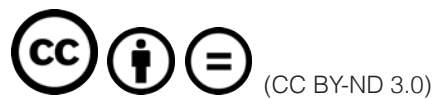




# COPYRIGHT

The collection of journal entries and photographs—written and submitted by the students and leaders of Rotary’s Ross Redmond Short Term Youth Exchange Program (RRSTYEP)—that comprise this book have been compiled by Veronica Koons.



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# GREETINGS FROM THE LEADERS

Upon arrival to each of the prefectures of Shikoku, Dr. Janice Smiell gave the following speech in Japanese. This speech was well received by the Rotarians and their families. The English translation and Japanese text are provided:

Past District Governor Dr. Inayama, Rotary presidents, Rotarians, host families, and friends.

Hello! My name is Janice Smiell. This is my husband, Jim Koons. We want to thank the Japanese Rotarians and host families for their kind hospitality. This is really a once in a lifetime experience. As representatives of District 7470, we are looking forward to experiencing your culture. It is nice to meet you.

こんにちわ！私の名前はスミールジャニスです。これは私の主人だ、クーンズジムです。私たちは日本のロータリアンたちとホストファミリーたちに親切なおもてなしに感謝します。このは、本当千載一遇の契機です。District 7470 の代表として、私たちはあなたた

ちの文化を経験することを楽しみにしています。よろしくお願いします。





1

# KYOTO & NARA



## DAY 1 - ZACH CERTNER

Today we left for Japan and began the first portion of this amazing trip and experience. Although we met at 4 AM and everyone was tired, I could also feel the energy and excitement that was brought along, too. As we departed from Newark, I realized that the 5 month wait was now over and this experience and immersion now became real. Immediately, relationships were renewed after a short break since our last meeting and we began to learn more about each other. In addition, a general conversation about what we were most excited to do and where we wanted to visit the most consumed some of the travel time. Filled with sleep, talking and waiting, the first leg of our trip was over and we were now in San Francisco after 6 hours.

The layover there (2.25 hours) seemed quick and we were soon stepping aboard the large, 2-story plane. As I walked to the back of the plane, I noticed the faces of everyone-- some excited, some scared or nervous or possibly afraid. Although the flight was long and the in-flight entertainment system was broken, we all managed to make it and we finally arrived in Osaka. As we walked out of customs, we

were greeted by a camera crew to welcome the newcomers, fellow Rotarians, to their home country. We then embarked on the 2 hour bus ride to Kyoto where we would spend the next few days not only acclimating but also immersing into the Japanese culture.

When we got to Kyoto, we went to our first dinner and the introduction to Japanese food. Most of us took advantage of the buffet as an opportunity to try a little of everything. The new food was both good and bad but learning about new food is always good. After dinner we went out in small groups to explore the city (our hotel is downtown so this was a short walk). It was interesting to see all of the dress styles, what Japanese like to do at night and how we could interact with everyone we saw. Although it was a long day, it was full of new and interesting things and I can't wait for the rest of the 3 weeks!

## DAY 2 - NICK FISCHER

Today has been an interesting day. We arrived in Kyoto and the hotel that we are in is very nice. It is in downtown Kyoto. We walked into town in small groups and had some interesting experiences. Not having to speak Japanese in over a year, I forgot a lot-- this put me into some awkward situations. Today I had to speak to some Japanese people and I realized that I really should have brushed up on what I had forgotten! I plan to study the language more when I get home.

## DAY 3 - MEG GUNSON

With a 7AM wake up call, our day started early! We had a buffet style breakfast at our hotel with both traditional Japanese and Western foods. Then, we met our tour guide, Yumi. Yumi was with us for the whole day.

First we traveled to Ryoanji Temple, one of many temples we would visit during the trip. It was also the first time we took off our shoes to go into a building which is a crazy concept because I could never imagine a place where Americans all took their shoes off. This temple signified perfection because there is no place I could stand to see ALL 15 rocks in the Zen rock garden (meaning that we have not reached perfection).

Next, we went to the Golden Pavillion or the Rokuon-Jim Temple. This temple was gilded with 22K gold (some silver mixed in) and it was gorgeous. Here we met a group of students from East Japan. As soon as we signaled a picture, they swarmed the boys-- it was crazy!

After that, we headed to the biggest bamboo forest in Japan! I learned that bamboo can grow one meter a day in the wet season! It was a gorgeous walk with great photo opportunities. Then we

went to lunch and had Bento boxes. Here I tried raw tuna and tempura shrimp which was delicious! Everyone tried at least one new thing including different types of tofu, raw squid, tiny dried sardines and other unidentified things. After lunch we were able to walk around and we got green tea ice cream. Here, most of us used an Eastern "squat" toilet. An experience to say the least...

Lastly, we went to Kiyomizu Temple where there were several colorful temples and a love stone. In that area, there were 2 rocks about 50 ft apart and if you could walk from one to the other with your eyes closed, you were destined for a great love life. We would not have known this if Jim didn't track us down after we wandered off-- he saved the day!

After dinner in the hotel, we got to explore even more of Kyoto City. We ate street food and met various locals (with the help of my English to Japanese book). Andorran, one of the locals, was the owner of a sushi restaurant and although she didn't speak English, she was so sweet and willing to try to understand us.

I am so excited for the first home stay and can't wait to meet my first family!

## DAY 4 - CASSIE TURCZYN

Today, we visited Nara and the Todai-Jim Temple and saw the Great Buddha. At the park, there were tons and tons (hundreds) of deer around. You could feed them and they'd come running and follow you for food--it was funny to watch the people run away.

There was one deer that started to eat my shirt, but it's OK because now I can say "you see this mark? Fight with a deer!"

The tour guide (Yumi) told us that the deer were brought here for the nearby Shinto shrine and it was illegal to kill them. In fact, if someone killed one, they would put it in another person's yard and it would be passed on through the night because the person who owned the property where it was found in the morning would be charged with the crime--the origin of "passing the buck."

Then we saw the largest wooden structure in Japan, the gate to the temple. It was simply awe-inspiring. Inside the temple, the Great Buddha seemed even bigger, if possible. The whole temple was filled with gigantic statues. I've never seen anything like it! I bought a few charms before we left for Takushima--they must stay in the wrapper until the person who it is intended for receives it so that the blessing placed by the buddhist monk is not lost. We went over the

longest bridge in the world to Tokushima. It was awesome. After 2 hours of driving, we arrived at a Rotary reception where I met my first host family--Kimura. The family consists of the mom, dad, 15 yr-old daughter (Lisa/Risa), their puppy (Lin-chan), and their grandmother, sister and 14 yr-old daughter who live next door. It was a bit awkward at first, but we warmed up quickly. They were very kind and giving. The food they made for dinner was soooooo good. It was all these meats and vegetables in a cooking pot. Simply delish! Then it was time for bathing and bed. It was my first experience with a Japanese bathroom. It was quite different, especially the intricate toilet. For bed, we slept on the floor on futons in a tatami mat room. It seemed that the futons would be rock-hard but they were super-comfy. I just know the rest of this trip will be amazing-- it already is. I love it here!



2

TOKUSHIMA



## DAY 5 - KENDALL GEORGE

Homestay in the woods...

