Supervisor: Sohail Agboatwala
Associate Vice Chancellor
International Operations

Troy University is fortunate to have an energetic young lady, Airi Mori, serving as our JOI coordinator. Airi’s enthusiasm to engage students and teach Japanese culture to all has allowed our stakeholders an opportunity to experience Japanese culture and tradition in Troy, Alabama.

Airi has done tremendous things at Troy during her time here – sharing culture in meetings on campus, at elementary schools, fairs and festivals off-campus and everywhere in between. Airi even had an incident where she was unable to park her car, and when an individual in the parking lot assisted her, Airi brought her into the office, shared what she did and ended up in that individual classroom sharing Japan with her elementary school students. There is no question she never meets a stranger and never passes up on an opportunity to promote Japanese culture.

This summer, Airi is actively involved in a weeklong camp that Troy University will host and the country of focus will be Japan. These young kids have a unique opportunity to learn from a native and I am sure this is an experience that they will hold dear. This builds upon the school visits Airi has conducted during her time here. In fact, she is often mentioned locally when teachers are looking for a global activity in their classroom. The Origami and Fisherman’s Dance appear to be the activities of choice.

On campus, Airi is engaged in workshops, classes, exhibitions and speaking opportunities. She exposes our university students to Japanese culture and creates a desire to visit and study in Japan, which has helped our study abroad initiative. Her involvement on campus has drawn attention from Consul General Shinozuka in Atlanta, who has visited us a couple of time to support the spread of Japanese culture on campus.

Finally, as we would say in the South, “Airi is good people.” She is a fit for Troy University. She understands Troy University. She never gives up an opportunity to teach. She never passes on an opportunity to learn.

Comments from Supervisors

Supervisor: Sohail Agboatwala
Associate Vice Chancellor
International Operations
Airi has been an important member of the Troy family. In her short time here, she has made huge inroads with departments across campus and throughout the state. She has attended several Japanese events and recently led a Japanese camp on campus. This fall she will be showcasing Japan as the country of interest for our International Student week. She has work extensively with our Japanese club and visiting scholars from Japan. She is a wonderful addition to the international culture at Troy University.
【Date】6/9～6/13, 2019
【Place】Troy University
【Target】77 students
15～18 years old
【Program】GEAR UP!
※GEAR UP! (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federal discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

【Participating Schools】11 high schools
1. Jeff Davis High School
   Montgomery, AL
2. Greenville High School
   Greenville, AL
3. Central High School
4. Booker T. Washington Magnet High School
   Montgomery, AL
5. Brewbaker Technology Magnet High School
   Montgomery, AL
6. Carver High School
   Montgomery, AL
7. LAMP High School
8. Park Crossing High School
   Montgomery, AL
9. Robert E. Lee High School
10. Sidney Lanier High School
    Montgomery, AL
11. Pickens County High School
    Reform, AL

【Overall】
I organized this camp this year. Actually, Troy University holds the GEAR UP camp as a Chinese Cultural Program every year because there are lots of Chinese students who can teach their culture. There are about 350 Chinese students, which means they occupy a third of the international students in Troy University. Since I am here to promote Japanese culture, this year I had the camp held as a Japanese Cultural Program.

【Japanese Cultural Training for Troy University students】
I recruited Troy University students to help me. I was able to recruit 13 students. Since they didn’t know anything about Japanese culture, I held Japanese Cultural Training for them before the summer camp.
【Organizing Schedules】
I planned 16 Japanese cultural activities with presentations and workshops, and I invited two special guests. One was Ms. Keiko Matsuda as a Koto player from Huntsville. The other was Ms. Carol Y Hara as a Ribbon dancer and a speaker (She is a third generation Japanese-American, and she was born in a Prison Camp during World War 2) from Dothan. I divided the high school students into three groups: Ninja group, Geisha group, and Samurai group. The high school students really enjoyed the group names.

The activities that I made
1. Traditional instrument and clothes /Ms. Matsuda (Koto player)
2. Ice Breakers (Fruits Basket and Janken Ressha)
3. Food and Chopsticks challenge
4. Cooking (Japanese Curry, Udon, Makizushi)
5. Calligraphy
6. Japanese seasonal event (Children’s Day), Kabuto
7. Japanese general knowledge, bookmark
8. Japanese tour spot
9. Traditional dance (Soran-bushi)
10. Japanese seasonal event (Star’s Festival), Kirie
11. Japanese pop culture, Origami (Pikachu)
12. Japanese traditional toys, Kamideppo, Ayatori, Kendama, Taketombo, Sumo
13. Japanese language
14. Tea Ceremony
16. Japanese Prefecture presentation
Stephen 3

【Lessons in the Camp】
Each lesson has a presentation I made and hands-on workshop. Since there are three classes at the same time, not only me but also some Troy students gave a presentation about Japanese culture.
On the last day of the camp, the high school students gave a presentation about regions of Japan including what they learned from the lessons.

This group got a 1st place for the presentation. They gave a presentation about Chugoku Region of Japan. They got Kendama for winning prizes. They did a great job!
2. LOCAL SCHOOL VISITS

I visited several local schools to teach Japanese culture. I got those opportunities with several ways. First of all, I went to my supervisor’s daughter’s school. Next I went to my coworkers’ sons and daughter’s school. Then I went to my church members’ sons and daughters’ school. I even got a chance when I struggled to park my car. The person who helped me was an elementary school teacher. I was lucky to have a lot of teachers around me.

Teaching contents depend on the teachers’ requests, but I usually include short presentation plus hands-on activities.

For presentations, I did general knowledge like “Where is Japan?” and “Which is Japanese national flag?”, Japanese greetings, numbers in Japanese, Japanese currency and Japanese kids’ songs. The most successful topic was Japanese school life. Children were really curious about different country’s school life.

For hands-on activities, I did Origami cup and dog, newspaper Kabuto, chopstick challenge, bookmark with children’s name in Japanese, fish printing and Soran-bushi. Children enjoyed these activities very much.
I hold Japanese cultural workshops twice a week at Troy University. Not only Troy students but also adults joined and enjoyed my workshop a lot.

I set a variety of topics. For example, Calligraphy, Tea ceremony, Origami, Chopstick challenge, Onigiri cooking, Maki-zushi cooking, Okonomiyaki cooking, Daifuku and Dango making, Japanese New Year, Doll’s Day, Japanese physical games, Original Sugoroku, Letter exchange program with Japanese Elementary school, Hokkaido Earthquake Smile Project, Paper cutting and so on. One of the most popular workshops was the Pikachu curry rice cooking workshop.

I will keep doing my best to teach Japanese culture!
I joined and helped several events and festivals in Troy, as well as other cities and states. I set up Origami booth and fish printing classes for high school students during International Educational Week in Troy University. Also, I taught Soran-bushi to Troy students and we performed together at the ISCO (International Students Cultural Organization) festival.

Also, I did Calligraphy session, Origami session and Soran-bushi performance at the Spring and Autumn festival held Huntsville Alabama. For Soran-bushi, I taught UAH (University of Alabama in Huntsville) students as well, and they collaborated with Troy University students.

I helped Mobile International Festival with Troy students. We made bookmarks with guests’ names in Japanese and did Japanese character body paintings.

Moreover, I helped Origami and bookmark workshop at Cherry Blossom Festival in Nashville Tennessee and where we also performed Soran-bushi with Troy students at Asian Pacific Islander events in Fort Rucker Military base.

I want to join more festivals to promote Japanese culture on my second year as well!