



KAKEHASHI Project (United States)

Invitation Program for Sports (Judo) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

Four U.S. judo practitioners were invited to Japan with the main objective of deepening their understanding of Japanese history, culture, and society and promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S. by providing them with opportunities to interact with related parties through sport (judo). The group visited Tokyo and Miyazaki, where they enjoyed a homestay and interacted and talked with local people, experiencing the attractions of Japan and disseminating them on social media and other platforms.

【Participants】 Total: 4 working youths affiliated with Judo from the U.S.

【Location】 Tokyo, Miyazaki

【Schedule】

Pre-study Program (Online):

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

Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Video Viewing】** “Lecture on Japan” (Choose on Web Japan)

■ Invitation Program:

Dec. 3 (Tue)	Arrival at Haneda Airport 【Post-arrival Orientation】
Dec. 4 (Wed)	Travel from Tokyo to Miyazaki 【Cultural Experience】 Tea Ceremony 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. YOMIYAMA Yoji, Mayor, Nobeoka City 【Meeting with the Host Families】
Dec. 5 (Thu)	【Homestay】 【School Exchange】 Nobeoka Gakuen High School (JUDO team) (Incl. Direct Instruction by General Manager Kenzo Nakamura, Olympic Gold Medalist)
Dec. 6 (Fri)	【School Exchange】 Nobeoka Gakuen High School(JUDO team and Culinary program class) 【Observation】 Asahi Kasei Corporation Show Room
Dec. 7 (Sat)	Travel from Oita to Tokyo 【Observation】 Japan Olympic Museum 【Observation】 KUSAKURA World Shop (Judo goods shop)

Dec. 8 (Sun) **【Observation】** Asakusa
 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)
 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans

Dec. 9 (Mon) **【Observation】** Kodokan
 Departure from Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program

	
December 4, 2024 【Cultural Experience】 Tea Ceremony	December 4, 2024 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. YOMIYAMA Yoji, Mayor, Nobeoka City
	
December 5, 2024 【Homestay】	December 5, 2024 【School Exchange】 Nobeoka Gakuen High School (JUDO team)
	
December 6, 2024 【School Exchange】 Nobeoka Gakuen High School (lunch exchange with the Culinary program class)	December 6, 2024 【Observation】 Asahi Kasei Corporation Show Room

	
December 7, 2024 【Observation】 Japan Olympic Museum	December 7, 2024 【Observation】 KUSAKURA World Shop (Judo goods shop)
	
December 8, 2024 【Observation】 Asakusa	December 8, 2024 【Reporting Session】
	
December 8, 2024 【Reporting Session】 Group photo	December 9, 2024 【Observation】 Kodokan

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Working Youth

The homestay was an excellent experience filled with genuine connection. The judo training was inspiring and humbling. Everyone involved in each program was respectful, engaged, and in good spirit. Every facility was well maintained and the experiences provided exceeded expectations. I am incredibly grateful to have been a part of this exchange and enjoyed every moment of the journey.

◆ Working Youth

The cleanliness and overall respect to one another with the people, and attention to care is astronomical, and can't compare to USA.

◆ **Working Youth**

The people I met during the Kakehashi Program and the interactions with them are things I will remember for the rest of my life. The trip itself was only for a short time, but I truly feel like I made new friends and even made a new family in Miyazaki. I fully intend to continue to keep in contact with them and to come back to Japan as soon as possible to visit them again!

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

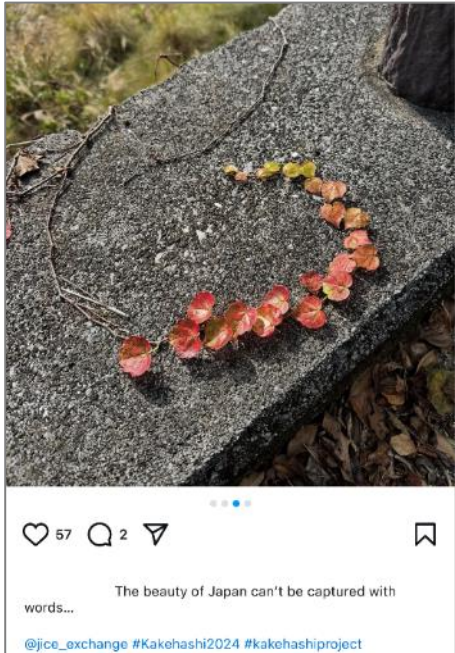
◆ **Host Family**

It was great to be able to cook Japanese food together and to have them cook for us. All four of us got along very well, and I couldn't believe they had only just met from the way they were talking! My family had a great time too.

