



KEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Japan Bowl Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives】 This program was conducted with the main objective of having high school students from the U.S. who had obtained high results in the Japan Bowl (a quiz competition in which students compete on their knowledge of Japanese language and culture) visit Tokyo and Okayama Prefecture to deepen their understanding and knowledge of Japanese culture, society and history; further deepen their familiarity with Japan; and strengthen the networks among themselves through home stays, school exchanges, observations, and exchanges with government officials. etc.

【Participants】 Awarded Japan Bowl Participants – Total of 23 high school students, undergraduate students, and chaperones from the U.S.

【Locations】 Tokyo, Okayama

【Schedule】

■ Pre-exchange Program (Online Pre-study Program)

Thursday, July 13 **【Pre-arrival (pre-departure) Orientation】** Program objectives and mission, itinerary outline, travel precautions, COVID-19 preventative measures, etc.

Set Period Prior to Arrival

【Video Viewing】 Lecture “Japan and the United Nations”, Lecture on Japan (Choose on Web Japan)

■ Inbound Program:

Tuesday, July 18 Entry from Haneda Airport/Narita Airport
Orientation

Wednesday, July 19 **【Courtesy Call】** First lady of the Prime minister Mrs. KISHIDA Yuko
 【Observation】 Asakusa
 【Observation】 【Cultural Experience】 Visit and experience the Japanese drumming Taiko (HIBIKUS) at Miyamoto Unosuke Shoten, presented by the Japan Bowl Supporters Group (JBSG)

Thursday, July 20 Travel from Tokyo to Okayama
 【Courtesy Call】 Okayama Prefectural Government
 【Observation】 Okayama Korakuen Garden, Okayama Castle

Friday, July 21 **【Observation】 【Cultural Experience】** Takada Orimono Co.Ltd.

Tatami factory tour and mini tatami workshop

【School Exchange】 Okayama Prefectural Kurashiki Amaki Senior High School

【Meeting with the Host Families】

Saturday, July 22

【Homestay】 12 households (Okayama City, Kurashiki City)

Sunday, July 23

【Farewell Party with the Host Families】

【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session

Travel from Okayama to Tokyo

Monday, July 24

【Courtesy Call】 Mr. RAHM Emanuel, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, U.S. Embassy

【Reporting Session】

【Courtesy Call】 Mr. YAMADA Kenji, State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tuesday, July 25

【Observation】 Meiji Shrine

Departure from Haneda Airport/Narita Airport

2. Program Photos

Inbound Program



July 19 【Cultural Experience】
Japanese Drumming Taiko



July 20 【Courtesy Call】 Okayama Prefectural
Government



July 21 【Cultural Experience】 Mini Tatami
Workshop



July 21 【School Exchange】
Okayama Prefectural Kurashiki Amaki Senior
High School

	
July 22【Homestay】12 household in Oyakayama City and Kurashiki City	July 24 【Courtesy Call】 U.S. Embassy
	
July 24 【Courtesy Call】 Ministry of Foreign Affairs	July 24 【Reporting Session】 Commemorative photo

3. Voices from Participants (excerpt)

◆ High School Student

Aside from the activities themselves, I was intrigued (not in a bad way) by the lack of garbage cans, the different crosswalk system, the driving system, and others. And for the activities, I was impressed by a lot of it, in particular the Taiko and Tatami workshops, as well as the homestay experience especially.

◆ Undergraduate Student

Some of the most impressive parts of my experience were when we visited the Japanese High School and also during the home stay. I was able to make friends in the high school and learned a lot about their school experience, like what kind of clubs they were in and also how much of the day they spend at school. I also liked playing the murukku* and having the instructions said in Japanese. My favorite part was the home stay where I got to practice my Japanese. It was scary at first but then communication became easier. I also went to an onsen and anime store. The onsen was surprising at first but then it was really relaxing and an overall nice experience. I had a ton of fun with the host family and got to learn a lot of new things.