On the bus to Tokushima, I was the first one on the list to finally hear where I would be staying for the next 4 nights. Oshira-san pulled out his papers, scanned across the row with my name and immediately started laughing hysterically. I was so confused, and now a little nervous, but I waited to hear my fate. Through Oshira-san's hysteria and strong Japanese accent, he said "enjoy your next three days in nature hahahahaha!" He said that Emily and I would be staying two hours outside of the city, seemingly in the middle of nowhere of the mountains.

At that point, I was even more confused because I love nature. We drove the two hours to our new house with our new family, and began our first day in the morning. Our house was right along a beautiful river that cut through the mountains, on which we would raft down with our 55 year old host-mom and a crazy Australian guide. We ran across ancient vine bridges and saw some of the oldest hatched-roofed houses in Shikoku. We drove up and through the mountains, saw beautiful views and old Buddhist temples, and finished our days with family-style dinners at our host-family's house. Each night

we had the option of bathing in the hot springs of our host-family's hotel that was just down the street of their house.

Rather than being stranded in the middle of the woods for three days, Emily and I were living the life with the absolutely most welcoming family in Japan. I could not have asked for a better way to start off the trip.

## DAY 6 - ALEC BUCCINO

My story in Tokushima Prefecture for these past 2 days has been truly incredible. I have been staying with 2 other Rotary Students at the home of Seijo Fukushima, a Buddhist priest who lives in a big temple along with his wife, son, and his son's wife. It is unlike anything I have ever experienced. Every morning I wake up to a traditional Japanese breakfast. I bathed in a special wash room, and I slept on a futon in a tatami mat room. Everything here is beautiful and peaceful. Fukushimasan and his family have all been extraordinarily kind and hospitable towards me and the other students.

It will be incredibly sad to say goodbye on Thursday but I will remember them and their kindness always.

Today, I rejoined the Rotary group for sightseeing-- we went to see the great Naruto Whirlpools which were unfortunately not visible at the time there because it was low tide. Still, the walk across the bridge was amazing. Then, we went to an art museum (one of Japan's largest) which was home to many reproductions of famous classic works from all over the world over time. The museum was built by Otsuka Pharmaceuticals in an effort to make durable ceramic reproductions of classics that are virtually indestructible

available to all to see and even touch. This was another wonderful experience --we saw the Mona Lisa and a to-scale Sistine Chapel!

After the museum, we went to have lunch at an all-you-can-eat cafe noted for its desserts. The food was delicious and I think I ate everything. After lunch, we did something truly amazing--we went to a Japanese highschool!

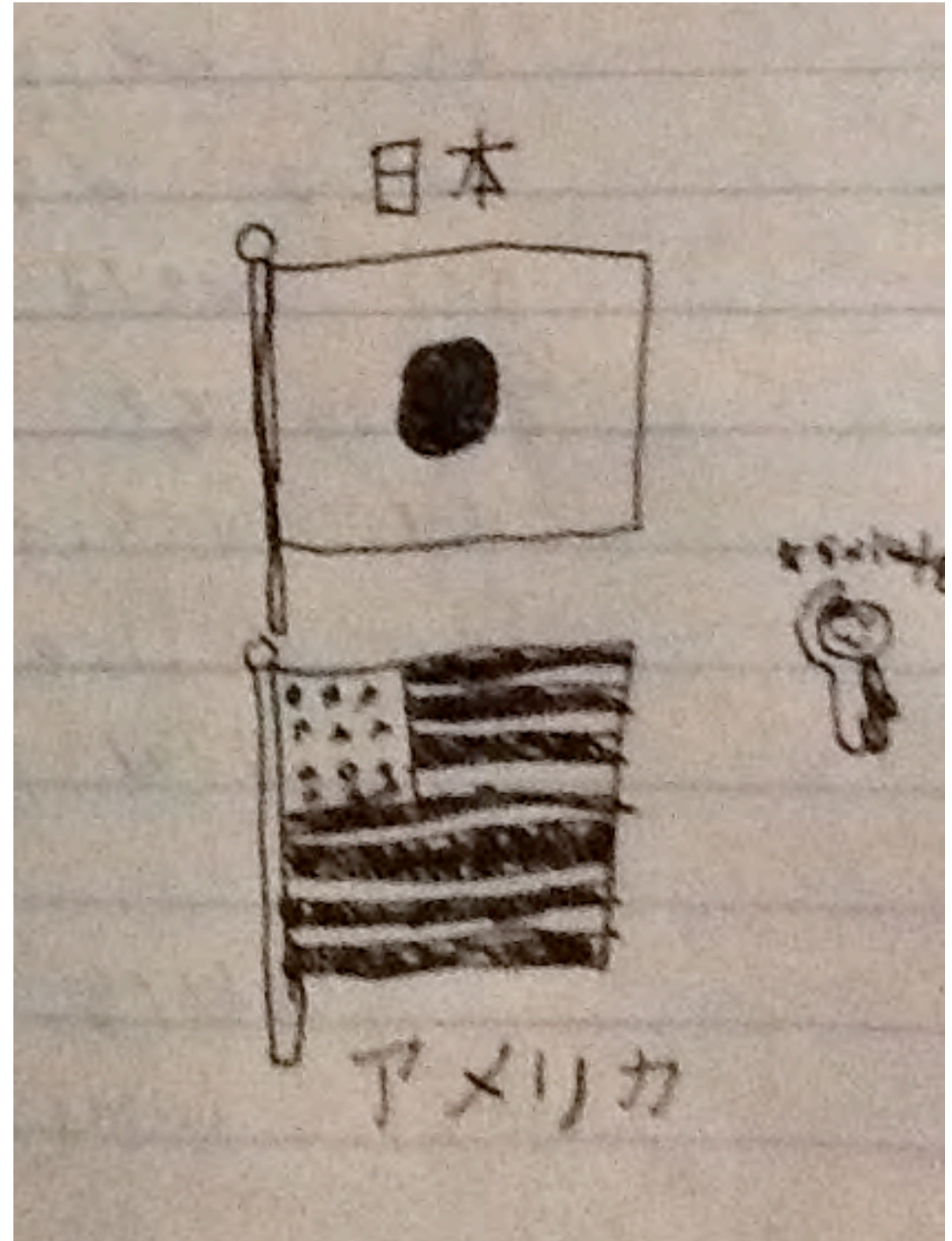
We attended two classes--calligraphy and English. In calligraphy, I learned to write Kanji the proper way. It was hard, but the Japanese student-teachers were nice and patient with helping me. After calligraphy, we had English class and I will tell you, it was so much fun! In order to help the Japanese students with their studies, we talked to them in English and helped excel their skills. They were all very nice and excited to socialize with us. I enjoyed our visit very much and believe I made plenty of new friends.

Before we left for our host family homes, the school and played traditional Japanese music for us. It was some of the most beautiful music ever and I enjoyed it very much.



Tomorrow, Fukushimasan's friend, Yamado, will take me to the hot spring and to eat sushi-- I am sure it will be so much fun!

I am having an absolutely great time in Japan and I believe it is only going to get better and better!



## DAY 7 - EMILY PECK

I really enjoyed my first home stay. We always had a feast for dinner and breakfast. The atmosphere in the home was welcoming and I just didn't want to leave. We did a lot of sightseeing and we even got to make our own noodles from scratch. But my favorite experience from this home stay was going white water rafting with my home stay mom Masayo-san. It was both her and my first time white water rafting and I would love to do it again. I will miss them a lot.

