



## KAKEHASHI Project (United States of America) Inbound program for Japanese Americans/Asian Americans the 2nd Slot Program Report

### 1. Program Overview

Under the “KAKEHASHI Project” of Japan’s Friendship Ties Program, 100 Japanese Americans and Asian Americans from the U.S. visited Japan from February 12 to February 19, 2019 to participate in the program aimed at promoting their understanding of Japan with regard to Japanese politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy. Through the lectures, observations and interactions with Japanese people etc., the participants enjoyed a wide range of opportunities to improve their understanding of Japan and shared their individual interests and experiences on social media. Based on their findings and learning in Japan, each group of participants made a presentation in the final session and reported on the action plans to be taken after returning to the U.S.

### [Participating Countries and Numbers of Participants]

United States of America: 100 participants

### [Prefectures Visited]

Tokyo (All), Gunma (Group A, 42 Participants), Akita (Group B, 20 Participants),  
Fukushima (Group C/D, 38 Participants)

### 2. Program Schedule

	Group A	Group B	Group C/D
Feb. 12 (Tue)	【Arrival】		
Feb. 13 (Wed)	【Orientation】		
	【School Exchange】 Meiji Gakuin University	【Observation】 Japanese Overseas Migration Museum 【Lecture】 Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad	【Observation】 Asakusa 【Observation】 The Edo-Tokyo Museum
Feb. 14 (Thu)	【Observation】 Japanese Overseas Migration Museum 【Lecture】 Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad Move to Gunma from Tokyo	Move to Akita from Tokyo 【Observation】 Akita City Folk Traditions Hall 【Courtesy Call】 Akita Prefecture	Move to Fukushima from Tokyo 【Courtesy Call】 Minami-Aizu Town

Feb. 15 (Fri)	<b>【Observation】</b> Kiryu City Historical Buildings Preservation District <b>【Culture Experience】</b> Natural Indigo Dyeing Move to Minakami Town from Gunma <b>【Meeting with Host Family】</b>	<b>【Observation】</b> Akita Transport Branch Office, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism <b>【Interaction】</b> Akita University "Yosakoi Dance" <b>【Meeting with Host Family】</b>	<b>【Culture Experience】</b> Aizu Railway "Pisces Toro Outlook Train" <b>【Observation】</b> Aizu Tsurugajo Castle <b>【Meeting with Host Family】</b>
Feb. 16 (Sat)	<b>【Homestay】</b> Minakami Town	<b>【Homestay】</b> Akita City	<b>【Homestay】</b> Minami Aizu Town
Feb. 17 (Sun)	<b>【Farewell Party with Host Family】</b> Move to Tokyo from Gunma <b>【Workshop】</b>	<b>【Farewell Party with Host Family】</b> <b>【Workshop】</b>	<b>【Farewell Party with Host Family】</b> <b>【Workshop】</b>
Feb. 18 (Mon)	<b>【Observation】</b> Asakusa <b>【Reporting Session】</b> <b>【Lecture】</b> Mr. Glen Fukushima	Move to Tokyo from Akita	Move to Tokyo from Fukushima
Feb. 19 (Tue)	<b>【Courtesy Call】</b> Mr. Kentaro Sonoura, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister <b>【Departure】</b>	<b>【Courtesy Call】</b> Mr. Kiyoto Tsuji Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs	

### 3. Program Photos

#### All groups (Tokyo)

	
2/13 <b>【Orientation】</b>	2/18 <b>【Reporting Session】</b>

### Group A (Gunma)



2/13 【School Exchange】  
Meiji Gakuin University



2/15 【Culture Experience】  
Natural Indigo Dyeing

### Group B (Akita)



2/14 【Observation】  
Akita City Folk Traditions Hall



2/15 【interaction】  
Akita University "Yosakoi Dance"

### Group C/D (Fukushima)



2/14 【Courtesy Call on】 Minami-Aizu Town



2/15 【Culture Experience】  
Aizu Railway "Pisces Toro Outlook Train"



