



**KAKEHASHI Project (United States of America/Canada)**  
**Inbound program for The Winners of Japanese Speech Contest (USA)**  
**Japanese Language Communication (Canada)**  
**Program Report**

## **1. Program Overview**

Under the “KAKEHASHI Project” of Japan’s Friendship Ties Programs, 21 university students from the U.S. and Canada visited Japan from January 8 to January 15, 2020 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. and Canada.

### **[Participating Countries and Numbers of Participants]**

United States of America: 10 participants

Canada: 11 participants

### **[Prefectures Visited]**

Tokyo, Yamagata

## **2. Program Schedule**

1/8 (Wed)	【Arrival】
1/9 (Thu)	【Orientation】 【Observation】 Imperial Palace 【School Exchange】 The University of Tokyo
1/10 (Fri)	Move to Yamagata from Tokyo 【School Exchange】 Yamagata University
1/11 (Sat)	【Courtesy Call】 Mr. NAKAGAWA Masaru, Mayor of Yonezawa City 【Observation】 Uesugi Museum, Uesugi Shrine 【Observation】 Toko Brewery 【Cultural Experience】 Sasano Ittobori, Otaka Poppo - Drawing for wood carving 【Meeting with Host Family】
1/12 (Sun)	【Homestay】
1/13 (Mon)	【Farewell Party with Host Family】

	<b>【Workshop】</b> Move to Tokyo from Yonezawa
1/14 (Tue)	<b>【Reporting Session】</b> <b>【Observation】</b> Chiba Institute of Technology Tokyo Skytree Town® Campus <b>【Observation】</b> Tokyo Skytree <b>【Courtesy Call】</b> Mr. NISHIMURA Akihiro, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary
1/15 (Wed)	<b>【Observation】</b> Senso-ji Temple, Nakamise <b>【Observation】</b> Akihabara <b>【Departure】</b>

### 3. Program Photos



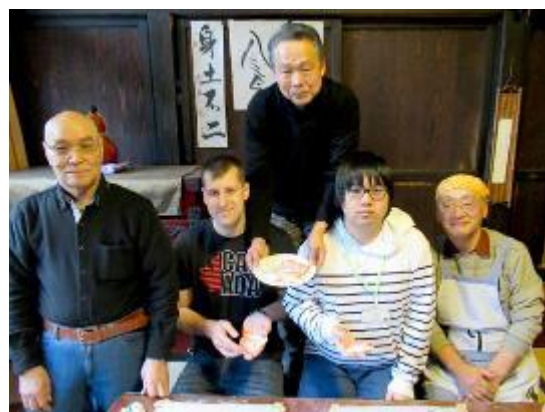
1/9 **【School Exchange】** The University of Tokyo



1/11 **【Observation】** Uesugi Shrine



1/11 **【Cultural Experience】** Sasano Ittobori, Otaka Poppo - Drawing for wood carving



1/12 **【Homestay】**

	
1/14 【Reporting Session】	1/14 【 Courtesy Call 】 Mr. NISHIMURA Akihiro, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary

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

◆The school exchange had such a huge impression on me and allowed me to understand the opinions and lives of the youth of Japan around my age. It is one thing to hear about issues through the internet but by being able to talk with Japanese students allowed me to understand and have a deeper connection with Japan. Specifically when at Yamagata University, we were able to work together to make marshmallow towers and discuss the future of translating devices. The activities truly made me believe that there are ways for people to work together despite differences in language and culture. The homestay and overall stay in Yonezawa was eye opening. I truly enjoyed seeing the everyday lives of people in Japan. Rather than seeing the busy tourist attractions, I enjoyed the everyday experience of onsen and watching TV together as a family (I.e. sumo and variety shows). Rather than seeing Japan as only a place of busy streets, I was able to see the slower paced but warm and loving lifestyle of those who live in more rural areas. Seeing traditional Japan was a highlight for me. I love hand-on activities so I truly enjoyed dyeing the handkerchief and painting the carved wooden statue (otaka poppo). Rather than just looking, I love being part of the history and tradition. I am so truly grateful to be able to participate in the program. I've made so many lasting memories and met so many people. I can never fully express in words what I've gain from this program but I know that this has been one of the best experiences in my life and I will forever treasure the memories from this time. Thank you so much to everyone for all their kindness and warmth.

◆The homestay experience was definitely one of the most interesting and memorable. I have really learned a lot of things and got to experience authentic Japanese life in person. The Dondoyaki that the host family took us to see really left a big impression in me! Being able to experience first—hand a ritual of another religion was very moving. The food is also something that I found impressive. Although I have always thought that I liked Japanese food, it was only during this week that I learned how delicious and intricate it can actually be. The food I ate this week has been the healthiest I've ever had in terms of food! The visit to the

Uesugi shrine was also very memorable. I have always been really interested in the Shinto religion, so being able to finally visit a shrine myself was a really emotional experience. Just like how I felt while watching the Dondoyaki fire, I was impressed at how much the religion here is different from what I have always known. Another thing which I have noticed is that Japan really takes the environment seriously. I have noticed during our Shinkansen ride from Tokyo to Yonezawa that a lot of houses have solar panels on their roofs. Even houses in the countryside have them. As we have learned at the Yamagata University, it is very important for other countries to start implementing these solutions as well. The workshops we went to were also really fun! I was glad to see that authentic arts like Otaka Poppo and the handkerchief workshop are still ongoing in this era where technology keeps on advancing more and more. Japan has a good balance of both extremely high technology as well as conserving their traditional arts and buildings.