## What I will remember most about Tokushima:

I'll always remember the BBQ with many of my host family's friends and the large assortment of fresh seafood. They all looked at me to try the "owabi" which was moving shortly before I tried it. Then when I left, the host father said, "I will never forget you." Which he clearly made an earnest effort to remember because he barely spoke English. -Jill

I will always remember the great host family that I stayed with. The parents were great and so were the kids. I will always remember the great home stay I had in Tokushima as my first in Japan. I hope to keep in touch with this family.

-anonymous

I will always remember their hospitality and generosity --they gave us kimonos [yukatas]and so many gifts but the best thing they gave us was making us feel welcome and comfortable. It's crazy how you can love another family after only 4 days without being able to speak the same language.

-anonymous

I will always remember the family and family- friends barbecue that the Tamura family had for us. We made okonomiyaki and yakisoba and the family gave us many gifts. It was a great honor.

-anonymous

I will remember most rafting with my host-mom, Masayusan. She is 55 and probably 5 ft tall, and she decided to go rafting with us for the first time. This was pretty intense rafting, but Masayusan had so much fun. At first she was terrified, but then she was laughing harder than I had ever seen her laugh before. It was a great time.

-Kendall

I will always remember how warm and welcoming my family was. They were extremely poor and had nothing but tried to give us everything. It was a great week.

--anonymous

I will always remember the warm hospitality of the Shoharson family and friends and the drunk friend at the BBQ.

--anonymous

I will always remember all of the good memories I had with my adorable little sister, Mutsumi. When she was playing with us, we always had fun goofing off or having a tickle fight.

--anonymous



I will always remember making Okinomyaki at home with my host siblings and parents. It was a lot of fun even though we didn't know what was going on.

--anonymous

I will remember the time they bought us yukatas and we went to get our hair done for them. We looked so awesome. I was so happy.

--anonymous

My favorite memory from Tokushima would be my last night with my host family. They held a BBQ for us and the kids invited their friends to join us. We had a great time talking and playing games. Though it was simple, it was so much fun to talk with kids our ages and relate to them!

--anonymous

I will always remember when we went to our host-Mom's friend's beauty salon and got our hair done then put on our yukatas. Later, we went to a Japanese tea house all dresses up.

--anonymous

I will remember the night we had the famous Tokushima ramen. Also, I will remember the fun at the chemistry class and meeting new friends in Joto highschool.

--anonymous

Being given silverware as a gift.

--anonymous

I loved everything about my home stay family. I loved how welcoming they were. We never spent the day inside. We went rafting, sightseeing, and we even got to make our own noodles to eat. I will miss them very much.

-Emily Peck

I think what I will remember most about my stay is getting to live in a Buddhist Temple for 3 days with some of the nicest people ever. Fukushima-san and his family were very, very interesting and I loved every minute of staying in their beautiful home.

--Alec

My most memorable moment with my family in Tokushima were the times we spent in the shopping mall. It was a lot different than an American mall, and I enjoyed it a lot.

--Michael Bastady

My most memorable moments were with my host family. I will never forget the time I spent with them. Many were some of the nicest people I have ever met.

--Nick Fischer

My most memorable moment in Tokushima was when we went to the fire station and I got to see the call center. We also got to ride on the ladder truck all the way up to 50 meters--thank-you Mr Koons, Oshima-san, and the Tokushima Fire Department for taking Michael and me.

--Leland

My most memorable moment in Tokushima would have to be staying in the magnificent Temple. The look of the Temple was beautiful and the inside was so calm and serene. It was an amazing site.

--anonymous

My most memorable moment in Tokushima was when my roommates and I took part in a traditional tea ceremony with our host parents. The tea was neither good nor bad, but the process of pouring, serving, and drinking the tea was very complex. It was definitely an interesting experience.

--anonymous

My most memorable moment in Tokushima was going for sushi with my family. I felt adventurous and had multiple dishes I wouldn't imagine having in America.

--anonymous

Getting full sets of kimonos[yukatas] for free from a designer store!

--anonymous

My most memorable moment in Tokushima was going to a restaurant in the mountains with my host family.

--anonymous

I will remember buying a ridiculous outfit in the shopping outlet. Also how great meals were-- because of how generous they were giving us so much great food.

--anonymous

I will always remember going shopping in the city with Kohei and his friends and wasting like 1000 yen to win one HiChew in the arcade.

--anonymous





3

KAGAWA



## DAY 8 - MARY KATE EFFNER

Today was a fun day. We woke up at 8 am, got dressed, and then got a visit from our host sister before she left for school. She gave Liz and me a little letter in English and it was so cute. She left for school and we ate breakfast with our host mother. We had fish, eggs, tomatoes, miso soup, and rice which were all delicious.

After breakfast, we packed our things, said goodbye to our dog Andy and headed for the hotel. When we arrived, we put our luggage on the bus and met up with the group. After catching up with everyone we gave our host parents a hug and got on the bus. I was so sad to say goodbye, they were so kind and generous. They really made us feel at home.

We drove for an hour and got to catch up with group. Everyone had a great story to tell and it's good to hear that everyone is having a great time too. After an hour of driving, we stopped at a rest stop. There we went to the bathroom and bought milk tea, of course. After that, we drove for another hour before arriving at the Kagawa hotel.

In the lobby, we all enjoyed a brief moment of WiFi before heading upstairs to the Rotary meeting. We walked in with applause from our anxious families and I was excited to see who my new roommate,

Jill, and I would be staying with next. We met our host father and his friend who spoke English. After saying hello, we introduced ourselves to everyone at the Rotary meeting and ate a yummy lunch.

After eating, we left with our host father and his friend and stopped at a fan factory owned by a fellow Rotarian. Jill, Clare, Emily, and I got a tour of a plastic fan factory and it was really interesting. Everything here is so efficient. We then drove a half an hour and parked in front of a house. We got out of the car and walked for five minutes to get to an autoparts store. We walked up four flights of stairs and arrived at our house and it is beautiful. It's so big and has an amazing living room. They then showed us our room which is huge, has two big beds, a couch, a big TV, A/C, and an amazing view of the city. They even left us a basket of candy!

After seeing part of the house, we sat down and met our host mother and younger sister who looks to be about 24 years old. They gave us cake and discussed our schedule for the next few days. This plan includes taking us to an island where a famous movie was filmed and I can't wait!

Later we went on a walk with our host father and his friend. When the art museum we were going to was closed, we headed for the Marugame Castle (which we can see from our window). After walking really far and climbing a ridiculously steep hill, we reached the top. Even though it was hot and sweaty, the view was worth it. After looking, we made the long walk down the hill, the longer walk home, and the trip up the four flights of stairs.

When we finally got home, we gladly took showers and then went to the sushi restaurant. Fresh sushi went around on a conveyor belt and you could pick up whatever you wanted. Everything was so fresh and delicious...we were in sushi heaven and so full afterward.

Arriving at home, we said goodbye to our father's friend for the night and went upstairs. Our family rented the movie that was shot on the island that we're going to visit. It was in complete Japanese, so needless to say it was interesting to watch. We ate some of the snacks that our family gave us while we watched and then went to bed after fighting with the A/C.

I can't wait for our adventures tomorrow!

