



## **KAKEHASHI Project Invitation Program for High School Students the 4th Slot (Davis Senior HS, Smoky Hill HS, Harvest Christian Academy) Report**

### **1. Program Overview**

【Objective】 This program was held primarily to provide an opportunity for American high school students to deepen their understanding of Japanese politics, economy, society, culture, history, and diplomatic policies through various exchanges in Japan. Another objective was to have them actively disseminate information about Japan's attractions from their standpoint as high school students. High school students from Davis Senior High School in California, Smoky Hill High School in Colorado, and Harvest Christian Academy in Guam visited Japan and learned about Japanese culture, society, and history through homestays in Iwate and Okinawa, school exchanges, and observations.

【Participants】           Total: 24 high school students and their chaperones from the United States  
8 students and their chaperone from Davis Senior High School in California  
8 students and their chaperone from Smoky Hill High School in Colorado  
8 students and their chaperone from Harvest Christian Academy in Guam

【Locations】           Group A (Smoky Hill High School, Harvest Christian Academy): Tokyo, Iwate  
Group B (Davis Senior High School): Tokyo, Okinawa

#### **【Program Schedule】**

##### **■ Pre-study Program (Online)**

Nov. 16 (Thu)           **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, schedule, travel warnings, COVID-19 countermeasures, etc.

Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Task-based Learning (Video Viewing)】** “Japan and the United Nations”,  
“Lecture on Japan” (selected from Web Japan)

##### **■ Inbound Program**

Nov. 21 (Tue)           Arrival at Narita International Airport

##### **【Orientation】**

Nov. 22 (Wed)           **【Cultural Experience, Observation】** Hamarikyu Garden, Tea ceremony

**【Observation】** Chiba Institute of Technology Tokyo Sky tree ®Town Campus

**【Observation】** Kawasaki Robostage (robot showroom)

Nov. 23 (Thu) – 26 (Sun)

Division into two groups. Group A: travel to Iwate; Group B: travel to Okinawa.

Group A (Smoky Hill High School, Harvest Christian Academy): Iwate

- 【Visit to the City】 Storyteller Bus Guide about the Great East Japan Earthquake
- 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. SASAKI Taku, Mayor of Rikuzentakata City, Rikuzentakata City Hall
- 【Exchange】 Nagahora Genki Village : Wakame seaweed core removal experience, Disaster Prevention Crossroads game
- 【 Observation 】 Iwate Tsunami Memorial Museum, Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster
- 【Exchange】Icebreaker, School Introduction by Delegation Members, Introduction to Life in Japan by Community members, Exchange
- 【Corporate Lectures】 “Introduction of Carbon Neutral/Energy Circulation Initiatives”  
Lecturer: Mr. OBAYASHI Takanori, General Manager, General Planning Department, Rikuzentakata Shimin Energy Co., Ltd.
- 【Observation】 Watami Organic Land
- 【Workshop】Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

Group B (Davis Senior High School): Okinawa

- 【Observation】 Shuri Castle
- 【Cultural Experience】 Karate
- 【School Exchange】 Okinawa Prefectural Mirai Senior High School of Technology
- 【Meeting with the Host Families】
- 【Homestay】 2 households (Churamura Yomitan)
- 【Farewell Party with the Host Families】
- 【Observation】 Marine environment lecture at Natural Blue, Beach cleanup
- 【Workshop】Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

|               |                                                                            |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nov. 27 (Mon) | Group A: Travel from Iwate to Tokyo, Group B: Travel from Okinawa to Tokyo |
|               | 【Observation】 Meiji Jingu, Harajuku (Japan's pop culture)                  |
| Nov. 28 (Tue) | 【Reporting Session】 Presentation of program findings and action plans      |
|               | Departure from Narita Airport                                              |

## 2. Program Photos

### Inbound Program

|                                                                                        |                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |       |
| November 22 【Cultural Experience, Observation】<br>Hamarikyu Garden, Tea ceremony       | November 22 【Cultural Experience, Observation】<br>Hamarikyu Garden, Commemorative Photo |
|      |      |
| November 22 【Observation】 Chiba Institute of<br>Technology Tokyo Sky tree @Town Campus | November 22 【Observation】<br>Kawasaki Robostage                                         |

### Group A (Smoky Hill High School, Harvest Christian Academy)

|                                                                                                |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |  |
| November 23 【Visit to the city】 Storyteller Bus<br>Guide about the Great East Japan earthquake | November 24 【Courtesy Call】<br>Rikuzentakata City Hall                               |

|                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                      |                                                                      |
| <p>November 24 【Exchange】<br/>Nagahora Genki Village : Wakame seaweed core removal experience, Disaster Prevention Crossroads game</p>                | <p>November 25 【Observation】<br/>Takatamatsubara Memorial Park for TSUNAMI Disaster</p>                                                                |
|                                                                     |                                                                     |
| <p>November 25 【Exchange】<br/>Icebreaker, School Introduction by Delegation Members, Introduction to Life in Japan by Community members, Exchange</p> | <p>November 26 【Corporate Lectures】<br/>Mr. OBAYASHI Takanori, General Manager, General Planning Department, Rikuzentakata Shimin Energy Co., Ltd.</p> |
|                                                                    |                                                                    |
| <p>November 26 【Observation】<br/>Watami Organic Land</p>                                                                                              | <p>November 26 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)</p>                       |

