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

JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION UPDATE #12: LANSING'S EXPANDING JAPANESE PROGRAMS

by Amanda Rollins, Japanese Language Program Coordinator

Michigan has a rich connection with Japan thanks in part to its sister-state relationship with Shiga Prefecture. The respective capitals Lansing and Otsu have been sister-cities since 1968, and though they once had a handful of Japanese programs in their school district, the number was significantly reduced when a Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant from the federal government was cut.



In 2013, the superintendent of Lansing School District Dr. Yvonne Caamal Canul was invited to join the Japan Foundation Invitational Group Tour Program. She was among a group of American educators who enjoyed a ten-day trip to Japan to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture. Upon returning to Lansing, Dr. Caamal Canul pushed to revitalize the Japanese language programs in her district. She and her colleagues applied for and were awarded a Japan Foundation Salary Assistance Grant, which supports the salary of Ms. Chris Kelly, a Japanese teacher at three elementary schools and one combined elementary/middle school. The grant has been extended into its second year, helping the new

classes expand into the middle schools which had previously lost their budding programs.

To the Lansing Japanese teachers, we would like to say, "Keep up the good work!"

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