## DAY 9 - JESSE WEINSTEN

The day started with a nice and simple breakfast: egg, sausage, and onigiri (rice balls). After a subsequent shower, I sat down on the couch and waited for the day to start. Eventually, our host father's best friend, President of something (didn't know at the time), arrived to take us to the most famous bridge in Japan where we slowly crossed,, taking pictures and selfies. After, we had a nice soba lunch as we watched a black bear statue pee into the valley. Then, we went to the president's office where we sat and drank tea. It was there that the president gave us pens; it was a pen company. He then had his cute secretary drive us to a traditional hotel where we got a very interesting tour. We stopped at a 100 yen store where we got absolutely nothing and carried on. We returned to the office where our host father picked us up and took us home for some free time. After two hours, we went to the beach for a beautiful seaside barbecue to end the day.



## DAY 10 - SETON KOONS

So today is my third day with my Kagawa family! I'm staying with the grandparents of the family, who my roommate Cassie and I call mommy and Gigi. We've been having a blast!! Last night we had a welcome party, Japanese BBQ, where we both tried Liver and tongue, and Cassie challenged herself to intestines as well! i only found the tongue enjoyable but she liked all 3. Today we woke up bright and early, 6:30AM, to go to our host fathers udon shop to make our own udon! It was so much fun. Later for breakfast we enjoyed a nice big bowl of our udon with a cracked egg over it. Oyshi! We then returned home for an hour, where I took a nap. Next we met with our translator, Yu (high school student coming to NJ in Aug) and a college student. We went to an onsen for a Kabuki show with our parents, their grandchild Soul, and friends ... It was quite an interesting experience to say the least! That was an all day affair, but after we went to a thrift shop and then Karaoke!!! That was SO much fun. After a while we returned home, and spent time with our host parents and grandchildren. They are so cute and remind me so much of my nieces and nephews! Although this family

doesn't speak English, we really have been making the most of our time and having so much fun anyway. Tomorrow we will be going to their grandchilds soccer game and then calligraphy class and shopping! I'm so excited!

## DAY 11 - WILLIAM WALLACE

### UDON

After a late night of eating and talking, Trevor and I rolled into bed at a late hour. Unbeknownst to us, our wake-up call would be around 9:30. Our host family let us sleep in today. When we finally woke up, we were expecting breakfast like always, but we were rushed into the family car heading to an unknown destination. The only snippets of Japanese that we could understand was the brief mentioning of "udon"--the elusive noodle we had been hearing about our entire stay in Kagawa. Not only would I get to hand-make this famous noodle, the car ride there was long and hot, only fueling my appetite further after a lack of breakfast. After parking the car, the family lead us to a shop in the middle of a bustling marketplace. There are other Japanese people in the shop as well, presumably waiting to make udon noodles, too. Trevor and I made small talk as we browsed the typical Japanese shop in which the only notable feature was a massive room hosting one super toilet that rested on a transparent floor under which koi swam. Also, as you sat on the toilet, you noticed the extra high ceiling from which hundreds of paper cranes were hanging.

So after using said toilet, we walked upstairs and began the process of making Udon noodles. First, you knead the dough (flour, salt and water only) for 5-10 minutes. Next, you have to press it hard onto the table to get all of the dough together. The fun part came next. We all put our dough balls into plastic bags and the Udon sensei brought out some mats. J-pop began blasting from all corners of the room, my dough was on the floor, and I was dancing on it. I pounded the dough with my feet for ten minutes straight--all on an empty stomach. After carefully removing the dough from the bags, rolling up the dough and making careful cuts, our noodles were ready. We walked down to another room with rows of steaming pots of water.

The Udon noodles were fabulous! I think that because of the large size of the noodles, they absorb much more flavor from the broth. I can't really say much more about the noodles, you really have to experience them to fully understand them.

## CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN

The next part of our day was the climbing of a 600 meter+ high mountain. There were steps the whole way up and shops along the way. Although the mountain was very tall, I was naive and sprinted up the first part of the mountain. About 10 minutes in, I was exhausted and not even one-fourth the way up. It was a personal struggle to make it to the top with the temperature reaching 100 degrees F and humidity near 100%. I sweat through my entire shirt. But I pushed on. About an hour and a half later, I reached the top and got a great picture with the breathtaking view in the background. It was totally worth it. Coming down the mountain was just as tough, but when we stopped for ice cream, my mind and body were satisfied.

## EVENING

After our ascent of the mountain, we were all exhausted and Trevor and I took naps. When we awoke, a strange smell reached our rooms. It was about dinner time and we walked into the living room. Here laid the oddest meal I had ever had in Japan. On the table were 2 jumbo pizzas, miso soup, and tea. Trevor and I could not stop laughing. It seemed almost ridiculous. We sat down and ate. Our host family told us that they have pizza only 2 times a year. That's crazy! After dinner we were still tired and decided to have an early night because we had to wake up early the next morning for our departure. I will dearly miss the Hasui family and their generous hospitality. I await my visit to Hiroshima.

## What I will remember most about Kagawa:

In my Homestay family, I had 3 younger siblings: 2 girls and 1 boy. They always kept me busy. I really enjoyed the Udon noodles and trying on yukatas--although it was very hot in them.

--Emily

I really enjoyed getting sushi for dinner with a rotating conveyer belt. I shared sushi with all of the family members and had the opportunity to try many different kinds of fish. They made me feel like I was part of the family.

--Jill

I will remember my host father and his friend going out for the best food and drinks I have ever had in my life. We celebrated in small rooms, private beaches and large houses. It was a fabulous experience.

--Zach

I had such a great time making Udon noodles and authentic Japanese sweets--it was so fun and such a great experience. They also gave us many gifts--way too generous!

--anonymous

I will remember most my host sister who is 27 telling me that you have to be 16 years old to ride a bicycle. She meant to say motorcycle, but ended up being the funniest joke over all 4 days. The joke never got old for them.

--Kendall

I will remember the boat ride we went on and the views we had on the island we were on.

--Meg

I will remember the incredible views and nature at Shodishima, including waterfalls, mountain views, valleys, etc.

--Yana

I will remember the time when our family ordered us pizza.

--Will

I will remember the dogs the family had.

--anonymous



I will remember going to the baseball stadium and watching the Rotarians play. I saw a 70 year old man hit a baseball.

--Parker

I will always remember climbing to the top of a mountain and then having the best ice cream EVER!

--Trevor

I will remember climbing up the steep hill to Marugame Castle and having our host father (who is not young) being a mile ahead of us.

--Mary Kate

My absolute favorite memory from Kagawa is simply meeting my host family and getting to know them. They were grandparents so we called them GiGi and Mommy! All of their grandchildren were so cute and funny, they're such a wonderful family! They made me miss all my nieces and nephews!

--Seton

I loved Kagawa. Meeting my favorite host family yet. Momi and GiGi ♥. They're so cute and awesome. Their family is adorable and hilarious. It was all one big beautiful memory.

--Cassie

I will always remember playing different card games with all the kids in my house in Kagawa.

--anonymous

My most memorable moments in Kagawa is when I got to make a glass receptacle and when I climbed the 650 stairs.

--anonymous

I will always remember stumbling upon a random group of Japanese kids playing volleyball. I walked up and asked to play and spent a good 40 minutes playing.

--anonymous

Playing Wii and losing every mini-game.

--anonymous

When I found an elevator in my host family's house.

--anonymous

Going to Koshin Stadium to watch the Takamatsu-West Rotary Club win 19-2 in baseball.

--anonymous

They were nice people. I plan to visit one day once I eventually return to Japan in the future. They taught me a lot about their relations to Samurai from hundreds of years ago.

