

## MARCH, 2014: BREEZE ISSUE #77

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



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JET-MIP honors Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson, who were caught in the disastrous earthquake on March 11, 2011. This program gave thirty-two participants the honor of visiting Japan in order to learn how Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson viewed and loved Japan. I was selected as one of the participants, and the program lasted from July 6th to July 24th.

During the two weeks that I spent in Japan, the thought that went through my mind as we landed in Tokyo was: "this is amazing." I finally had the opportunity to apply everything that I had learned in the past four years of studying Japanese. Walking through the airport with the group and seeing Japan with my own eyes made me think that there was so much to do, but it seemed that the two weeks we were given were too short. Every day, we would have an activity to do such as an exchange with Japanese high school students, or having class so that we would be better prepared for the upcoming events. The program provided us with many different experiences, and I thought that we were only able to experience them because we were part of the JET Memorial Invitation Program. The chaperones never let us go hungry, and we were sent us off to our host families and gave us a firsthand experience of Japan. I learned something new every day during the program, such as thinking of ways to help the people of Tohoku, realizing what we have in common with people in Japan, and basically the everyday life of Japanese people. The program as a whole set us up to have a once in a lifetime experience. Everything that we did during the trip was enjoyable, and I only regretted not having more time to learn more and experience more.

After experiencing Japan, I learned that my level of Japanese was still not good enough. I could understand most of what people were saying, but I wanted to understand more. I wanted to avoid the awkward situations where I did not know how to express myself correctly in Japanese, and the people I talked to did not know how to express themselves in English. The experience really inspired me to continue my learning of Japanese. I also realized that there was more to learn than just knowing how to speak and write in Japanese; Japan has a completely different culture than America, and their history...

its own story for people to understand. As I look to my future, I know that I want to continue studying Japanese, and hopefully be more involved with Japan. By becoming more involved with Japan in the future, I know that I can become a bridge between America and Japan.

When I arrived at my house after coming back from Japan, I immediately went to sleep. After I had somewhat recovered from the sleepless nights, I shared my experience with my friends and family. Most of my friends had already seen pictures that I had uploaded while I was in Japan, but I told them the stories that went with the pictures because I thought that the pictures only told part of the story. I told my friends the adventures I had with the other JET-MIP participants such as biking across a bridge to find a mall, or just walking around in humidity and finding vending machines to use. I was happy telling them about the people in Japan and what they do on a daily basis because my friends wanted to know if Japan was like how they pictured it: anime. I would tell them how part of the culture in Japan was reflected in anime, such as the summer cicadas in Japan, the hordes of vending machines, and even how the schools were set up. I found it funny that the more I told my friends about Japan, the more I missed it. I had told them that Japanese workers wore uniforms so that it would be easy to identify them, Japanese people were probably the kindest people in the world, the air in Japan smells and feels different, the people openly greeted foreigners, and they wanted to do more than acceptable; they wanted to excel. After hearing about my experience, my friends became more interested in Japan. Some of the students that were taking Japanese became inspired to study more and they decided to apply for JET-MIP next year.

I would like to thank Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson for everything that they have done. Before leaving for Japan, we had a two day orientation in Los Angeles. We learned about what Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dickson loved, and we learned how they became a bridge between the United States and Japan. Their love of Japanese language and culture has affected more people than they can imagine. They influenced students, parents, teachers, and the communities that they taught in. Now, after the March 11 earthquake, they influence a foundation, and students all over the United States. By becoming a bridge for the two nations, they have given us, and more people in the future, the opportunity to also become bridges.

## **NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION**



“On Top of the Mountain”

I chose this picture because it is the view that people in Ishinomaki had when they were looking for shelter. As I looked down, I wondered what the people thought of as they looked down and saw the disaster.

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Breeze #85

Breeze #84



Breeze #83



Breeze #82



Breeze #81



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Japanese Language Education Update 4

2013 J-LEAP Report: Taku Okamoto

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Sarah Xie

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Jacob Wolter

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Alix Tuel

2013 JET-MIP Essay: Sean Truong

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