I have had several opportunities to teach basic Japanese at schools and public libraries. This summer, I’m teaching Japanese to children once a week at one of the public libraries in Winston-Salem. One of the things the children always enjoy is singing “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” in Japanese.

One of the sites I have been visiting continuously is Speas Global Elementary School, which offers classes in languages other than English. While many students there are already multilingual, they don’t have Japanese classes. Mainly I have been teaching basic Japanese to the students in academically gifted classes. The students have learned writing systems, greetings, numbers, some basic grammars and how to write their own names in Japanese. The students learn the similarities and differences about Japanese and American culture, as well as language.
Wake Forest University offers Japanese classes. Since last summer, I have visited the classes several times as a guest speaker. I gave presentations about my dialect and answered questions about religion in Japan. I was interviewed by the WFU students about my hometown and the recipes of traditional Japanese foods for their projects.

One of the WFU Japanese class’s and I worked together on the Japanese photography exhibition at the Museum of Anthropology that opened on January, 2018. The photos in the exhibition were taken in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s. They focus on the traditional customs and culture of Japan. The students did researches on what was photographed, the history and culture behind it. The labels for each photograph were written in both English and Japanese by the students. This exhibition will be open until October, 2018.
Wake Forest University celebrated Asian Heritage Month during April, 2018. During the month, many student organizations and departments at the university offered special events where participants could experience and learn about Asian culture.

The Museum of Anthropology held a Japanese themed Open House on April 7. Some things visitors enjoyed were making fish flags and kabuto (samurai hat) for Children’s Day, origami, kami (paper) sumo, and chopstick challenge. I read two traditional Japanese stories using kamishibai boards, introducing how the boards and the stage are used. This event was open to the public. About 120 came and got a glimpse of Japanese culture.

Comment from Supervisor:
Nana had a busy and productive year in Winston-Salem, NC. She has been involved with Wake Forest University events, students, and professors. She also visited other universities in the area. Nana visited and participated in events at many schools in the district. Nana spent a lot of time presenting programs and doing activities with lots of different community organizations. On a personal note, Nana has been interested in seeing and trying everything. Because she has traveled by herself, wants to and is willing to try new foods, I have seen Nana’s confidence in herself grow. Nana is making the most of her American experience.
There are several international festivals in Winston-Salem area, and the one at Vienna Elementary School is one of the biggest. On April 25, the Museum of Anthropology, my host site, participated in the event to share Japanese culture. We taught the visitors how to make kabuto with origami, and I showed them what their names looked like in Japanese. More than 110 people came to our booth to learn about Japan during the festival.

Considering the fact that the festival didn’t have a Japan booth the previous year, it was meaningful that we had the opportunity to share Japanese culture in the area where there are very few Japanese people. I was happy to see the children wearing their kabuto, and to hear some of them tell me they want to learn Japanese in the future.

This event was written up in Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools website.
In April 2019, I visited Salem College, where I collaborated with Dr. Oczkowicz for her Hayao Miyazaki course. The students were studying the films from Studio Ghibli, such as technical aspects and stories, as well as Japanese culture.

I gave two different presentations for the class. My first presentation was about *Princes Mononoke*, and I talked about the idea of spirits (*mononoke*) in Japanese culture, the animals that the characters are based on in Japanese culture, and also about language and translation. Second presentation was about food in *Spirited Away*, focusing on the food in different scenes and what they could mean in Japanese culture. Through the presentations and discussions, I shared how I would see and interpret the films with my background growing up in Japan, and I learned a lot from the students’ perspectives.

“On a number of occasions my students told me how much they enjoyed getting to know Nana. They greatly valued the opportunity to hear how their Japanese peers think and see their own culture as well as what they think of America. Nana’s presence and her contributions to my classes were an invaluable cultural exchange opportunity that already inspired a few of my students’ interest in teaching English in Japan after they graduate. Nana Watanobe has been a fantastic Japan Outreach Initiative Coordinator, and my students and I will miss her dearly.”

- Edyta Oczkowicz, Ph. D.
Children’s Day Activities at Libraries

From March to May 2019, five different library branches invited me for Japanese Children’s Day programs. The children made hina dolls with paper plates for Girls’ Day *(hina-matsuri)*, *kabuto* with newspaper and carp streamers *(koi-nobori)* for Children’s Day. Through the activities, they learned about events for children in Japan, how those days are celebrated and what children’s lives are like in Japan. Although many of them said they didn’t know anything about Japan before the program, they learned that they already knew some Japanese words and some things in their lives that are originally from Japan while talking with me and other friends. In total, 93 people joined the Children’s Day programs.

Nana has been a great asset. She has created, presented, attended, and participated in many events at various types of organizations. She was able to reach audiences of all ages. Some of her collaborations were short but many have been long term and continuous. Having Nana as a JOI coordinator has been so easy and enjoyable.

- Tina Smith