



## **KAKEHASHI Project (United States)**

### **Visiting U.S. Program for Okinawa Program the 2nd Slot (Itoman High School) Report**

#### **1. Program Overview**

##### **【Objectives and Overview】**

The Okinawa Program is a mutual exchange program between high school students from Japan and the United States. With the goal of promoting mutual understanding between the two countries, 10 students from Okinawa Prefectural Itoman High School were dispatched to Washington State, USA, from January 22 to 29, 2025. During their stay in the U.S., the group visited the local Consulate-General and Okinawa Kenjin Club, toured companies, participated in student exchanges, and stayed with host families. Through these activities, they learned about Japan-U.S. relations and the economic ties between the two countries, deepening the friendship and trust between Japan and the U.S. Additionally, they gained valuable insights by experiencing different cultures and customs, while sharing the attractions of Japan and Okinawa with the people they met during the exchanges.

**【Participants】** Total: 10 participants (9 high school students and 1 chaperone from Okinawa Prefectural Itoman High School)

**【Locations】** Seattle, Washington, U.S.

##### **【Schedule】**

##### **■ Online Pre-study Program:**

Dec. 23 (Mon)                    **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warnings, precautions of infectious disease, etc.

##### **■ Dispatch Program:**

Jan. 22 (Wed)                    Departure from Haneda Airport, Arrival at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport  
**【Orientation】**

Jan. 23 (Thu)                    **【Courtesy Call】** Mr. SUMI Junichi, Deputy Consul General, Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

**【Lecture】** Okinawa Kenjin Club (Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle)  
Mr. UEHARA Tomoyuki, President, Okinawa Kenjin Club of WA

**【Observation】** Panama Hotel

**【Observation】** Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Washington

Jan. 24 (Fri)                    **【School Exchange】** Lindbergh High School

**【Homestay】**

Jan. 25 (Sat)                    **【Homestay】**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan. 26 (Sun) | <b>【Homestay】</b><br><b>【Workshop】</b> Preparations for the Reporting Session (Summarizing program findings and preparation of action plans)                                                                                                             |
| Jan. 27 (Mon) | <b>【Reporting Session】</b> Presentation of action plans<br><b>【Courtesy Call】</b> Mr. PAVONE Armondo, Mayor, City of Renton<br><b>【Courtesy Call】</b> Mr. DAMIEN Pattenaude, Superintendent, Renton School District<br><b>【Observation】</b> Space Needle |
| Jan. 28 (Tue) | Departure from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Jan. 29 (Wed) | Arrival at Haneda Airport                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## 2. Program Photos

### Dispatch Program

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |                                                                                                                         |
| <p>January 22, 2025 <b>【Arrival】</b></p>                                            | <p>January 23, 2025 <b>【Courtesy Call, Lecture】</b><br/> Mr. SUMI Junichi, Deputy Consul General, Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle<br/> Mr. UEHARA Tomoyuki, President, Okinawa Kenjin Club of WA</p> |
|  |                                                                                                                        |
| <p>January 23, 2025 <b>【Observation】</b> Panama Hotel</p>                           | <p>January 23, 2025 <b>【Observation】</b> Japanese Cultural &amp; Community Center of Washington</p>                                                                                                        |



January 24, 2025 【School Exchange】  
Lindbergh High School



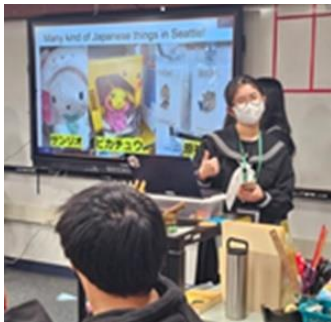
January 24, 2025 【School Exchange】  
Lindbergh High School



January 25, 2025 【Homestay】



January 26, 2025 【Workshop】



January 27, 2025 【Reporting Session】



January 27, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. PAVONE  
Armondo, Mayor, City of Renton



January 27, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. DAMIEN  
Pattenaude, Superintendent, Renton School District



January 27, 2025 【Observation】 Space Needle

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

#### **◆ High School Student**

I went to the Panama Hotel and learned for the first time that Japanese Americans had been sent to internment camps. Seeing the belongings left behind by people at the hotel and hearing that they were only allowed to take two pieces of luggage when they were sent to the camps made me realize that not only Okinawans and Japanese people but also Japanese Americans in the United States were affected by the war.

#### **◆ High School Student**

Visiting the Consulate-General was a great experience because I was able to gain many important insights that will help me when thinking about my future.

#### **◆ High School Student**

I was able to learn a lot about Japanese culture and history at the Panama Hotel and the Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Washington. What left a strong impression on me was how deeply connected Japanese people are to Seattle. I also learned a lot about American culture, and since I was able to learn about the history of Japanese culture for the first time as well, my understanding of both countries deepened.

