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



RYAN MCCORMICK

*Clarkstown High School South
West Nyack, NY*

The JET Memorial Invitational Program was one of the best and most culturally educational experiences of my life. The program in Japan was well orchestrated by everyone at the Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai, and aside from the "super typhoon" cancelling our trip to Rikuzentakata, the trip itinerary always kept me well informed on what we were doing each day. The free time given to us on most days was one

of the best parts of the trip where we got to explore parts of Japan to our hearts extent, in the surrounding area of the institute at least, and get to know the other program participants better. This experience was the opportunity of a lifetime and I will never forget it.

To start off, the program in Japan consisted of visits to various schools associated with the late teachers, Montgomery Dickson and Taylor Anderson. These two were teachers from America who taught English in Japan through the JET Program. Every single person I met whether a teacher or a student, was extremely kind and caring, but most importantly they were strong. For example, we met children at Watanoha Elementary School who experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake at a young age and they are now working hard for a better future. On days where we weren't visiting schools, we had rigorous Japanese lessons in the Kansai Institute to prepare us for the school visits and our homestay. My teacher specifically was very knowledgeable and could translate from English to Japanese in a way that wasn't too complicated and we could understand. She even friended us on Facebook during the trip! Japan was one of the most beautiful places that I have ever visited in my life both the people and the scenery. The Japanese population consists of such nice people that are so kind and caring and wholeheartedly happy to help you at any time. It was a huge culture shock to return to America and return to my job at a pizza restaurant having people yelling and being obnoxious whereas in Japan everyone is courteous and nice. Americans do not bow and say welcome to my store and thank you very much repeatedly when you enter their stores. I will always miss the hospitality and kindness that was given to me by every single person I met in Japan.

This experience has impacted my future Japanese Language education by inspiring me to go further with it and not give up on it after I graduate high school. The bonds I have made with the people I met both American and Japanese while in Japan will last forever and us JET-MIP participants will be the bridge between our two countries. I believe that this trip will set me apart from others and even provide potential opportunities for careers in the future. Opportunities such as the JET Program will be available to me when I graduate college as well. I believe that having JET-MIP on a resume when applying for the JET program will significantly help my chances of getting accepted.

Throughout the trip, I was always busy doing something. When we weren't visiting schools in Japan or taking part in the daily Japanese lessons, we had free time usually after 5pm. This time allowed for some of my favorite experiences of the trip. Spending time with my fellow MIPpers by visiting local stores, shopping at the AEON mall, going to the nearby ramen restaurant to eat, playing late night games in the lobby, and having group sleepovers in the lounge were some of the most fun things I've done in a while. Each one of my fellow MIPpers have a special place in my heart and I'll always keep in touch with them through Facebook or other means. It's not an everyday that you have an opportunity to be able to live with 31 other people your age and travel with them for almost 3 weeks straight. Always having your meals together and working together on songs and games to be shown to an audience. Although I can't say singing 'Happy' by Pharell Williams repeatedly was a blast, playing Split Splat with the other MIPpers and Watanoha elementary school students was tons of fun.

To Taylor Anderson and Montgomery Dickson, although I didn't personally get the honor of meeting you, I feel like I got a great understanding of your personalities and who you were through the stories told by your families, friends, and students. It is very sad that you didn't get to live longer and touch more hearts than you already did through your actions and teaching, but I know that you're still living today through everyone that you touched. Without you two, I would not have had the opportunity to visit Japan and take part in one of the best experiences of my life, so I'd like to thank you very much.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"Vending Machines"

This is a picture taken inside the Aeon mall arcade of several vending machines. I chose this because it is one of the coolest things about Japan. No matter where you were, there was always a vending machine within walking distance where you could get thing you would normally never find in a vending machine in America.

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5700 Wilshire blvd, Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90036
P. 323.761.7510

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