

NOVEMBER, 2015: BREEZE ISSUE #97

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



CLAIRE ENDL

North High School

Eau Claire, WI

I could tell from the moment I left my parents at the security gates that I was going to return to America as a different person. I had never flown alone before, and the experience of waiting alone in the slow moving lines at the airport gave me the first feelings of confidence and independence that I feared I wouldn't possess while in Japan. From that realization, I knew I was going to embrace Japan in the best way possible - by gladly accepting the challenges I knew were inevitable while visiting a different country, and by making the best out of every experience.

I remember arriving on the 13th floor of the Kansai institute and immediately running towards the window at the end of the hallway with the other girls on my floor. The view was unlike anything I had ever seen before - coming from Wisconsin, I had never really experienced such a condensed city like Kansai, let alone even being on the 13th floor of anything. It was simply breathtaking, and that sight was what helped shape my first impressions of Japan. Everyone at the institute was kind and genuinely interested in making sure our stay was a comfortable one. Not only was the staff friendly, but so were the people in town. Everyone would be happy to help us if we were confused about something, and we had no issues with asking a police officer for directions to the nearest konbini (convenience store) on one of our many bike excursions. And watching the other people at the institute who were from different countries get together for lunch and speak in Japanese really moved me in a way. They all spoke different first

languages, but Japanese is what they all had in common and that is what tied them together. It really made me see the beauty and power of language and travelling, and I hope that someday I can return to the institute and have experiences similar to theirs.

I am so thankful to have had the privilege to spend two and a half weeks in Japan through JET-MIP. I would have never thought that it would be possible to experience so much of Japan in just a short amount of time, but this program definitely showed me it was. We went everywhere, from Osaka to Rikuzentakata, and we were able to experience many things that an average tourist would not otherwise have been able to. Upon visiting the Tohoku region and meeting with the many students, it was so hard for me to think that these same students were affected by the same earthquake and tsunami we have all heard about. The students were just like us - they loved music and sports, they wished to travel in the future, and they were all happy and excited to speak with us. Their happiness despite having gone through so much reassures me that good can sometimes be a result of an otherwise bad occurrence.

When talking to my family members about my time in Japan, I expected to hear many more jokes about the culture than I did. Coming from Wisconsin where the Japanese culture is basically nonexistent, people have always been confused to as why I was interested in the culture and have sometimes made comments based on the stigmas that are associated with the country. But after my trip, the people I talked with were open to my point of view, and I feel like I had made an impression on them by sharing my experiences with them, and struck down some stigmas along the way. But the person I feel like I had affected the most was my sister. She had lived in Japan in 2007, before the earthquake and tsunami had happened. While telling her what I had learned about it, I could tell she had an interest in it as well. She now has a sudden enthusiasm to return to Japan, and she wishes to travel to the same areas that we visited in the Tohoku region and learn for herself. I am glad to have had such an impact on her in that way.

Not only have I learned so much about Japan, but I have also learned many things about myself while travelling there. I have always had a feeling that the Japanese language and culture would be a part of my life in the future, but this trip has made me so much more sure of myself when thinking of my future career. Although speaking in Japanese was a challenge for me, it only fueled my ambition to keep learning more. I never want to stop learning, and the many unexpected things I learned while in Japan make me want to return and learn even more. I am not completely sure of what my future holds, but this trip has made me certain that I will find a career where I can continue my passion of learning Japanese, no matter how difficult it may be.

To Tayler Anderson and Montgomery Dickson: I feel like nothing I have to say will do justice to you. You both were wonderful people who really have made an impact on every person you had interactions with, and you continue to affect lives of people today, in both Japan and America. In such a short time you reached your goals of becoming a bridge between the two countries. And although I wish things were different, you have made so many things possible for every single one of the JET-MIP participants. I promise to uphold the legacy you have

created and hopefully possess the same amount of enthusiasm for connecting Japan and America that you had. This experience will be one that I will always remember, and because of you, I promise to return to Japan in the future.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



“Traditional Housing”

When busing through the rural towns, I saw so many traditional houses and it was cool to experience a part of the rural life instead of big cities.

Breeze #98



Breeze #97



Japanese Language Education Update 24

ACTFL 2015

2015 Teacher Training Program: Sueyon Seo

2015 J-LEAP Report: Ami Kaneko

2015 J-LEAP Report: Seiji Arai

2015 JET-MIP Essay: Claire Endl

2015 JET-MIP Essay: Dillon Evans

2015 JET-MIP Essay: Nicholas Gallitano

2015 JET-MIP Essay: Isabelle Joyce

Breeze #96



Breeze #95



Breeze #94



Breeze #93



Breeze #92



Breeze #91



Breeze #90



Breeze #89



Breeze #88



Breeze #87



[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

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

Annual Report

© 2019 The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

Web Design.