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

#### **◆ Host Family**

We had so much fun connecting with our student. We have been to Japan before and this exchange makes me so excited for my next visit. As a host, it was a lovely experience. We wish it was for a longer period of time.

#### **◆ Courtesy Call Representative**

For the high school students, this was their first opportunity to interact in the U.S., and I believe it must have felt like a dream-like program.

During the exchange at Lindbergh High School, we were impressed by how both Japanese and American students made great efforts to communicate using simple English and Japanese.

Through this program, our consulate was able to collaborate with the superintendent and the mayor, which was very beneficial for Japanese language teachers who are struggling to maintain Japanese language education.

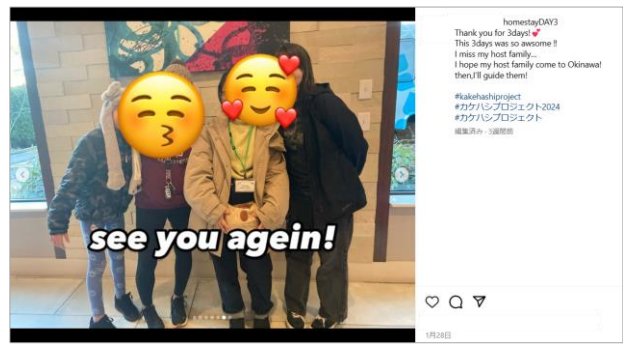
Taking this opportunity, we hope to actively engage with other superintendents in Washington State and continue working toward sustaining Japanese language education.

## 5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt), Articles, etc.

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|  <p>シアトルの日本領事館にお邪魔してきました！<br/>領事館では首席領事の方と、沖縄県人会の会長さんにお会いしてお話を聞きましたー！ ✨</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>・外務省ってパスポートを管理して外国と仲良くする抽象的なイメージしかなかったのですが、実はもっとたくさんの仕事があるということを知り、とても驚きました、 😲</li> <li>・沖縄県人会の方では沖縄が意外と世界に知られていることを知りました！ 会長さんめっちゃ friendly</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  <p>1/23 パナマホテルにお邪魔してきました！！ 🏠</p> <p>パナマホテルはワシントン州の日本町 🇯🇵 の中にあって第二次世界大戦の前から変わらずあるそう。</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>January 23, 2025 (Instagram)</p> <p>High School Student</p> <p>We visited the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle!</p> <p>At the consulate, we met with the Deputy Consul General and the President of the Okinawa Kenjin Club and listened to their talks.</p> <p>I had only a vague image that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs manages passports and promotes friendly relations with other countries, but I was really surprised to learn that they have many more responsibilities.</p> <p>During the talk by the Okinawa Kenjin Club, I realized that Okinawa is more well-known around the world than I had thought! The president was very friendly!</p> | <p>January 26, 2025 (Instagram)</p> <p>High School Student</p> <p>We visited the Panama Hotel!</p> <p>The Panama Hotel is located in Japantown, Washington, and has remained unchanged since before World War II.</p> <p>[What surprised me] I learned that Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps in the past.</p> <p>At that time, many Japanese Americans stayed at this hotel and left their belongings in the basement. (I could see the basement room from the front desk.)</p> <p>In addition, I heard that the sento (Japanese-style public bathhouse), which can be accessed from outside, has been designated as a National Historic Landmark in the U.S.!</p> <p>The hotel owner was very kind and shared many stories with us along with various historical materials.</p> |



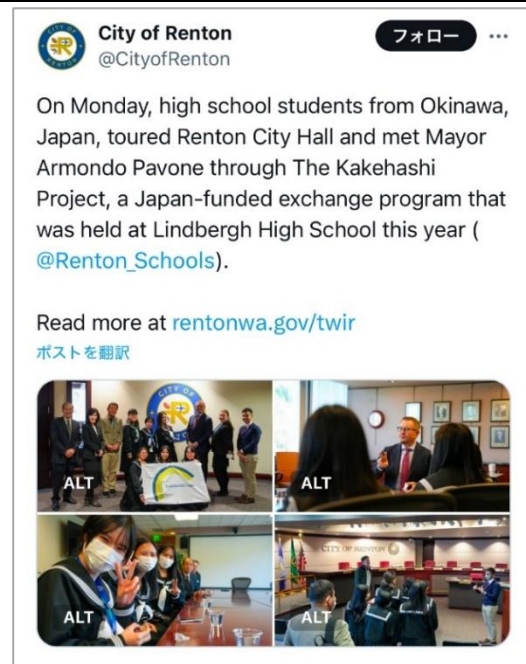
January 28, 2025 (Instagram)  
High School Student  
Second day of my homestay  
I visited various places with my host family! The most wonderful thing was that my host mother made a hat for me!!



