Japanese Calligraphy Class

Date: 1st Tuesday of each Month
Place: Incarnate Word University
Class Capacity: maximum 12 people

Details of Program: JASSA Japanese Calligraphy Class is a NEW cultural class I planned and organized for the San Antonio Community. An average of 6 people attended each time and enjoyed writing Japanese characters using “Fude” and “Sumi”.

Background: Some Japanese housewives were interested in volunteering but couldn’t find a way to volunteer. I found a Licensed Calligraphy Master and asked her to be the instructor for the JASSA Japanese Calligraphy Class. Incarnate Word University kindly offered their conference room for the class.

Coordinator Comments: There were no cultural programs for JASSA members at all until I started this class even though “Educational Opportunities” is listed as a JASSA membership benefit. I wanted to organize some Japanese cultural programs for the community and knew there were Japanese housewives who wanted to interact with SA people. All attendees enjoyed learning Japanese traditional culture and the instructors enjoyed teaching in English. I hope this class continues after my return.

Comments from attendees:
- Thank you for teaching the calligraphy class last night. I look forward to the next one.

Supervisor Comments:
Tamaki is solely responsible for successfully organizing this class. She enlisted the services of a Calligraphy Master from the local group of Japanese company wives. This was an important addition to JASSA’s outreach not only for the cultural instruction offered to class attendees, but also for recruiting from a group (the Japanese company wives) who previously had not interacted with JASSA.
Asian New Year Celebration

Date: Monday, January 26, 2009  
Place: University of Incarnate Word  
Total Number of Participants: 200+

Details of Program: The University of the Incarnate Word celebrates “Chinese New Year” as one of the Institute of World Culture programs. Chinese, Korean, Japanese and other Asian communities support this event and perform Dance, Music etc. Not only college students but also high school students in the San Antonio area enjoyed various Asian cultures.

Coordinator Comments:

I participated from the beginning in the preparation and planning for the celebration with UIW’s Institute of World Culture. I organized Origami, Calligraphy, Sumie painting booths and Bon-Odori. Performers were invited from among JASSA members and Japanese who are not JASSA members. They networked well with each other. Students seemed to enjoy all types of Japanese Culture.

Comments from Attendees:

- Thank you for giving me the opportunity to perform Bon-Odori. It was really fun to meet lots of students and teach them how to dance.
- I enjoyed very much teaching Origami to kids. I want to come back next year again.

Comments from Supervisor:

Incarnate Word has an extensive international student population, and sponsors many activities focusing on international interests. However, only a small portion of these activities involve Japan and Japanese culture. Tamaki has increased the inclusion of Japanese culture in many of the college’s international events.
Japanese Language Class Trip to Japan

Date: Thursday-Friday, March 12 - March 20, 2009
Place: Tokyo, Kamakura, Hakone, Kyoto, Osaka
Total Number of Participants: 5

Details of Program: Students from the JASSA Japanese Class planned a 9-day trip to Japan. I went with them as a chaperone. We visited lots of sightseeing places in Japan and experienced Japanese food and culture. During our free time, all attendees planned a day for themselves, took a train, and used Japanese to communicate with Japanese people.

Coordinator Comments:
All attendees enjoyed the trip to Japan. I am happy to hear that all of them want to go back.

Comments from Attendees:
- Being in Japan for a second time was amazing. The people were extremely nice. I really, really, really want to go back.
- This was my first time in Japan and it was too short. I want to go back now. Japan is very beautiful. It was one of the best experiences of my life.
- This was my first time to visit Japan. It was a beautiful country. The people were very polite and with the train system it was easy to go to many places without spending so much. I really, really want to go back.
- This is actually my 3rd trip and there is always something new to see and learn. I love the culture and the people.
- I had a lot of fun. It was beautiful. I want to go back.

Comments from Supervisor:
Giving these students the opportunity to go to Japan strongly reinforced their interest in Japanese language and culture. Tamaki helped to ensure that they had a wonderful time. The students will be strong proponents of and participants in continuing grass-root interactions between the US and Japan.
Jump to Japan

Date: Saturday, January 19, 2008
Place: San Antonio Children’s Museum
Total Number of Participants: 100

Details of Program: The San Antonio Children’s Museum hosted “January 2008 is all about Japan month.” At event, “Jump to Japan: Discovering Culture through Popular Art”, children could experience the wonders of Japanese culture and art while learning about Kimono, Sumo, and Koi fish and creating their own scrolls or Maneki Neko.