	
2/16 【Homestay】 Minami-Aizu Town	2/17 【Farewell Party with Host Family】

#### 4. Voice from Participants (abstract)

##### Group A (Gunma)

###### ◆ U.S.A. Student

I appreciated the lecture from the professor at the migration museum very much. It made me feel more connected to what it means to be Nikkei, which I view as a very important part of my identity. I might not look the most Japanese, but I feel it is a community I belong in and want to embrace more. For the homestay program, my host family welcomed us with such warmth and kindness. I am so grateful for the time, effort and love they put into our visit. I just really enjoyed being in Kiryu and Minakami to be in a different part of what we view Japan as. There is not this huge dichotomy between urban and rural like we think there is. It is all connected and I am very grateful for the time we spent away from the city.

###### ◆ U.S.A. Adult

The most memorable experience I had on the exchange program was the homestay in Minakami. One of my goals on this trip was to immerse myself in the culture of Japan, and the homestay allowed me to do that. I enjoyed seeing what a typical day in the life of a Japanese citizen is like. From the food to the onsens, it was interesting getting to have those experiences firsthand. I liked being in the smaller groups and getting the chance to connect personally with each participant. Even though our homestay family didn't speak English, we found a way through expressions, gestures, and technology to bridge the cultural gap. The homestay experience was a once in a lifetime opportunity that I feel grateful to have been a part of.

##### Group B (Akita)

###### ◆ U.S.A. Student

The lectures were very interesting: we learned about immigration to the Americas, transportation car policies, every day Japanese culture, Akita and its people/ economy/ industry, and Akita traditional lantern festival. I enjoyed the culture and history-based lectures the most. The school exchange was so fun and we also learned a lot... It was nerve-wracking

at first to talk to people my age but we became friends very quickly. The homestay was so impressive because we were staying in a traditional Japanese house and had an amazing experience. The food was so different but was so delicious. We got to experience Japan during a snowy season and wear traditional kimonos. We learned to make Kiritampo and Damako mochi and eat it. The women I stayed with were so giving, kind, and friendly. I will remember and cherish the memories I made with them forever. I also liked the free time we had to explore the city, try food, and walk around. Being immersed in the Japanese community was truly a unique and amazing experience.

◆ U.S.A. Student

I enjoyed learning about Japan's move for automotive vehicles, particularly the reasons why: it was interesting to learn about its purpose related to aging population and use for elderly folk. It was extremely fun to watch the yosakoi dance although I wish we could have visited the school itself. Akita was extremely welcoming. I hope the culture and people are supported to maintain their individuality/uniqueness in regards to the local population. My favorite visit was the homestay that I enjoyed. My family are amazingly workers. And they prepared many dishes specific to Akita (kiriboshidaikon etc.,) which were all absolutely delicious. Their young son was amazingly to play with. I built a kamakura with them as well and, having never seen so much snow before, it was a unique and wonderful experience.

**Group C (Fukushima)**

◆ U.S.A. Adult

I really loved how much pride everyone had in their city, from being super excited to tell us about all the things in the town hall made of timber from their land and talking to us about their mascots. Also being super open to answering our questions, especially the ones about more complicated issues that local government faced.

◆ U.S.A. Student

My home stay experience was unforgettable. My host parents gave me so much love, despite the huge language barrier, and I'm eternally grateful for their kindness. They showed me the simple beauty of Minami-Aizu and the traditional Japanese life. It was such a monumental reminder about embracing the simple things in life that many Americans can learn from and I know I'll take with me everywhere. Overall, I've learned so much and I am excited to see how this experience will positively impact me in the future.

## **Group D (Fukushima)**

### **◆ U.S.A. Student**

The offices are very open-air, big-windowed within the building. It felt like everyone, such as the education or engineering offices, were working together for the whole town. The internet Wi-Fi was surprisingly strong for a rural area. Our Wi-Fi-less neighbors were borrowing it from across the street. Our host parent was also very open and liberal, knew everyone in the town, and had very strong opinions about her neighbors. Despite things looking rusty in some places, they felt very welcoming and like home. The Japanese people work very hard with everything they have, and it really shows. Everything is also efficient and seems amazingly planned.