--Nick

When I went to my host sister's (Navumi) school and got to see the archery club and baseball club and hanged out with Navumi and her friends.

--Alec

What I remember about Kagawa is the monkey park and the nearly 8,000 stairs I climbed --so narrow and windy it makes you dizzy.

--anonymous



4

HIROSHIMA

## DAY 12 - YANA KROPOTOVA

After a 6 AM wake-up call, we left our host family in Shodoshima. The 30 minute boat ride back to the main land of the Kagawa prefecture served as a final memory of our 4 day stay in Kagawa. As students collected at a hotel on the mainland we piled onto the tour bus and prepared for the long journey to Hiroshima. Before we arrived in Hiroshima, however, we stopped at several sight-seeing spots. The first stop was the Kintai-Kyo Bridge.

The Kintai-Kyo Bridge was beautiful. While walking under it, you could see the intricate structure of the bridge. When we went onto the bridge we crossed into another part of the city. While there, we went to a 100 flavor ice cream shop which was refreshing during the sweltering hot day.

After the bridge, our last stop before Hiroshima was the Hukushima Shrine where when the tide comes in, the shrine looks like it is standing on water. When the tide is receding, which it was when we were there, you can walk right up to it and see the age of the wood and carvings. While walking up to the shrine, it was surprising how many hundreds of tiny crabs surrounded the shrine because of the

receding water. It was interesting to see how nature and history combined to create a beautiful spectacle.



## DAY 13 - HIROSHIMA PEACE MEMORIAL PARK

On this day, the students and leaders visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum was created in 1954 and is open throughout the year. It is dedicated to the legacy of Hiroshima and the memories of those affected by the nuclear attack and its aftereffects, as well as advocating world peace.

The students were asked to write about their impressions and experiences about the park and museum. The following pages are their impressions.





By Clarissa Van Ryzin

Throughout our entire visit to Hiroshima Peace Park and Memorial Museum the main thing going through my mind was simply , peace. I was very impressed that Hiroshima could go from complete devastation to spreading their message of peace without focusing on blame. I learned a lot about the bomb while going through the museum. Seeing the dioramas of before and after the explosion along with the statistics about the current amount of bombs that each of the major countries currently possess makes me wish that atomic bombs could not be used. There shouldn't be any innocent people killed at war. In a perfect world there wouldn't be any war at all. The entire experience truly motivated me to spread the message of peace.

By Jesse Weinstein

Hiroshima was a terrifying experience for me. Having read the book, I re-imagined every account of the bomb. It was bone-chilling to learn about the heat of the explosion and seeing the before and after dioramas of the city. However, seeing that the 3-way bridge target of the bomb still stood to this day reminded me that there is always hope.

By Michael Bastady

Going to Hiroshima made me realize, or remember, that every large scale catastrophic event in history has immediate consequences to individuals involved. It can define a generation. While we see the event as historical, the incredible effect that it has on people cannot

always be defined. Everyone has tis/her own tragic story and it is horrible to stop and listen to many of them. They make you realize that it might be a good idea to think about these individuals in plans like this [Manhattan Project].

By Nick Fischer

I believe that visiting Hiroshima was an important experience. Not only did it show a different perspective on WWII, but it also showed us how important it is to keep peace in the world to prevent something as bad as this from happening once again.

By Joshua Wolfe

Even before going to Hiroshima I knew that the exhibit would be a powerful thing to me and I was right. Seeing all of the exhibits and memorials about Hiroshima was an inspiring symbol of peace. It shows the horror of atomic weapons and that peace in the world will never happen unless all atomic weapons are destroyed. I hope that the monuments and exhibits in Hiroshima will show the world that there is no need for atomic weapons.

By Cassie Turcsyn

When I visited the Hiroshima Memorial I wasn't sure what to expect. I knew what had happened, but I didn't know the extent of the true tragedy that took place. I was overcome with many emotions such as sadness and regret for the actions America decided to take. Yet, I am now set on the demolition of all nuclear weapons in support of

world peace. It was a very moving experience--one I will never forget.

By Emily Peck

Being in Hiroshima made me feel the effects that war has on those who are not directly involved in the conflicts of governments. Lives were lost and people suffered. It also enabled me to understand the war from the point of view of others and see the devastation of nuclear weapons. Being in Hiroshima was a very sad experience.

By Mary Kate Effner

The Hiroshima Memorial was something that I really wanted to see again when I came back for a second time. Last year, it was extremely devastating and an opinion-changing experience for me. I was interested to see how it would affect me the second time. Even this year, I was struck by the power of the memorial and was thankful that I got to see it again. I was impressed by how much they focus on peace and it makes me want to spread peace, as well.

By Julia Smith

When visiting the a-bomb museum and seeing the aftermath of a "retaliation" it looks a lot worse on the Japanese side than the American side. I was a bit shocked about the stretchy skin and the clothes burning to your skin and the whole disintegrating on the spot. All the paper cranes actually made me want to creates chain of them

and bring it just to carry a memory of one of the victims --living human beings that probably had no idea what was happening.

By Meg Gunson

Going into Hiroshima, some in the group were apprehensive about the experience, as was I. As we stepped off the bus in front of the only still-standing building, I knew this would be an experience. Then as we walked around the outdoor memorials and I saw the mass grave, I got shivers down my spine. At this moment, I knew my trip to Japan was worthwhile.

As we walked toward the museum, we saw a group of Americans who we later would meet. As I entered the museum, I could feel the tension in the air--quiet, still, and calm. As we observed the museum displays at our own pace, I realized how different this experience would be from any other one I will ever endure. The most frightening sight I saw was when we walked by display cases of remains of burnt clothes, broken or melted glasses and deteriorated bones. During this time, we talked to the American all-star baseball team and we found out that they were there playing a 5 game series (1-2, so far). Not only was the American team there, but some Japanese players and coaches were also there. I was amazed how both teams put competition aside and spent time attending the museum.

Altogether, the A-bomb museum was a changing experience and one of my favorite things we did in Japan.

By Seton Koons

Although it is the second time visiting, the city still amazes me. On our first night there, we were able to enjoy free time after some sight-seeing. The next morning we visited the Peace Park and Memorial Museum. The park is beautiful but there is still a somber tone. It was important to show respect during this visit. Walking through the museum was just as difficult yet captivating as last year. The amount of nuclear warheads existing on our planet is astonishing after we learned the devastating results of their use.

By William Wallace

I was blown away by how much impact Hiroshima made on me. It really changed my perspective on nuclear weapons. I really never understood the total impact of the atomic weapons. I think that we should totally change our ideas about nuclear weapons. There are not enough words to describe the terrible fate of Hiroshima City in 1945. I hope that no other people ever in the history of the world have to be subjected to the terrible pain and suffering that affected Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

By Ian Rahimi

I've always known the deployment of the atomic bomb onto the small city of Hiroshima was a tragedy. Having visited the city, the word "tragedy" now holds much more weight. The city itself is so lively it's hardly believable that less than a century ago it was obliterated. If not for the haunting image of the dome on its skyline, Hiroshima would seem like any other city. The intentional preservation

of some of the ruined buildings as well as the memorial park remind the world that lest we take care, all of our cities might be ruins.

