



KAKEHASHI Project (United States of America)

Outbound Program for America Bowl

Program Report

1. Program Overview

Under the “KAKEHASHI Project” of Japan’s Friendship Ties Program, 4 Japanese high school students and supervisor visited the United States of America from August 15 to August 22, 2018 to participate in the program aimed at promoting the understanding of Japan with regard to its politics, economy, society, culture, history, and foreign policy.

During the school exchange program, they delivered a presentation and performance to introduce the attractiveness of Japan. Through the observation of various sites, the participants enjoyed a wide range of opportunities to improve their understanding of the US and Japan-US relations, and shared their individual interests and experiences through social media. Based on their findings and experience in the US, each group of participants made a presentation in the final session and reported on the action plans to be implemented after returning to Japan.

【School Names and Number of Participants】

Kaisei Senior High School: 4 participants

【Destination】

Washington D.C.

2. Program Schedule

Aug. 15 (Wed)	[Arrival] [Observation] Iwojima Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, World War II Memorial, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial [Orientation]
Aug. 16 (Thu)	[School Exchange] Hayfield Secondary School, Thomas Jefferson High School [Observation] United States Capitol
Aug. 17 (Fri)	[Courtesy Call] Embassy of Japan in the United States of America [Interaction] Keidanren USA, Japan Commerce Association of Washington, D.C. [Reception] Reception by Japan-America Society of Washington D.C.
Aug. 18 (Sat)	[Observation] National Museum of American History, National Air and Space Museum/National Gallery of Art (Observation with local high school students) [School Visit] Georgetown University
Aug. 19 (Sun)	[Observation] Christ Church in Alexandria [Workshop]
Aug. 20 (Mon)	[Reporting Session] [Farewell Party] [Lecture] Internment of Japanese Americans [Observation] Japanese American Memorial [Interaction] Ambassador John R. Malott, Former President of The Japan-America Society of Washington D.C.

Aug. 21 (Tue)	[Departure]
Aug. 22 (Wed)	[Arrival] Tokyo, Japan

3. Program Photos



8/16 [School Exchange] Thomas Jefferson High School



8/17 [Courtesy Call] Embassy of Japan in the United States of America



8/17 [Observation] Keidanren USA, Round-Table with Japan Commerce Association of Washington, D.C.



8/18 [Observation] National Museum of American History, National Air and Space Museum/National Gallery of Art (Observation with local high school students)



8/20 [Reporting Session]



8/20 [Interaction] Ambassador John R. Malott, Former President of The Japan-America Society of Washington D.C.

4. Voice from Participants (abstract)

◆ It was a week that made me think of how I could become a "Kakehashi" (bridge) between Japan and the United States. Of course, in order to become a "Kakehashi," we need to offer information about our own country, Japan, as well as have a better understanding of the United States. However, during this visit to the United States, there were many occasions when I was reminded of how ignorant I was about Japan. It made me keenly aware that my understanding of the history of my own country was lacking when I was asked about religions in Japan at a church, or when some Japanese American people told us about how they experienced discrimination during World War II. When offering information about Japan, it is important to be willing to communicate with foreigners proactively, but I also felt that it was necessary to have an objective viewpoint towards Japan at the same time. This visit also made me realize that you can only acquire such a viewpoint by actually experiencing life in a foreign country yourself. Through this program, I have gained a better understanding from a new perspective, not only of the United States, but also of Japan. I would like to continue working to become a real "Kakehashi" who can offer information about Japan, while having a good understanding of the viewpoints of foreigners.

◆ I enjoyed interacting with American high school students who were interested in Japan. It was good to have had valuable experiences such as touring a museum with Americans of our own age with whom we don't usually get a chance to talk in Japan. Also, at Keidanren, I had a chance to hear various stories from people at leading companies, which I thought was a greatly useful experience for when I determine my course and career in the future. It was an extremely comprehensive program, and I'm glad I had opportunities to visit establishments and museums about history, which is a subject of my interest.

◆ I learned that many schools include Japanese language courses in their junior high and high school curriculums. In particular, I was very surprised to find a Japanese cartoon section in the library. When a cashier at a shop chatted to me for a while, I thought that was something quite rare in Japan, and felt that was probably because many Japanese people were rather shy. At Keidanren, it was very interesting to hear a story from someone who struggled in the United States because his English was not very good, while another told us of living in Washington D.C. and working for a trading company after having left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. I have learned the difference between government and the private sector. Also, I had a chance to share ideas and exchange opinions with the members of the Japan-America Student Conference, and very much enjoyed chatting with them. It was a really valuable experience for looking at Japan in greater depth.

5. Voices from the US Students/Schools/Organizations

◆ Student who participated in the school exchange program

It was particularly intriguing to discuss topics relating to American and Japanese history in both English and Japanese. Moreover, the experience of hearing a Japanese perspective on world events remained quite enlightening. Finally, I enjoyed shopping and simply chatting with the Japanese exchange students about our daily lives. Interacting with them further reaffirmed to me that friendships with them could persist no matter the slight language barrier. I look forward to keeping long lasting relationships with all three students who visited.

◆ Student who participated in the school exchange program

I am very glad I was able to participate in this program. Through the exchange, I was able to meet students who are skilled in not only their academics, but also in their understanding of English and America. The Japanese students discussed many aspects of culture, language, history, etc. with us and it lead to a deeper understanding of each culture.

6. Dissemination by the participants

	
<p>About the program (Facebook)</p> <p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan conducts something very interesting called KAKEHASHI Project, Japan's Friendship Ties Program, which sends about 1100 people to or from Japan. I actually went to Washington D.C. as part of this project.</p>	<p>About 5th day of the program (Facebook)</p> <p>On the fifth day, we visited Christ Church, an Anglican church in Alexandria, Virginia. (snip) Meanwhile, how do we view god in Japan? We celebrate Christmas, hear the rings from a temple of Buddhism on New Year's Eve, and the next day we go to a shrine of Shintoism. We can say we are tolerant of a diversity of religious, but in other words we are so indifferent about religions. That was the day I keenly felt my ignorance of my own country.</p>

7. Action Plan Presented by Participants at the Reporting Session



Action Plan

1) To help foreign visitors in tourist areas if they get lost. It is not only for giving them the directions, but also introducing them some Japanese culture and society. It will be a good opportunity for them to learn more about Japan from us. To keep communicating with people from the world.

2) To make presentation about our experiences in the U.S. in order to promote the KAKEHASHI project and other related program. It should be held in October when a reporting session for our high school's summer study abroad program is scheduled. The target should be those students who are interested in overseas program.