### **◆ U.S.A. Adult**

It was interesting to visit and engage with the government official of Minami Aizu through a Q & A session. We asked varying questions about challenges they are currently facing, recovery efforts, tourism, healthcare and more. The officials were very open to discuss these things with us. My favorite part was the Homestay because I felt able to connect with a normal Japanese family through learning about my host's profession (carpentry and making soba) and playing with their grandsons. I was also impressed by the various aspects of Japanese culture that were practiced by the family such as origami, calligraphy and visiting and participating in activities at their local shrine, even though I mostly saw these in photographs placed around their house.

## **5. Voice from Japanese Students/Schools/Host Families/Organizations**

### **◆ Host family (Group A)**

This was the first time I hosted international students; I had three Japanese-American girls staying at my place. They knew very well about their own family histories and explained to me about their respective families as they showed me their photo albums. I gave each of the girls a "Daruma" doll, a specialty of Gunma, with my best wishes to the girls for every success in the U.S.A. after returning from Japan. I explained to them that they should each set a goal or make a wish for the happiness of their families, then paint both eyes of the Daruma once their wish comes true. The three are young enough to try anything they want to do. I think coming to Japan must have been part of it. I would like each of them to experience many different things and grow as a person.

### **◆ Host family (Group B)**

They were delighted by Japanese food. They really enjoyed the activities in snowy Akita, such as making a Kamakura (snow dome) and experiencing the Hiburi Kamakura (fire-swinging festival) at the snow festival. They played games with my seven-year-old son despite their not speaking the same language. We too really enjoyed these two days that we spent with them.



◆ **Host family (Group C)**



They had a good understanding of Fukushima. They told me that they would spread the word in the U.S.A. about how safe and secure it is in Fukushima. They happily tried local food such as vegetables stored under snow, saying they were delicious.

◆ **Host family (Group D)**

It was my first time hosting international students; I had never imagined that I would have such a great time with them. They were all so friendly and happily played with my children and were very nice to us as well. They also tried to speak with us in Japanese. We spent a wonderful time with them in those two days.

**6. Dissemination by the participants**


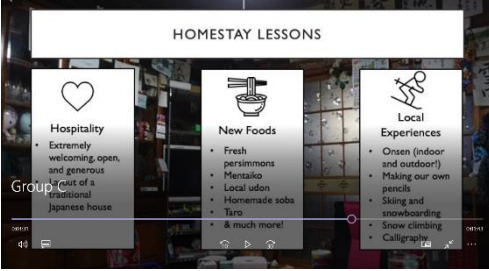
	
<p>(Group A) About School Exchange (Facebook) American-Chinese-Japanese-Korean all in one picture! Met some amazing people today at the Meiji Gakuin University. Putting our differences aside to bridge together some of the world's greatest countries. We're not so different after all.</p>	<p>(Group B) About Observation (Facebook) LakeTazawa Kunimasu museum &amp; kimono in Senboku</p>

<div data-bbox="239 168 790 716">  <p><b>Zenith Azad Farin</b> is with Merielle Macaraeg. 15 February at 08:29 · 🌐</p> <p>About to embark on a scenic train through Minamiaizu, a small town in the Fukushima Prefecture of Japan while sitting on traditional kotatsu! Alhamdulillah this trip has been amazing! #Kakehashi2018 #blessed</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="821 168 1372 772">  <p>Post</p> <p>♥️ 💬 📌</p> <p>Liked by <b>its.ale.not.alex</b> and <b>66 others</b></p> <p><b>tararararawr</b> First part of the Kakehashi trip we went to Asuka-dera, a Buddhist temple. I tested my luck and got an omikuji saying I'll have "best fortune". Then we went to the Edo-Tokyo Museum. It had replicas of buildings from the Edo Period and extremely detailed town replicas. #kakehashi2018 #japan #usa #asukaderatemple #edotokyomuseum</p> <p><b>xuan.lake</b> One of the best museums! ♥️</p> </div>
<p>(Group C) About Culture Experience (Facebook)</p> <p>About to embark on a scenic train through Minamiaizu, a small town in the Fukushima Prefecture of Japan while sitting on traditional kotatsu! Alhamdulillah this trip has been amazing!</p>	<p>(Group D) About Observation (Instagram)</p> <p>First part of the Kakehashi trip we went to Asakusa-dera, A Buddhist temple. I tested my luck and got an omikuji saying I'll have "the best fortune". Then we went to the Edo-Tokyo Museum. It had replicas of buildings from the Edo period and extremely detailed town replicas."</p>



