



KAKEHASHI Project (United States/Canada) Invitation Program for Japan Bowl Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective and Overview】 This program was conducted with the main objective of having high school students from the U.S. and Canada who had excelled in the annual Japan Bowl^(Note) visit Tokyo and Fukushima to deepen their understanding and knowledge of Japanese culture, society and history; to further deepen their familiarity with Japan; and to strengthen networks among the participants through homestays, a school exchange, observation visits, and exchanges with government officials, etc.

(Note) A quiz competition launched in 1992 in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., in which high school students taking the Japanese language as a foreign language compete on their knowledge of the Japanese language and culture.

【Participants】 Total: 27 participants (24 high school students and undergraduate students along with 3 chaperones from the U.S. and Canada)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Fukushima

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Jul. 11 (Thu) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Program objectives and mission, itinerary outline, travel precautions, COVID-19 preventative measures, etc.

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

■ Inbound Program:

Jul. 17 (Wed) Arrival at Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation】

Jul. 18 (Thu) **【Courtesy Call】** (U.S.) Mr. RAHM Emanuel, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, U.S. Embassy in Japan

【Courtesy Call】 (Canada) Mr. Matt Fraser, Counsellor, Mr. Steven Lapointe, First Secretary, Public Affairs Department, Canadian Embassy in Japan

【Courtesy Call】 Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado

【Observation】 Suga Shrine

【Courtesy Call and Exchange】 (U.S.) The America-Japan Society

【Observation】 (Canada) Ginza

Jul. 19 (Fri) Travel from Tokyo to Fukushima

【Observation】 Commutan Fukushima - Fukushima Prefecture Environmental Creation Center Communication Building

	【School Exchange】 Fukushima Prefectural Kitakata High School 【Meeting with the Host Families】 KITAKATA Tourist Product Association 【Homestay】 Kitakata City
Jul. 20 (Sat)	【Farewell Party with the Host Families】 【Cultural Experience】 Akabeko decorative painting experience & visit to a nostalgic Showa-period style store (Wakatsu Shoten)
Jul. 21 (Sun)	【Observation】 Tsurugajo Castle Travel from Fukushima to Tokyo 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)
Jul. 22 (Mon)	【Exchange】 Japan Bowl Supporters Group (observation of miniature works and creation of miniatures at SMALL WORLDS Miniature Museum) 【Reporting Session】 Presentation of program findings and action plans 【Courtesy Call】 Mrs. KISHIDA Yuko, Spouse of the Prime Minister of Japan
Jul. 23 (Tue)	【Observation】 Fukagawa Edo Museum Departure from Narita International Airport and Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Inbound Program

	
July 18 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. RAHM Emanuel, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, U.S. Embassy in Japan	July 18 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. Steven Lapointe, First Secretary, Public Affairs Department, Canadian Embassy in Japan



July 18 【Courtesy Call】 Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado

(Note) This photo is for this report alone and may not be disclosed on social media.

July 18 【Observation】

Suga Shrine



July 18 【Courtesy Call and Exchange】

The America-Japan Society

July 18 【Observation】

In front of the Kabukiza Theatre in Ginza



July 19 【Observation】

Commutan Fukushima - Fukushima Prefecture Environmental Creation Center Communication Building

July 19 【School Exchange】

Fukushima Prefectural Kitakata High School

	
July 20 【Farewell Party with the Host Families】	July 20 【Cultural Experience】 Akabeko decorative painting experience
	
July 21 【Observation】 Tsurugajo Castle	July 22 【Exchange】 Japan Bowl Supporters Group (SMALL WORLDS)
	
July 22 【Reporting Session】 Group photo	July 23 【Observation】 Fukagawa Edo Museum

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ High School Student (U.S.)

I really enjoyed the American Bowl students because they were as enthusiastic as we were to meet us. We stayed standing and talking for a long time because of how fun it was talking. I think talking at the Embassy was also really impressionable. Seeing how we can use our Japanese language skills and understanding in the future motivated me to study more.