Seeing the monument to those who were lost that day is deeply sad-denying. Even so, in their mourning, a seed of inspiration existed where the people of Hiroshima dream of a world with no nuclear weapons. They plaster their walls and adorn their t-shirts to spread this ideal. To me the true zeal of the inhabitants of Hiroshima in their crusade against nuclear weapons is best exemplified by the wall of letters of protest in the A-bomb Museum. For each nuclear test (totaling in the hundreds), the mayor of Hiroshima wrote a letter beseeching world leaders to end it. That truly shows exactly how Hiroshima has affected the world.

As for how Hiroshima affected me, I found it to be one of the saddest single places I have ever seen. The sheer terror experienced by the Japanese people led them to beg the world to never allow such a tragedy to happen again.

By Yana Kropotova

Visiting Hiroshima and the A-bomb Museum was an eye-opening experience. We learned about the horrors of the bomb in school but that doesn't compare to seeing actual remnants of buildings and children's clothing. The entire museum did a good job of portraying both emotion and fact. It was heart-breaking to learn not just how many lives were lost, but also how many families were torn apart. Imagining dealing with such horror, and all alone on top of everything, is impossible.



We also went to an outside mound that was the burial place for all of the un-identified bodies. Even for those people who survived this horrific event, never finding any family is just as emotionally scarring. Visiting Hiroshima was a good experience because it solidified my beliefs about the necessity of world peace and no nuclear weapons. Near the museum, there burns a flame that will only go out when all nuclear weapons are disarmed. I sincerely hope that this flame will not burn for much longer.

By Alec Buccino

The city of Hiroshims was a beautiful, interesting, and lively city. Its food was wonderful, its streets clean, and its people kind and beautiful. Today, it is hard to believe that the great city of Hiroshima was destroyed only 68 years ago by a chilling new weapon that ended a horrible bloody war. While in Hiroshima, we visited many of the memorials and museums in the city. The things I saw and the emotions I experienced were beyond words. The city seemed to be weeping still, and this overwhelming sadness consumed me. Seeing photos of destroyed buildings, charred bodies, stains from a vaporized body on a stone stair-- it was as if hell itself was unleashed upon the un expecting citizens of Hiroshima. After the horror of the A-bomb, I imagine that the people of Hiroshima would be angry and still hold a resentment towards Americans, but I was surprised with how friendly and helpful everyone was towards us. Instead of pointing fingers and holding resentment, the Japanese chose to look to their future and make sure that the tragedy of Hiroshima is never repeated in Japan or any other nation.

I have to admire the Japanese for choosing to forget a terrible war rather than constantly dwell on it like so many other people would. I do not hold resentment nor regret for what a nation did to Hiroshima. However, I am most certainly not proud of it and I am extremely sorry for the innocents that lost their lives 68 years ago. What Hiroshima has taught me is that the atomic bomb should never be used again and we should push for a world -wide nuclear disarmament. Let us take Japan's example, don't dwell on the tragedies of the past, but look to and insure the love and peace of the future.

By Zach Bruch

Being at Hiroshima was very sad. Though we were at war it is very unfortunate. So many civilians died. Hopefully something like this won't happen again and world peace can be in sight.

By Trevor Beecher

Visiting Hiroshima was chilling because of the past it has. Also it has been cleaned up so well you would never know what happened. It's amazing how far the Japanese people have come, and how no matter how devastating it was they found a message in it. There needs to be world peace, so that something this tragic never happens again.

By Abby Reza

We visited Hiroshima today. We saw the Dome, two memorials, and the peace museum. Everything was deeply moving, to the point where I ended up crying some.

At first, in the museum, there were a lot of technical explanations, like how the atomic bomb was constructed, and then some information on the hydrogen bomb. Evidently, fourteen cities were chosen for the target, but through a very uncaring process, Hiroshima was selected because of its size, location, population, and lack of prisoner of war camps. I always find myself appalled by the lack of humane conscience when people are planning large-scale destruction.

To show this, there were models depicting Hiroshima before and after the A-bomb. The before model showed many, many buildings, most of them houses, with about four large buildings. After the bomb, everything was gone, save the big buildings, but they were in ruins. I've thought about how the bomb impacted the city before, but it was another thing entirely to see the scale of the destruction in front of me. My stomach clenched, but I knew it was only about to get worse.

As I progressed into the second building, I saw a sculpted reconstruction of a mother and her children fleeing the bomb. Their skin was melting off, and their clothes had literally become part of their bodies. What was left of their clothes, anyway. I began to cry then, and I felt rather nauseous. One thing that really struck me, and I'm not sure if this was the designers' intention, but neither the mother nor her daughter were crying. The son was, but he was young. Their skin was in tatters, their city was burning, and people were dying all

around them, but they were not crying. They were too scared; it was etched in their expressions. You could see that the only thing on their minds was getting away, and that wounded me very, very deeply.

Further in, there were artifacts from the event. Most things were children's clothes, particularly those of junior high students, but there were also locks of hair and other detached pieces of skin. The skin was mutilated and looked like it had melted then re-solidified the worst part is that they had, which was, even after all that, still difficult to wrap my head around. There was also a watch, which was given to a man by his son that he never took off, and a shoe that a mother made for her daughter from her old kimono, and many other small treasures.

I was very moved, very touched. The experience was sobering and educational, and I had trouble laughing or even smiling for a little while after we left.

By Parker Pridgen

Visiting Hiroshima was a special experience that I will never forget. The fact that we stood in the area where the bomb had actually landed did not really hit me until after we arrived back in the US.

Not many people, especially young adults like us get to come in contact with such a place. Not having known that Hiroshima was bombed 70 years ago I would have no idea that it ever occurred because of how well Japan has overcome the matter and rebuilt their beloved city. Not only was this event tragic, but also it taught us a huge amount about the devastation nuclear weapons can cause. I

am glad that we were given the opportunity to see experience a part of America's history, or essentially the entire world's history.

By Leland Hemgren

Hiroshima was a reminder that war is not a politician's or soldiers' affair; war involves the civilian population as well. All politics aside, whether it was beneficial or not, does not change the absolute horrors of the atomic bomb. The marks of this weapon will scar the world, figuratively and literally with the "shadows" of people imprinted in the walls. Since World War II, Hiroshima has become a city promoting peace and the abandonment of all nuclear arms.



5

EHIME





## DAY 14 - JILL ROSAMILIA

Journal entry not submitted.

## DAY 15 - KATE DIQUOLLO

Today we had "family day." We had brunch at 11 which consisted of ramen noodles at an underground restaurant near the subway. It was actually really neat and we had time to shop afterwards with our host mom. Cassie and I were really lucky that we were able to shop with our host mom at unique little shops. I bought a few tapestries that had Japanese writing on them and smelled of sandalwood. I'm so excited to bring them home and hang them on my walls as they will remind me everyday of an unforgettable trip.

Cassie and I then went to the hot springs. I was reluctant at first, but once we got there, it was actually a really interesting experience. It was kind of hard to relax in the hot springs because it was so hot, but I'm really glad we tried something that was out of our comfort zones. We then made our way to the Matsuyama castle with a volunteer tour guide who spoke English. The best part about it was the chairlift to the castle. It was similar to a ski lift, and it was so relaxing listening to the wind chimes as we slowly made our way to the top, where we had an amazing view of the city. The castle was interesting too because of the historic background it had. Our tour guide

pointed out small square cut outs in the walls of the castle that allowed Japanese soldiers to shoot enemies or intruders with guns and arrows. We then stopped for drinks and snacks before heading back down. Cassie ordered freshly squeezed orange juice which was delicious - mainly because Matsuyama is known for its oranges.