## 7. Action Plan Presented by Participants at the Reporting Session

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Plan: What</li> <li>• Delegates will be meeting family, community and friends in the US and many will return to Japan to study abroad.</li> <li>• Others will get involved with the JACL</li> </ul>	<p><b>How we'll share our experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kakehashi Project Facebook page</li> <li>• Individualized posts             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Testimonials</li> <li>◦ Facts about Japan</li> <li>◦ Local Events</li> <li>◦ Word of the Day</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Merchandising (?)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ T-shirts, stickers, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <hr/>
<p>Action Plan (Group A1)</p> <p>Contents about Japan to share:</p> <p>We have been sharing our experience through our social media outlets such as Instagram, FB, and Snapchat since the beginning, and we will be sharing things such as new appreciation for culture, an emphasis on a connection towards ancestry, and new experiences like visiting rural cities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As our action plans, we will be meeting our families, community, and friends in the US, and some may return to Japan to study.</li> <li>• Others will get involved with the JACL</li> </ul>	<p>Action Plan (Group A2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a public Facebook page moderated by Kakehashi program alumni.</li> <li>• Kakehashi alumni create a schedule for regular posts and updates on the page.</li> <li>• The participant from this group serve as admin for the group, as well as a JACL staff member; new administrators can be added from future Kakehashi groups.</li> <li>• Alumni will also connect with local JACL chapters to learn about other opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Who is this for?</b></p> <p>Japanese Americans/ Asian Americans, Young Adults/ Students, Friends/ Family, Kakehashi Alumni (Past, Present, and Future)</p> <p><b>Who will do it?</b></p> <p>The 2019 Kakehashi program participants, Our new friends, Alumni</p> <p><b>When?</b></p> <p>As soon as possible</p>

 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ When we get back to the U.S. we will be excited to share our favorite and most memorable experiences immediately.</li> <li>❖ Within the next three months, we will continue to post on our social media platforms about Japan and our experiences here.</li> <li>❖ While the application for the Kakehashi program is open we will post reminders for others to apply.</li> <li>❖ We will continue to share our experiences and knowledge through the years.</li> </ul>	
<p>Action Plan (Group B)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing our experience</li> <li>• Social media (photos and videos), telling friends and family, bringing back Japanese souvenirs</li> <li>• Promoting tourism and travel</li> <li>• Visiting Japan again, sharing info about Kakehashi Project in person and on social media, taking friends and family to Japanese American events and landmarks</li> <li>• Get involved in Japanese American communities</li> <li>• Local JACL chapter events, JACL National Convention</li> <li>• When we get back to the U.S. we will be excited to share our favorite and most memorable experiences immediately.</li> <li>• Within the next three months, we will continue to post on our social media platforms about Japan and our experiences here.</li> <li>• While the application for the Kakehashi program is open we will post reminders for others to apply.</li> <li>• We will continue to share our experiences and knowledge through the years.</li> </ul>	<p>Action Plan (Group C)</p> <p>We will share our experiences through social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Pinterest, Line, etc.), video formats (YouTube), Blog posts, through student groups, newspapers (school &amp; local), &amp; seminars.</p> <p>We will upload pictures &amp; videos on all platforms, in addition to giving talks &amp; publishing through print &amp; digital. Word of mouth &amp; gifts are another extension. Skills &amp; dishes learned in Japan will be shared as well.</p>

## COLLECTIVE ACTION PLAN!

- University Student Panel
- Keeping in touch with other participants + w/ host family
- Show Japanese films/screenings
- Reach out to other student groups on campus (universities/clubs)

### Action Plan(Group D)

#### University Student Panel

- Keeping in touch with other participants + w/ host family
- Show Japanese films/slides
- Reach out to other student groups on campus (universities/clubs)