Background: San Antonio Children’s Museum contacted me to perform and teach Japanese art to children at the event.

Comments: Since the target audience was from very young children, age 3+, I thought it best to make something very simple but still enjoyable. “Making Samurai Helmet: using a newspaper” was selected. One volunteer from JASSA, Hiromi Akagi, joined me to teach Samurai Helmets. After making a Helmet, many children wore the helmet and looked very happy. I thought making Samurai Helmets was the perfect project.

Comments from San Antonio Children’s Museum: We could not have asked for a better presentation! The children, adults, and museum staff really enjoyed learning about making newspaper samurai helmets. They were a hit! We felt very fortunate to work with Tamaki and Hiromi. We really appreciated their participation and the joyful enthusiasm they brought along. We definitely will keep Tamaki on our list of favorite special guest artists!

Comments from Supervisor: I am very pleased Tamaki was able to help the San Antonio Children’s Museum with their Japanese Art program. JASSA can fill a real need in the community through such programs. By going together, Tamaki and Hiromi Akagi had fun together and also learned from each other. Tamaki has made friends with many JASSA members and has not been shy about rolling up her sleeves and working hard at other JASSA community outreach programs such as the Asian New Year Festival, Folklife Festival and Matsuri.
Explore Japanese Culture

Date: Tuesday, February 12, 2008  
Place: Incarnate Word High School  
Total Number of Participants: 150

Program Details: Established in 1881, Incarnate Word High School, a division of the University of the Incarnate Word and member of the Brainpower Connection, is a private, Catholic, all-female, college-preparatory school serving day and boarding students in grades 9 through 12. 9th graders study about Japan in their literature class. I was asked to make a presentation about Japanese school life, social life, weddings, sports, trends of the young generation, bowing differences and useful greetings in Japanese. The presentation was for 45 minutes.

Coordinator Comments: I prepared about 30 power point slides. I left about 15 minutes for Q&A. After the presentation, there were many questions about Japanese life. I was so impressed to know that many students have an interest in learning about Japan and enjoyed the presentation. I will consolidate questions from students and will improve this presentation for future use.

Teacher Comments: Tamaki brought a most delightful experience to our freshmen. The pace of her program was such that the interest level remained high. The subject matter included a wide variety of Japanese life and culture. The only addition I would suggest would be to include more of the country landscape. I hope we can take advantage of this organization on a yearly basis.

Comments from Supervisor: In spite of the fact that the school did not provide a wireless mouse or a laser pointer, Tamaki overcame these technical difficulties and gave a professional presentation. She established rapport with the students quickly and kept their interest throughout. Students told me later that they enjoyed her talk and found it informative. The freshman class reads Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston in the spring, and as a prelude to this reading, they study Japan and its culture. Tamaki’s talk fit perfectly into this study and the fact that she was able to answer questions was very helpful.
Fantasy Origami & More

Date: Monday-Friday, June 9-13, 2008
Place: San Antonio Academy
Total Number of Participants: 7

Details of Program: Summer at The Academy was launched twenty years ago and has grown into one of the most successful summer programs in San Antonio. Each year more than a 1800 boys and girls attend a diverse array of over 350 classes taught by more than sixty of the area’s top teachers, coaches and artisans. The program is 5 days for boys and girls aged nine and older. The class time is from 12:30 -3:00 including a 15 minutes snack break.

Coordinator Comments: Class activities included not only Origami but also playing with Japanese toys, writing their name in Japanese, folding furoshiki bags and using chopsticks. I selected a few very easy Origami for the first day activity. Students made a bookmark with their or their friend’s name in Japanese. Students also experienced Japanese sweets, such as cookies and candies.

Comments from Supervisor: This was a class I had taught for two years. Because it is a week long, students can work on more challenging designs. Also, the students who sign up for this course are often origami enthusiasts and very demanding. I asked Tamaki if she would take this class for me so I could devote more time to preparing for the Folklife Festival. She accepted enthusiastically and came up with fresh ideas to introduce more of Japanese culture such as using furoshiki, playing with Japanese toys, using chopsticks, writing names in katakana and sharing Japanese snacks. The students loved all aspects, especially the snacks. A basic text was provided for each student which contained designs that could be quickly mastered. Additional designs were introduced daily, including some unit origami which required multiple sheets and the additional challenge of putting things together. A real indication of the success Tamaki had with the class is that she was asked by a parent of one of the students to do origami at another venue.