 40 new friends on Facebook.

Last but not least, there's the Tohoku region. I would have to say this was the most rewarding part of the trip. Actually going to the places where the 3.11 earthquake hit and hearing people's stories was unbelievable. I took so much from the people and their stories while we were there. Not to mention the scenery! I was looking forward to seeing the tree of hope and I was grateful that we actually got to see it up close. The people that I met here have definitely left the biggest foot print. Because even though they'd been through so much, you'd never guess it if you saw them on the street.

When I returned home from the trip, I shared my experiences with many people. One person in particular is Dennis Fenerty. He's a regular member at the club that I work at. He came up to me and told me he was so shocked when I had told him that 90,000 people had passed away in 3.11 earthquake that he went home and researched the number himself. Just to find that the number I'd given was correct; that 90,000 people passed away. He went on to talk about what a shame he thought it was and that more people should be educated on these numbers! Of course, I hadn't given everyone this fact but I was surprised that he'd actually looked into it after I told him about it.

Overall, I'd say that this has opened my eyes that were once closed to all the possibilities I have in front of me. I never really knew how much I truly loved the Japanese culture and its people until I went there. After this trip, I have concretely decided that I will become a JET when I graduate college. I've always wanted to teach English somewhere, what better place than Japan? This was the best experience of my life and I am so happy now that my parents put me in the Japanese Immersion Program as a kindergartener. I will never get enough of learning this language and sharing its beauty.

TO TAYLOR AND MONTY,

To be honest, I hadn't known much about either of you before this trip. But now that I do know about you, it makes me sad to think we will never meet. The things you have done for others will forever be remembered and I was touched to hear from all the people you've affected with your friendships. I hope to carry on the legacy the two of you created and I hope to do a good of a job as you did.

Monty, I was happy to have spoken on your behalf since we're both from Alaska. Since we grew up same place, your story affected me differently. I don't know about any other state but in Alaska, even in my family. I have friends that go to and have graduated from the same high school you did. And I went to

Sand Lake Elementary school so it kind of hit close to home when I saw you in all these pictures wearing a shirt, repping my elementary school. I had the pleasure of speaking with your sister and from her stories; I wish we could've met

You are both dearly missed and I hope you know that your legacy will forever live on in the United States, and in Japan. You are our role models for how to be a bridge between our two countries. Thank you so much for all you've done and giving me this opportunity to get a chance to continue what you've done.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



“East Sendai High School Visit”

I chose a picture from our visit to the East Sendai High School because this was one of the most friendly school that we visited. Here, we were all at lunch in this huge circle just talking about anything. And more and more kids would join us as time went by. I wish I could submit a

collage of all the pictures that I took with all the kids here because I felt like a celebrity .

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.