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



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JET-MIP 2013

This program has taught me so much. It validated who I want to be, what I want to do, and helped me find a part of myself. Japan definitely felt like home and it was hard to leave it behind, but I know that I will carry the great lessons I learned there forever. The program in Japan

allowed me to experience life as a literal Japanese student. I was put into situations where I had to communicate with students, live the life of a Japanese kid for a day, explore the culture, and learn the language. Japan has left such a big impression on my heart and it will never go away. Seeing the kids' faces light up when we walked into rooms was surreal and it brings tears to my eyes thinking about it. There's nothing else I'd rather do than go back as a JET and pay them back for everything they taught me while I was there. Seeing the people gave me strength and hope that I will carry with me the rest of my days. The survivors and victims gave me a glimpse at what a true struggle is and that image will stick with me forever.

Living in Japan for two and half weeks definitely strengthened my understanding of the language. Although my knowledge of kanji is still rough, I learned many things from the Japanese people I met as well as my fellow JET-MIP friends. There is no doubt in my mind that Japanese is what I want to pursue. This school year I had no idea what I wanted to be, but now I know that Japan is my passion and the people there are an even bigger passion for me. To teach there and live there would be an absolute dream and the college I go to depends on its Japanese program in order for this dream to come true. I know that I have barely scraped the surface of the Japanese language now and I want to delve into more situations that allow me to struggle just the right amount because that's the only way you can truly learn. Of course Japanese class has taught me things, but it is nothing in comparison to actually going to Japan and experiencing the real deal. This program allowed me to learn and I think it pushed me to want to learn more and in this case it succeeded for me.

When I arrived back in America and saw my family again I started crying. It sounds selfish to say that it wasn't because I missed them, but it was because I knew what I was leaving behind. I now realize it was not left behind at all, but it lives on in my heart. All the people I saw, all the memories I made, a the experiences I share are stained in my mind. I told my family the news of how I wanted to become

JET and they said they figured I would before I even told them. I know that they will be with me all the way on this and they encouraged me to go for it. I feel as if the friends I made on this trip are closer to me than my friends back home because we all have one huge bond and that is Japan. It tied us together and over the course of two and a half weeks I met some of the most amazing people in my entire life. They have left the best impression on me and I can't wait to see them again. I have stayed in frequent contact with a few and Andrew has even met some of my friends back home. When I told my friends about my experience they were amazed, but not in ways I would expect. It seems like they don't know the true things I appreciated. It wasn't all the gifts or the fact that I got to travel abroad, but what I cherished was the people, the places, and the memories (as well as the pastries).

I would like to thank Taylor and Monty not only for this opportunity that they gave me, but for their dedication to their students and the love they shared for the same cause. I know that their life had a reason and I believe I have that same reason. Even though I did not know them, I share a tie with them and that is Japan. They have left, but they left footsteps behind that all of us JET-MIP kids could follow. When we were shown the movie about Monty and Taylor it was the defining moment for me and I remember whispering to myself, "This is what I want to do." They are pillars of what this program is about and that is to learn about the regions they taught in and create everlasting bonds.

As a closing statement I would like to thank all of the staff at the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles, the Japan Foundation Japanese Language Institute Kansai, Hotel Boyo, the schools, as well as my host families and Taylor and Monty. This has been the best experience of my entire life and it comes from the bottom of my heart, thank you all.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"Remembrance"

This picture shows a shrine that was set right in front of the boat in Kesenuma. It was the first real disaster sight the JET-MIP students got to see. It shows that the Japanese know people were lost, but they will never be forgotten and live on in memories.

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