◆ High School Student (Canada)

The homestay section of the trip was highly impressive to me. Our host family treated us with kindness and hospitality the whole way through and provided excellent activities. In just one day, I felt more immersed in the country of Japan than weeks of studying Japanese in Canada.

◆ Chaperone (Canada)

As a high school teacher, I really enjoyed spending time at the high school and learning about school and education in Japan. I was very impressed with Commutan Fukushima. The interactive and engaging nature of the displays helped me understand the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster and the efforts to recover and make Fukushima a safe and attractive place for residents and tourists alike.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Exchange School Student

It was difficult speaking in English, and I wasn't able to express myself at times, but I enjoyed trying to communicate with the participants, using gestures and what few words I knew. It was a great experience getting to know what they like and the differences between our countries.

◆ Host Family

I was a little worried if we could truly communicate, but they all spoke Japanese at different levels, and we were able to have a great time.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

	
July 18, 2024 (Instagram) High School Student (U.S.) Today I did something I've never done before. I went to a famous Japanese Shrine, Suga Jinja, and made a wish and got omamori charm. Together with KAKEHASHI members, I went to US	July 20, 2024 (Instagram) High School Student (Canada) Fukushima prefecture was a much needed breath of fresh air from Tokyo. The agricultural industry that the prefecture is famous for was so beautiful to see. Eating the fresh

Embassy. Thanks to the things I could do today, I wish more to continue my Japanese studies in the University. I'm looking forward to the coming activities.	produce and meeting amazingly kind locals was so heartwarming. Moreover, not to say that I did a homestay (ate the best food) AND went to a local high school and met the most incredible students ever !? So excited for what's next to come next in this trip.
	
July 20, 2024 (Fukushima-Minpo Newspaper) Japan Bowl finalists from the U.S. and Canada Intercultural exchange with Kitakata High School students Enjoying homestays until tomorrow	July 21, 2024 (KITAKATA Tourist Product Association's Facebook Page) 24 high school students from the U.S. and Canada visited Kitakata City on July 19th.

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

Locations: Tokyo, Fukushima Presentations by a total of 3 groups

U.S. (Group A)		
		
【Presentations of Program Findings】 ■ Findings Japanese public transportation is very clean and efficient, and navigable even for foreigners. There were very big stations with commercial districts. We learned at Commutan Fukushima that Japanese people value the environment and work together to overcome difficulties. ■ Prospects We will stay in touch with the people we met, continue studying Japanese, and seek opportunities to		

study, do internships, or work in Japan. We hope to engage in volunteer activities such as picking up trash.

【Action Plan】

We will do trash clean-up activities around our cities, become energy efficient, and promote usage of renewable energy (solar energy). Cleanliness and consideration of community is an important value in Japan. We will carry this value back to the U.S. We will be based out of our schools and colleges, and we will also join the KAKEHASHI Alumni committee.

U.S. (Group B)



【Presentations of Program Findings】

■ Findings

- So much discipline practiced by everyone in Japan.
- Public transportation was very safe and efficient, punctual, and accessible, and very clean overall. There was a lot of emphasis on separating trash properly and keeping the streets clean.
- Vending machines were everywhere!
- People are very kind, friendly, and accepting to many travelers.

■ Prospects

Many of us participants aim to take the JLPT to gain certification for our language skills, because certification will open more doors for our careers.

【Action Plan】

We will give presentations to our respective schools to explain the impact of our trip to Japan on our personal life and future plans. We will also encourage participation in Japan Bowl for incoming Japanese students at our schools.

Canada



【Presentations of Program Findings】

■ Findings

Tokyo: Has very close strong ties to Canada. City planning derived from its history as a castle city.
Fukushima: Has agricultural products (peaches, rice, berries), and rural communities are more naturally connected. Fukushima was a historically important prefecture during the Meiji period and during the war.

We also learned about the heavy decontamination efforts and considerable ethic towards nuclear cleanup and ensuring healthy radiation levels.

■ Prospects

We will continue studying Japanese. We are also considering to study in Japan or abroad, and even work in Japan.

【Action Plan】

After seeing the Japanese people's kindness and engagement with us, we want to replicate that in Canada. We will do Japan related volunteering within 2 month and beyond.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)