◆ **Observation Destination Representative**

We are glad that the participants seemed to have had a good experience.

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

	
December 5, 2024 (Instagram) Working Youth (U.S.) There's no better reason to be up at 6am than to be making fresh mochi.	December 6, 2024 (Instagram) Working Youth (U.S.) The beauty of Japan can't be captured with words...

	
December 4, 2024 (X account of Mr. YOMIYAMA Yoji, Mayor of Nobeoka City) The Nobeoka program for judo athletes at the U.S. University Champion level as part of a project by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has begun. The program includes training with the Nobeoka Gakuen High School Judo Club, homestay at local farms, and direct coaching by Kenzo Nakamura, general manager of the Asahi Kasei Judo Club (gold medalist at the Atlanta Olympics). As one would expect from athletes selected by the U.S. Department of State, they were very polite and courteous.	December 6, 2024 (Instagram page of Nobeoka City's Japan Games and National Sports Festival for People with a Disability Department) Nobeoka Gakuen High School's Judo Club Practiced with American Judo-ka On December 5th, students of Nobeoka Gakuen High School's Judo Club and four American Judo-ka visiting Nobeoka for the "KAKEHASHI Project" worked hard together at a joint practice session held at Nobeoka Gakuen's Judo Hall. General Manager of the Asahi Kasei Judo Club (and Atlanta Olympic gold medalist) Kenzo Nakamura instructed the students enthusiastically with demonstrations and taught them the techniques that he used to compete against the world. ...

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

Locations: Tokyo, Miyazaki – Presentation by 1 group

Kakehashi Project 2024 Judo Sport Exchange	Early to Bed and Early to Rise  Waiting up at 6am to make fresh mochi before going to practice! 	Judo Practice  
【Results of the Program】 ◆ Learnings from the program: - Old and new exist side by side. - The “take your trash home with you” culture has taken root in Japan, and not only was there no trash in the streets, but there were no trash cans either.		

- Matcha served at tea ceremonies is treated as a luxury item.
- There is a custom of describing the size of a room by the number of tatami mats.
- The dragonfly was a symbol of fearlessness among samurai because it always flies forward.
- Japanese people are respectful and work hard in everything they do.
- One mochi (rice cake) is equivalent to one bowl of rice (meaning you need to watch how many you eat).
- Through the homestay, we learned firsthand that people can connect with each other beyond borders and languages. We now have fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers here in Japan.

◆ Learnings about Judo

Even though we have been exposed to judo since we were young, there were many new discoveries for us. The custom of beginning and ending with “rei” (bowing) has been introduced to the U.S. as well, but we found out that showing respect was the norm in the Japanese culture. The quality and quantity of repetitive practice was very different from that in the U.S. We practiced for two and a half hours for two days, but the quantity and density of practice was very different, and the experience gained during these two days was something that could not have been obtained even if we had practiced for 10 days or more in the U.S.

【Action Plan】

Since each participant lives in different cities and belongs to different dojos, each participant will be conduct their own action plans (each member will disseminate their findings on social media as well)

1) I would like to create a design that is more in line with Japanese culture by incorporating designs that I have seen firsthand in Japan at the martial arts gear and apparel company I work at. (e.g. Judo wear designs I saw at Nobeoka Gakuen High School, city sceneries, temples and shrines, art, clothing designs of people walking in the streets, etc.)

Also, when I shopped in Japanese stores, I saw that people took pride in their products and also took great care in wrapping the items, and I would like to do the same in my own company.

2. I will incorporate elements of the practice I saw in Japan into the practice at the dojo I belong to.

- Set up a day when no music is played (a day to concentrate).
- Introduce shouts to get everyone motivated.
- Introduce different menus for regular practices and for practices before matches to increase everyone's focus and energy.
- At the intensive training camps held twice a year, we will have one or two practices based on the same menu as the one held at Nobeoka Gakuen High School to see how well the camp attendees can keep up in terms of stamina.

3. I will share with my friends, fellow dojo members, family members, etc. recipes of the food we had and the wisdom of life we gained during the homestay. (e.g., chicken nanban recipe, pine leaf tea, etc.)

We will also share the importance of a balanced diet, which we noticed was common not only during the homestay but also for meals at Japanese style restaurants.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)