◆ Home stay was the most impressive part of the program for me. We stayed at the Magotaro Samurai House in Yonezawa, which was a traditional house with many components passed down from over a hundred years ago. We got to see items in the family passed down from more than 3 generations ago, and they were very well preserved. We also followed traditions with the host family such as praying to the shrines that hosts the gods and the souls of the ancestors every morning. On one of the days, the host family invited a wagashi (traditional Japanese sweets) maker to the house to teach us how to make wagashi. Not only were they delicious, we also experienced Japanese traditional craftsmanship, which was very interesting. We talked to the host family about the difference between modern and traditional Japanese lifestyle, and the host family expressed their concern about the lifestyle of the youngsters being too convenient. Specifically, they believe that in the modern age, food is too easy to obtain and much of them are not healthy at all. They think that a large part of the strong Japanese spirit came from the types of food Japanese traditionally ate and that these food represented Japanese's will to survive. During the home stay, we exchanged many opinions and saw new and interesting perspectives from the host family.

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

### **◆ Student who participated in school exchange program**



I participated in the KAKEHASHI Project networking event and was inspired by the high levels of language acquisition awareness in the American and Canadian students. I met with people who had a wide range of interests and had many strengths outside their field of expertise, and I learned anew from them that you can expand your own world more and more by yourself. Their high level of motivation to learn Japanese was also apparent during the discussion. While we were discussing communication tools for the next 10 years, an American student commented, "We can overcome the language barrier with technology, but we must not forget to respect each other's culture when communicating." This opinion pointed out the essence of communication, about how after learning a new language like English,



one must think who to connect with and how to relate to that person. I would like to thank the people who arranged this opportunity.

#### ◆Host family


This time, we hosted a hands-on event to make straps from tanned wild grapevines. The students looked happy and worked hard to make their straps until they were satisfied. I was really happy to hear them say it was a very fulfilling experience. We gave Japanese chopsticks made by wood burning technique as gifts and they were very pleased.

### 6. Dissemination by the participants

	
<p>About Yonezawa City (Facebook)</p> <p>Do you know ABCs of Yonezawa?</p> <p>“A = Apples” Yamagata prefecture is famous for pears and cherries, but in Yonezawa, crisp and delicious apples are popular delicacy!</p> <p>“B = Beef” Yonezawa beef is considered one of Japan’s top 3 famous beefs along with Kobe Beef and Matsuzaka Beef.</p> <p>“C = Carp” Food culture surrounding koi is supposedly started by Uesugi Kenshin as a source of protein during war time. We tried Sashimi. Yum.</p>	<p>About Yamagata Prefecture (Instagram)</p> <p>Yamagata, Japan. I’ve always been more fond of the countryside than big cities and I definitely still feel the same here. Beautiful shrines, onsens, and great people. The host family I got to stay with was amazing. From the food to the extremely inviting atmosphere I couldn’t have asked for more. So glad to participate in the Kakehashi Project!</p>

	 <p>Liked by <a href="#">_keetm3</a> and 26 others</p> <p><a href="#">breecrvz</a> With this, my stay in Yamagata is completed!! ❤️ It was a great change of pace from the usual city life. I definitely will come back again ✨ especially for the gyouza (the best I have ever eaten in my life. Bet, I could eat 1000) #kakehashi2019 #jice #kakehashiaward #japan</p>
<p>About the dondo-yaki (Instagram)</p> <p>The “dondo-yaki” happens once a year and it happened in Yonezawa tonight. After burning the New Years’ decorations, everyone grills mochi on the huge fire! Eating the mochi brings a year of good health.</p>	<p>About Yamagata Prefecture (Instagram)</p> <p>With this, my stay in Yamagata is completed. It was a great change of pace from the usual city life. I definitely will come back again especially for the gyouza (the best I have ever eaten in my life. Bet, I could eat 1000)</p>

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

	<p><b>Plan 1: Japanese Enthusiastic Language Learning Organization (JELLO)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> <li>• When?</li> <li>• By whom?</li> <li>• To whom?</li> <li>• What?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action Plan (U.S.A.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a presentation on Kakehashi Project to class.</li> <li>• Promote and help Yonezawa tourism and business since host dad's house was Airbnb.</li> <li>• Make a presentation on different programs through a series at university.</li> <li>• Present to a Japanese class at college, Facebook post series over a few months on various topics of Japan.</li> <li>• Give a 20 min presentation on university on 1/26.</li> <li>• Present and promote speech contest to Japan Club.</li> <li>• Make presentations, talk for study abroad expos on Japan, share more knowledge about Speech Contest, make a video (easily shareable)</li> <li>• Visit high school Japanese teacher, present to the class as they were the ones to suggest.</li> <li>• Post about travelling, food, and different aspects of culture through blog, and continue to promote Japanese tourism on personal social media channels and encourage friends, family, and others to learn more about Japan and Japanese culture.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action Plan (Canada)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japanese Club Facebook group - presentations and posts</li> </ul> <p>Collaboration between University of Ottawa and Carleton University Japanese clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David, the arts and culture editor at Huron University's Rough Park Press, will write and share an article on his travel experience through the Rough Park Press website and in print when their annual wrap-up paper is posted.</li> </ul>