Group B (Davis Senior High School)

|                                                                                                     |                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    |          |
| <p>November 23 【Observation】 Shuri Castle</p>                                                       | <p>November 24 【Cultural Experience】 Karate</p>                                            |
|                    |          |
| <p>November 24 【School Exchange】<br/>Okinawa Prefectural Mirai Senior High School of Technology</p> | <p>November 25 【Homestay】</p>                                                              |
|                  |        |
| <p>November 26 【Farewell Party with the Host Families】</p>                                          | <p>November 26 【Observation】 Marine environment lecture at Natural Blue, beach cleanup</p> |
|                  |        |
| <p>November 27 【Observation】 Meiji Jingu</p>                                                        | <p>November 28 【Reporting Session】<br/>Commemorative photo</p>                             |

### **3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)**

#### **◆ High School Student**

The host family was very kind and made us a lot of great food. For instance, I was able to try beni-imo and sata andagi for the first time. It was fun to experience life as close to Japanese life as we could. My host family taught me a lot about Okinawa history and culture, and we visited historical sights and the Yomitan Museum. We were also able to try our hand at playing the sanshin and tried on traditional Okinawan clothing. The students at Mirai High School were also very friendly and sociable. They were very welcoming, and spending time there was my favorite part of the program. I wish that I had the opportunity to spend a lot more time doing the school exchange. During the marine science lecture, I also learned about how and why we should protect the sea. Perhaps if more people had this experience, then the oceans would be cleaner. We also received knowledge regarding Okinawan karate, such as the philosophy behind it, the weapons used, the history, the importance of teaching, and got to try it out for ourselves.

#### **◆ High School Student**

The most impressive part of the experience was the interaction with my host family. I was able to converse with them and learned many things about Okinawa culture and history from them. They were good listeners who listened to what I had to say and helped me with words I didn't know. They also used easy to understand words and explained more difficult words with simpler words. I enjoyed this interaction with them because I was able to understand them and respond. And because of them, I was able to learn a lot about Okinawa culture, customs, cuisine, and the history of Okinawa and Ryukyu. Thanks to these interactions, my speaking proficiencies have certainly increased.

#### **◆ High School Student**

The most impressive part was when we went to a school that was destroyed by the tsunami. Babies' shoes and small teddy bears really stood out amid a lot of debris. I couldn't even imagine how many people would have struggled and cried. But fortunately, I was very happy that all the students at the school were able to escape. I really send my condolences to all the victims.

### **4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)**

#### **◆ Observation Destination**

I am glad the students enjoyed the tour. Thank you for the opportunity.

#### **◆ School Exchange Destination**

I can still picture the students from both schools mutually engaging in communication using the languages they are each studying and their faces lighting up with smiles when they were able to get across to each other.

## 5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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|    | <p>November 24, 2023 (Instagram)</p> <p>Today we met with the mayor of Rikuzentakata. It was amazing talking to him and we're honored to have had such an experience. After, we went to go see the tsunami exhibit in Rikuzentakata. There were lots of art about the lonely tree, a lone pine that survived the tsunami and was left standing. There was also a beautiful painting of Iwate and a very old pine trunk.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|  | <p>November 24, 2023 (Instagram)</p> <p>Day 2 in Rikuzentakata City. Today we went to the City Hall for a meeting with the governor, Governor Sasaki. From him and a few others, we learned about how recovery efforts in the region have progressed, as well as how some of the statistics line up.</p> <p>For the raw numbers, roughly 8,000 homes were destroyed in the tsunami. Additionally, all the low-lying schools as well as the city center were swept out to sea. The full bounds of the city saw over two thousand deaths, most of which were in the inland residential areas. The waters reached up to around 35 meters and swept around 18 kilometers inland. The local economy became almost non-existent. From a population of around 24,000 before the tsunami, there is still only 17,500 today.</p> <p>Now we can get to the hopeful aspect. Recovery in Rikuzentakata has taken many forms. A massive project was undertaken utilizing a massive conveyor belt (seen in picture 6) to demolish a nearby mountain and transport soil about 300 meters away to elevate the land for the new city center. This conveyor, as well as some materials and other aid, came from the U.S. when residents were not able to source it themselves. Over time, the area has had the opportunity to start regrowing. Most of the local fishing economy has returned, as well as many displaced residents. However, only a small portion of businesses in the city center have reopened; many have either lost their owners or</p> |

moved elsewhere.