After the castle, we headed home and helped cook dinner with our host mom and host sisters (Rio-age 5 and Azusa-age 2). We made pizza with them: one with tomato sauce, cheese and veggies and the other with mayonnaise and teriyaki chicken. I had so much fun making the pizza with them because they were so cute and so excited about it. We ate dinner when the girls' Papa came home and it was delicious. Homemade pizza is always the best but it was even better because we actually made it with our host family.

After dinner, the family gave us gifts which consisted of Japanese candy, chopsticks with our names on them, and Hello Kitty bags for



my six nieces and nephews. The Japanese host families are so generous and hospitable, it embarrasses me that I can't repay them for how much they have done for us. We played with the girls after dinner and then packed our suitcases and got our things ready before leaving the next morning.

Overall, it was an awesome home stay and it was definitely very different from my other ones. Our host parents were only 28 years old so it was certainly a different experience after having 80 year old host parents at the previous home stay. Even though the parents were young, and not too much older than I am, they were definitely very mature and wise beyond their years. However, I was very surprised to see that they didn't exactly discipline their young children. I guess I was always under the impression that Japanese parents were stricter with raising children than American parents, since Japanese students are so respectful and well behaved.

When Cassie asked our host mom why they host American students each year, she told us its because she's always wanted to travel to the US and experience another culture, but wasn't able to because she has young kids. That comment really stuck with me and made me appreciate our time spent in Matsuyama even more. I thought it was really sweet and genuine that she told us that. I'm definitely going to stay in touch with this family.

## DAY 16 - PARKER PRIDGEN

So far things were going great on the trip. We were on our third homestay in the prefecture, Ehime. I was partnered with Zach Bruch and William Wallace. We were so lucky to have such a great family, the Isizus. It was a large family that consisted of 5 children (Monami - 2, Majo - 8, Tomana - 9, Yota - 16, Hidenori - 18). July 12th was our last full day in Ehime. Our plan was to go to the beach. We got to wake up around 10am so we were really refreshed for our last day in Ehime. The only downside was that the kids could not come with us because they had school; same with the father who had to work. So it was just Zach, Will, myself, and our host stay mother. It was only about a 30-minute drive so we arrived in no time. The temperature had to be in the high 90s if not hotter. So if you can imagine the sand was so hot that we could not stand on it without flip flops on. We got to play beach volleyball and take in the sun until we had no other choice than to go in the water because it was so hot. The water was really nice and helped us cool down very easily. After we got out we enjoyed some shaved ice and sat in the shade. It was around 1pm when we left to go see this structure carved in the sand. It was a huge sand castle/ structure that supposedly was carved by people a long time ago, and was surprisingly still standing. After this we

drove home and got to hangout around the house. They had this bathing cage

where we played some baseball for a little while until the kids got home from school. When they got home we just hung around with them in the family room and watched some tv until dinner, which was around 6. The type of meal was called shabu shabu. It is a Japanese dish featuring thinly sliced beef and varied vegetables boiled in water. This was my first time having this meal so it was very good. It was especially awesome because the meat cooked in less than 10 seconds. After dinner our family surprised us with fireworks. We had a lot of fun playing around with the fireworks and taking pictures. Soon enough we ran out of fireworks to light off so we went back to the house. We then exchanged our farewell presents. We enjoyed seeing them try pop rocks and other American candies while it was fun for them to experience us trying their types of Japanese treats. As our night was coming to an end we became upset that we had to leave, but then again excited to see where our next homestay would take us.

## What I will remember most about Ehime:

My favorite memory will be the BBQ we went to. We had to catch our noodles as they went down a bamboo slide and later we played with sparklers (hanabi).

--Emily

I will remember hanging out on the beach and eating Japanese ice.

--anonymous

My favorite memory from Ehime was when Julia and I were dressed up in yukatas at the Rotary lunch and they had me try to juggle a soccer ball.

--Clarissa

I will remember most hanging out with my Japanese host grandfather watching old western movies on TV in English with Japanese subtitles in the morning before his work and during his lunch break. he owns a noodle factory that is basically attached to his house.

--Kendall

I will remember the most the high school cooking class I attended where the language barrier was a non-issue because we were doing a common hobby.

--Meg

I will always remember catching noodles in a man-made small stream for dinner and making cake on a bamboo stick with my family.

--Yana

My most memorable moment in Ehime was eating pasta and pizza with Japanese people at an Italian restaurant. We also met some JETs there.

--Will

Choosing just one memorable experience isn't possible. From the rich cultural experience from a night in Dogo to the Matsuyama castle to the incredible cuisine, my time in Ehime could only be described as incredible. I was blessed with an amazing host family, and consider myself very lucky to have been placed with them. They even threw me a birthday party, complete with cake! ♥

--Liz

I will remember going to the oldest bath house in all of Japan. Also playing around with my family and watching them try pop-rocks.

--Parker

My favorite memory from Ehime would have to be all the shaved ice me and Conor ate. (Also the BLT)

--Trevor

My favorite memory from Ehime would be teaching my host sister, Misaki, the slide game during the Rotary BBQ and watching her laugh like crazy.

--Mary Kate

My favorite memory from Seijo, Ehime would be when we were able to wear \$5000 kimonos and have a professional photo-shoot done. It was such an amazing experience that I will not forget.

--Seton

The most memorable time from Ehime was when I went to the Dogo Onsen. I will never forget seeing my future through the bodies of all those old women. Scarred for life. Gotta love it.

--Cassie

My most memorable moment was having noodles float down the large bamboo chute.

--anonymous

My most memorable moment was playing games with my host brother because language was not necessary.

--anonymous

Dressing in yukatas while our host grandpa cross-dressed in a kimono.

--Ian

I had a great time having family day with my host family. We went shopping and made pizza with our host mom and sisters. It was a great experience with one another even though there is a language barrier.

--anonymous

I really enjoyed simply hanging out in the living room with the host parents and making an effort to interact with them. I felt so close to them after the end of our stay and seeing my host-dad cry as we left let me know that they felt the same way.

--Jill



My most memorable time with my family in Ehime was the barbecue they had for us. we ate noodles that flowed down a bamboo stalk. it was the most fun I've had eating food.

--Michael

My most memorable event is when I dressed in Samurai clothes and had pictures taken.

--anonymous

My most memorable moment was setting off fireworks with a Japanese girl I met.

--Nick

I think that my most memorable experience in Ehime would be going to Matsuyama castle and getting to try on Samurai armor. I also loved bathing at Dogo Onsen, the oldest and most historic bath house in Japan!

--Alec

My favorite memory from Ehime was going to the confectionary factory. There were so many sweets it made me sugar-hyper just to

look at them. Now I have a box of Japanese sweets. I also made a friend here-- her name is Yuki and she loves cops lays anime!

--anonymous

My most memorable experience was going to a play. I didn't understand any of it but I enjoyed it a lot.

--anonymous

I bought bread. we also visited Matsuyama Castle. the stairs were terrifying but the castle itself was beautiful.

--anonymous



6  
KOCHI

## MY BEST HOMESTAY - JOSHUA WOLFE

My stay in Kochi was my best Homestay. I was close to the hotel at which we were staying our last night so after dinner, I knew what places to go to. It was fun walking through the city seeing all of the interesting shops and the street market. Also, going to the very nice restaurants was very cool, and overall, a good time.