January 28, 2025 (Instagram)  
High School Student  
It was so amazing for the last 3 days!  
I miss my host family.  
I would like my host family to visit Okinawa, next time! Then I will guide them!  
Thank you very much for the last 3 days!



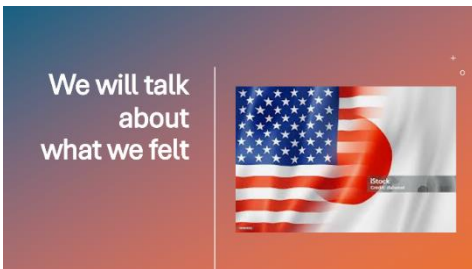
January 23, 2025 (Instagram page of the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle)  
On January 23, a group of students from Itoman High School in Okinawa, participating in the Japan-U.S. youth exchange program "Kakehashi Project"



February 3, 2025 (Instagram page of the City of Renton)  
On Monday, high school students from Okinawa, Japan, toured Renton City Hall and met Mayor Armondo Pavone through The Kakehashi Project, a Japan-funded exchange program that was held at Lindbergh High School this year.

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

### Presentation by a total of 2 groups

| Group 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
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| <p><b>【Learnings from the Program】</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Japanese immigrants &amp; Japanese Americans (Nikkei)<br/>The visits to the Panama and JCCCW surprised us to know that there was a history of Japanese immigrants in Seattle.</li><li>• American life/culture<br/>Our visit to the US proved that America is a salad bowl with a variety of ethnic groups. Individual achievements are expected rather than group achievements.</li><li>• Difference between Japanese schools and American schools<br/>The Superintendent of Renton School District told us that the US has no certificate of residence and that anyone can enroll in a school. We were surprised with this great difference from Japan.</li><li>• Overseas Diplomatic Establishment &amp; Diplomats<br/>Japanese diplomats support Japanese people in overseas countries. Their duties vary and include interpretation for VIPs and rescue of Japanese nationals in overseas countries in emergency.</li></ul> <p><b>【Action Plan】</b></p> <p>“Sharing the history of Nikkei and our program experience through presentations in class and preparation/distribution of flyers to our peers”</p> <p>We aim to encourage sophomores (11<sup>th</sup> graders) at Itoman High School to take an interest in studying abroad and exchange programs by introducing the history of Nikkei in Washington State and the charms of the U.S. and Japan that we experienced through the program.</p> <p>In February, five members of Group 1 will give short presentations in their classrooms with any extra time during homeroom or other classes.</p> <p>We will also prepare and distribute flyers to all sophomores.</p> <p>The presentation will cover the history we learned at the Panama Hotel and JCCCW, as well as the insights and experiences we gained through the homestay and school exchange.</p> |  |

## Group 2



### 【Learnings from the Program】

- Japanese immigrants & Japanese Americans (Nikkei)

We were surprised by how much Japanese history and culture were known by the locals. The visit to the Panama Hotel helped us to learn about the history from WW2 and we experienced a tea ceremony in the JCCCW. We were moved at the fact that the local people have preserved Japanese history.

- American life/culture

All the meals were huge, and people ate hamburgers almost every day. They value their private time and we felt that they clearly differentiate the time they spend with family members and the time they spend alone.

- American people

People in the U.S. were always friendly. Even if they didn't know you, they would greet you with small talk such as "how are you today" or comments like "your clothes are nice!". This mentality is amazing, and it was great that no matter where we went, we could hear people saying, "Thank you!!" and "You're welcome!!". Regarding fashion, they value individuality, and the fact that everyone is confident and does not care what other people think left a strong impression on us.

- Difference between Japanese schools and American schools

We felt that classes in the U.S. are more casual, with students eating and drinking, entering classrooms in the middle of lectures, and using electronic devices. That being said, we were inspired by the fact that most of the students actively participate in classes, raising their hands and confidently sharing their opinions.

- Overseas Diplomatic Establishment & Diplomats

We think that it is essential to gain a lot of experience in many different countries to fulfill their services. We learned that there are many cases where they also have to visit life-threatening places.

### 【Action Plan】

"Sharing (our experiences) during an all-school assembly"

We aim to share knowledge that can only be gained through on-site experiences and provide an opportunity for students at Itoman High School to develop an interest in overseas countries.

Between February and March, four members of Group 2 will give a presentation during an all-school assembly.

The audience will be freshman and sophomores (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> graders).

The presentation will cover the differences between Japanese and American schools, American life and culture, and American people.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)