The city hall features a small museum about the earthquake and city. Here, one can see what the town looked like before the tsunami compared to 2022 (Images 2, 3). You may also see the city symbol, the Last Pine Tree, which was the only shore pine out of thousands to survive the tsunami. This tree provided hope to residents when all seemed grim. If it could tough out the water, then so could they. The tree has since perished at around the age of 155-160 years, and a replica is now where it once stood.

The seventh image is a memorial to all the city officials who perished in the flood whose families wished it—86 among a rough total of 110.

## 6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans at the Reporting Session, (excerpt)

**Locations: Tokyo, Okinawa**

**Davis Senior High School**



| What                | Why                                                        | How          | By Who          | For Who                                                                     | When               |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| World Language Fair | Share and learn about Japanese culture and Okinawa culture | Presentation | Presented by us | Participants of the event<br>Residents of the town and international people | February 2nd, 2024 |



**Karate**

- History
- History of 19th century
- Philosophy: peace, respect and respect
- Long practice martial art
- Steeped in tradition



**【What we Learned】**

- We were able to learn about the history of Okinawa, the ethics of karate, and even the latest technology in Japan through visits and observations.
- Through the school exchange, we were able to learn about the differences between the Japanese and U.S. educational systems, as well as the differences in the daily classroom routines. Through the homestay program, we were also able to learn more about Japanese culture and see a glimpse into the daily lives of the Japanese people.
- We learned for the first time that although coral reefs cover only a limited area, they are irreplaceable for more than 30% of marine life. We also learned that the key to marine conservation is to educate the public about the current situation and to make efforts (beach cleanups, etc.) to lessen the impact on the environment.

**【Action Plan】**

1. Hold in-class presentations in our Japanese classes (level 1-5)  
To: increase understanding and deepen interest in Japanese language and culture
2. Give presentations to the Davis Kids Club and Child Development Centers (after school programs for youth)  
To: increase youths' interest in different cultures, specifically Japanese culture
3. Share our experience in school newspapers and news videos  
To: share our important experiences through photos and videos so that readers and viewers can

become more interested in Japan and hopefully one day visit.

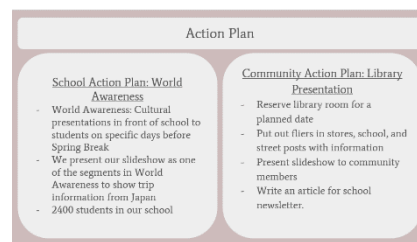
4. Give a presentation at the high school's World Language Fair (Feb. 2024).

WLF: Spread awareness and understanding of different cultures from around the world.

To: reach the wider public of our town and spark interest in Japan and Japanese culture. Also, we aim to increase awareness and cultural understanding between Japan and the U.S., with both the elderly generation and youths as a means to instill a better understanding between our two cultures.

## Locations: Tokyo, Iwate

### Smoky Hill High School



#### 【What we Learned】

Japanese technology is very advanced and has become an indispensable part of daily life (subways, automatic sensors on escalators, solar panels, etc.). We felt that there is an abundance of transportation means other than cars, such as public transportation, which also contributes to people's health. At the same time, there are many environmentally friendly initiatives, and the country is efficient in all aspects. We were also able to hear about the devastation caused by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami from the people who were affected by the disaster, as well as learn a lot about the thoughts of the people living there and their efforts to recover from the disaster. We were all amazed at how people never forget the past and are determined to work towards the future.

#### 【Action Plan】

1. At school

Before spring break, each participant will give a presentation (alone or with others) on Japanese culture to the 2,400 students in conjunction with World Awareness Day.

2. Presentation for residents (at the library)

We will reserve a room in the library, advertise in the school newspaper and distribute flyers around town, creating an opportunity to share the experiences we gained in the KAKEHASHI Project with as many people as possible.

3. Interview with the Japan-America Society of Japan

We will be interviewed by the Japan-America Society about our experiences and insights gained in Japan, and the interviews will be posted online.

## Locations: Tokyo, Iwate

### Harvest Christian Academy



### 【What we Learned】

- Japan has not only big cities but also beautiful nature, small towns and villages, and the people are always kind and respectful.
- There is such a variety to Japanese food, and fish is on the table more often than we had imagined. We felt it was wonderful to be able to buy hot drinks from vending machines and so many things from convenience stores.
- Japan's resilience in terms of recovery is leading in the world. I was moved by the story of a small boat that took two years to arrive in Crescent City, California, from Rikuzentakata City, which led to a sister city relationship.

### 【Action Plan】

Through presentations at different locations, we aim to share our experiences in Japan and emphasize the importance of international cooperation, especially during times of crisis.

1. We will give presentations on goals and motivations to learn Japanese to the school's Japanese class (Japanese 1).
2. We will give presentations to the school's junior high school students, so they become interested in the language and hopefully choose to learn it in high school.

Why: Guam has a large number of Japanese tourists and residents, and learning the language would be both beneficial to the learner as well as the Japanese population on Guam. If students have opportunities to visit Japan such as through KAKEHASHI, language skills could make things easier. International cooperation is especially important in times of disaster.

**Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)**