## DAY 17 - ELIZABETH MADDOX

Technically, I was supposed to write yesterday, but I needed a little time to get my ideas together... I have so much to write about! Just writing one entry is admittedly a bit difficult, as I've found that I've learned so much these few weeks alone, and maybe even changed a bit as a person.

Needless to say, I've already noticed my Japanese skill levels improving. As a student of the language, it's become very clear to me that immersion, whenever possible, is absolutely the best way to learn. Not only is it much, much faster than traditional learning, but it truly allows the student to learn about and experience the culture in ways no textbook can teach, and (especially with a bit of a background in the language going in) is surprisingly effortless in comparison to the rigor of lessons. At the moment, I'm planning to Japanese at the AP level in the coming year, and I can safely say that my confidence in my Japanese-speaking abilities has grown significantly. But perhaps what's stuck with me the most is how true it is that deep down, we really aren't all that different. Though we've all heard the saying many times, with a limited perspective of the world, it remains far too easy to view those from different backgrounds as irreconcilably different from who we are and what we know, even to the point of

shutting out that which is unfamiliar to us, thus contributing to what amounts to a travestied perspective of the unfamiliar. As an American, I feel that our privileged background as a world leader allows for the continuation of this all too common phenomenon, and personally, I consider this brand of egocentrism to be nothing short of a tragedy of the human condition. As I write this, I'm sitting at a barbecue, discussing Ozzy Osbourne and Nirvana (in Japanese, of course) with my fellow partygoers and playing Smells Like Teen Spirit, which they all seem to know, over my phone speakers. I feel so at home, and I'm beginning to realize how beautifully irrelevant our supposed "barriers" are. In other words, I think I now truly understand what it really means to be human.



## DAY 18 - JULIA SMITH

It was an OK-sort of day. I felt sad that I was leaving such a wonderful host family. They were really nice and spoke pretty good English. I showed their daughter, Myoko, how to juggle pieces of candy which she thought was entertaining. She tried to copy and she was getting the hang of it. They said their farewells and the host sister and brother went off to school. Cassie and I and the host mom went white water rafting together. For some reason it felt like home to me. At the farewell party, when our host dad came, I wished the whole family would have come--I miss all the fun we had.

## DAY 19 - CLARISSA VAN RYZIN

The main event of today was going to the Shikoku Kochi Ryugado. Nit is a cave system about a mile long. It was very interesting to see how all of the rocks formed in the cave. Before going to the cave, we went to one of the family's diners for breakfast. We also went to a CD, DVD and book store, had some Starbucks, went to the mall, then lunch. After the caves, we visited Zach in the hospital. Lastly, after dinner, we all dropped our host brother off at a bus stop so that he could return to his university in Tokyo.

## DAY 20 - LELAND HEMGREN

### Farewell Reception

It is both a sad and proud time as we leave our generous hosts. For the past three weeks, they have taken us in as their children and gave us an experience we will never forget.. To celebrate, the Rotary had tons of food at the banquet as well as entertainment. The speeches that the Rotarians made were moving and made us all reflect upon the last three weeks. In return for the Japanese's generosity, we put on a talent show with performances ranging from rhythmic cups to martial arts performances---not to mention the dance we put on for them. All in all the farewell banquet reminded up of the Japanese's generosity and let us reflect on all we have learned on the exchange program.



## What I will remember most about Kochi:

My favorite thing in Kochi was the host family. They were fun and had a daughter who was two months early-- like me. The festival was amazing, too.

--anonymous

My favorite part of Kochi was all the wonderful people I met. My host family "the Yokoyamas" were some of the funniest people I ever met and we all had a grand time together going to a big festival and Kochi Castle. It was a blast and I will miss them greatly.

--Alec

My favorite thing here has been going to the beach. I had a lot of fun and got a bit of sunburn.

--anonymous

My favorite memory from Kochi is when we cooked our host family breakfast. It felt nice to give something back to our family! We had the kitchen to ourselves at 6:30AM to make chocolate chip pancakes!

--Seton

My favorite memory from Kochi was when we went white water rafting. It was such a fun time.

--anonymous

My favorite memory from Kochi was driving right up to the river and swimming across.

--anonymous

My favorite memory from Kochi was going to our host grandmother's house. She's so little and adorable and makes amazing food. We had a great time!

--Mary Kate

My favorite Kochi memory is when I went to dinner the first time with my host family. The hilarity that ensued was great.

--anonymous

My favorite memory in Kochi was canoeing and swimming in a beautiful river with my family and their friends. It was an absolutely gorgeous place and everyone had a wonderful time.

--anonymous

My favorite moment in Kochi was swimming at the beaches, and our host mother bought us a kayak for us to use.

--anonymous

I made new friends.

--Nick

I partied hard and loved every second spent with my host family.

--Jesse

I ate whale and eel.

--Ian

I went Kayaking.

--Zach B.

I will remember going to revolving (conveyor belt) sushi with my family and eating sushi for the first time and loving it.

--anonymous

I will remember most from Kochi going to a wedding reception with 350 people and 700 lb of tuna cut into pieces of sushi--so good.

--Kendall

I will remember going to the ocean with my host family and friends and spending good times with my host family.

--anonymous

My favorite memory of Kochi was going to see my friend in the hospital. I also enjoyed going to the beach and swimming out to these rocks.

--Parker

The thing I will remember most from Kochi is running into Parker randomly in the ocean.

--Trevor

My favorite part about Kochi was going canoeing

--Jill

The farewell dinner was so much fun--it was a great way to end the trip and have everyone come together one last time.

--anonymous

I really enjoyed trying karaoke with my home-stay family even though it was really embarrassing. My host dad and younger brother were really good singers.

--Emily

My favorite part about Kochi was the castle, it was really nice and the view was amazing.

--anonymous





7  
OSAKA



## DAY 21 - TREVOR BEECHER

The trip to Japan went so fast, and I'm sad. I experienced so many new things on this trip and learned about other cultures and myself. I also met great people who I hope to keep in touch with and continue friendships with. It was a great trip and I would recommend it to anyone. Japan is a beautiful country with the nicest people. I feel blessed for having been on the trip. That being said, home is still the best. And I'm so happy to be back.

## DAY 22 - ZACHARY BRUCH

We did a lot of flying. We flew to Tokyo first then Seattle and then to Newark . We had an unbelievable trip but we all are pretty ready to come home. The ride has been long and the lay overs too but America was only a few plane rides away. Japan was an amazing experience but I'm so happy to be back home.

# FINAL WORDS

This is the farewell speech that Dr. Janice Smiell gave to the Japanese Rotarians and host families:

Twenty days ago, we came to Japan from America as tourists, expecting to see beautiful views, eat good food, and meet nice people.

We traveled through your country, saw temples, shrines, castles, gardens, mountains and more. We noticed the many magnificent and strong bridges that will last for generations to come. We ate foods that were different and good beyond our imaginations, and we got to know your culture and you.

We did all this and more.

In these three weeks, we also built many bridges connecting Shikoku to America. While our visit may have been a once in a lifetime experience, these new connections between us and you, our hosts, are based on the strongest foundation, love, that will last throughout our lives.

We leave now, twenty days later, as members of many Japanese families, sad to go as anyone is to leave a loved one, but happy to have you in our lives, our memories, and our hearts forever.

Thank you very much!