*Murukku is a sport based a traditional game called “kyyykkä” originating in Finnish Karelia.

◆ Undergraduate Student

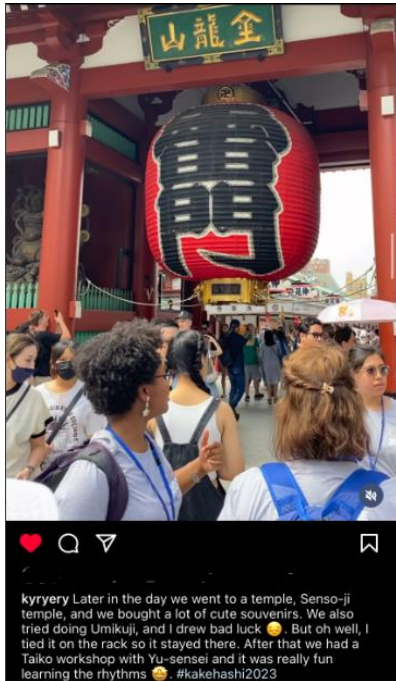
The best part of the Japan visit has been the Kurashiki Amaki High School tour as well as riding the Shinkansen. I learned a lot about how useful and important public transit is in Japan.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Cultural Experience Venue

I believe everyone was able to enjoy the mini tatami making workshop and the entire experience.

5. Disseminations by the Participants



July 19, 2023 Instagram

Later in the day, we went to a temple, Senso-ji temple, and we bought a lot of cute souvenirs. We also tried doing Omikujii, and I drew bad luck. But oh well, I tied it on the rack so it stayed there. After that, we had a taiko workshop with Yu-sensei and it was really fun learning the rhythms.

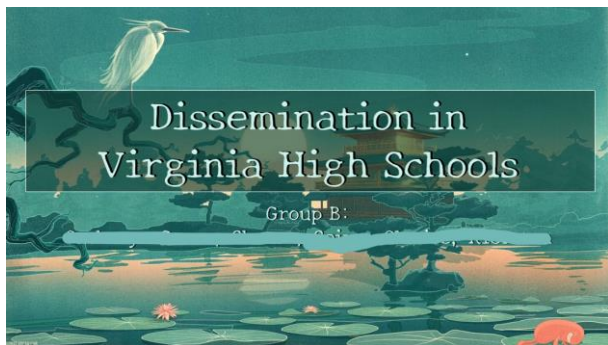


July 20, 2023 Facebook

The exterior of Okayama castle. It's called "Crow Castle" because of the color. Lovely.

6. Results and Action Plans Presented at the Reporting Session

*4 groups in total gave presentations



What we learned

We interacted with Japanese people during our stay and not only improved our Japanese vocabulary, but also deepened our cultural understanding as we learned about Japanese manners, etiquette, and how people are considerate towards others. We were particularly impressed by the lack of trash cans in the city and paper towels in public bathrooms, the culture of open shops, the diverse food culture, cultural customs such as yukata and suikawari, bathing methods, what tatami-beri means, and how you can bad fortunes up at shrines, and much more.

Action Plan

To disseminate the knowledge we acquired through the KAKEHASHI Program, we will be giving a video lecture to high school and middle schoolers who are taking Japanese classes in Lake Braddock and Hayfield by mid-October. Our experiences in the program have deepened our interest in Japan and inspired us to want to learn more. Through the video lecture, we would like to share the wonders of Japan in hopes that everyone listening gains the courage to take the first step and go on a new adventure.

What we learned

I learned more and deepened my understanding of the following areas during my stay in Japan, Literature, Manga, Manners, History, Seasons, Geography, Current events

Action Plan

We want to convey that Japanese culture has more facets than just pop culture and encourage students to explore the diversity of different cultures. To this end, at the beginning of the academic year, we will give a presentation on Japanese culture at a deeper level to Japanese students and students interested in Japanese culture.

Implementation agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)