Cranes for Peace Program

Date: Feb 19th - May 28th, 2009
Exhibition: W.T. Young Library, University of Kentucky
Program participants: K-12, university students, teachers, Library, Community group, sister city program participants
Total number of Participants: 342 people

Details of Program:
“Origami: The Art of Science and Mathematics” displayed the work of Duk Lee, an associate professor of mathematics at Asbury College, in three UK libraries. This exhibition features over 50 origami works, including geometric forms, animal, insect, and plant figures. At the exhibition, 1000 cranes were displayed, too. My role was to collect 1000 cranes from community members through the ‘Cranes for Peace’ program. This program was delivered to a variety of audiences, from elementary school students up through adults. I told how important peace is through Sadako’s story and the book called 'If the World Were a Village of 100 People’. Then I taught how to fold cranes. The cranes were truly a community effort.

Background:
To create origami, you don’t need to speak Japanese. The only thing needed is paper and a willingness to learn. We wanted to not only display Lee’s work but also involve as many community people as possible and help them experience how much fun it is to fold Origami. Since I go to many schools to teach about Japanese culture I got the inspiration to collect 1000 cranes from students and display them. Students can’t donate money, but fold origami cranes for peace.

Comments: At the middle school Japanese class, there were some students who didn’t like studying Japanese. But they loved to fold Origami. Thanks to them, it took only 3 weeks to collect more than 1200 cranes. Since folding cranes has many steps, when I taught it, it seemed a little bit hard for them. But I was impressed when I returned to the school and saw that students folded cranes by themselves and enjoyed it. They made their own variations too- bigger ones, smaller ones, twins. After hanging the display, I felt very happy that I saw many people stop by this exhibition. I hope this program becomes a chance for Kentuckians to consider peace and learn Japanese culture.

Comments from Supervisor:
The “Cranes for Peace Program” was a great idea of Keiko’s and a fantastic way to engage a wide variety of community members in a Japanese cultural activity. So many people enjoyed folding the cranes, from elementary students (which required skilled coordination of volunteer helpers on Keiko’s part) to senior citizens; it really brought many people in our community together. Then seeing all the cranes together in W.T. Young library was very impressive, especially with the explanation Keiko created which connected the diversity of the cranes to the diversity of our world-community and the need for peace. We hope to show the crane exhibition again in more places.

Events
- Feb 19th & March 5th, 2009
  Japanese Culture in Kentucky Society (JCIKS)
  - total: 41 (college students & community members)
- Feb 20th & March 18th, 2009
  Jessie Clark Middle School
  - total: 188 people (6th–7th grade students)
- Feb 27th, 2009
  Georgetown College
  - total: 4 people (college students)
- March 24th & 26th, 2009
  Lexington Public Library
  - total: 84 people (K-12, adults, librarians and Japanese students from sister city)
- April 2nd, 2009
  Spring Break Camp at Maxwell elementary school
  - total: 25 people (elementary students)
Japanese Conversation Hour

Date: August 2008 – June 2009
Place: University of Kentucky (UK), Georgetown College (GC), Public Library
Participants: University students, children & community adults (392 people)

Details of Program:
From the fall I led various activities – Karuta, Onigiri party, Japanese songs, storytelling, and Japanese conversation – for UK and Georgetown College university students once a week. In the spring I began a monthly Japanese lecture & discussion hour at the public library for community people. I collaborated with the public library multicultural liaison staff person, who made it easy to hold the program at the library. I picked speakers who live in Lexington to come each month to give a 30 min. presentation in Japanese on their favorite topic such as Kimono, thoroughbreds, kaiseki ryori, and Japanese short stories. Then they led a discussion about the topic, so the audience could understand it more deeply. The target audience is students, business people who have lived in Japan and are still studying Japanese, anybody interested in Japanese culture and Japanese people. Since the topics were interesting, both Americans and Japanese enjoyed the program.

Background: The purpose of this program is to provide an opportunity for Kentuckians to keep up with and improve their Japanese language skills. At the community events, I wanted to show the lifelong learning of the speaker in their area of expertise, and give the audience the chance to engage in lifelong learning of Japanese. I tried to impress the audience by introducing them to wonderful people telling their stories. We understand their world by listening to others. You can learn something not only from studying at school and books but also from meeting many people. Conversation hour on campus is a great opportunity for Japanese and American students at UK to become friends. There are no Japanese students at GC, so I helped them hold conversation practice.

Coordinator Comments: I’ve met so many wonderful people so far in Kentucky. I wanted to share these acquaintances with other people and help them grow. I expected it would be difficult to find a good speaker every month but was amazed when speakers approached me to ask to lead a session: it seems they use this as a good chance to share their professional skills. This is also a great opportunity for participants to get to know each other. I got many volunteers to help with other events on Japanese culture from the student groups I held conversation hours with.

Comments from participants: Very nice. Keep the themes different each time and keep it interesting. It was great. Reflect on my own culture and learn much from ideas of tea ceremony/kaiseki.

Supervisor Comments: Since we have established Japanese language programs and many professionals who have lived in Japan here in Central Kentucky, holding events in Japanese was an important JOI goal. Keiko has helped the 2 student groups at UK and Georgetown College hold robust programming which makes the students more excited about their Japanese studies. She has also done a remarkable job with the Community Lectures & Discussions. The way she organized these events, by calling on her wide network of contacts from the library and the Japanese community, helped make connections that did not exist previously. Because she has organized them this way, they should be much easier to sustain, than if she had simply led a discussion hour by herself.
Lessons on Japan

Date: August 2008 – June 2009
Place: Public school (K-12), University, Library, community group
Audience: K-12, university students, teachers and adults
56 places, 5593 people (1923 unique people)

Details: One important job is to visit schools all over Kentucky to classes on Japanese culture. The lessons I’ve done are: “Japanese sense of seasons” through Chihiro Iwasaki’s drawing, Noh and Samurai, Kentucky-Toyota economic relationship, Origami and Calligraphy classes. Usually I give the same program 5-6 times a day. I also lead a basic “Japan in a Suitcase” program designed by the JOI coordinator at JASK four years ago to familiarize students with a day in the life of a Japanese student through photos and school supplies. Students are then able to compare and contrast their lives with that of a Japanese student. During the presentation I show a Japanese backpack, winter and summer school uniforms, Japanese writing, school books, indoor shoes, and informal male and female kimonos.

Comments: The aim of the program is to help students learn in the classroom and motivate them to learn about Japanese and other cultures throughout their lives. I met so many people through this program. One teacher had this kind of Japanese culture lesson when she was a child. She really loved it and then went to Japan for 2 years. She said it’s very important for students to experience cultural exchange when children. I participated in a Noh demonstration here and learned a lot from the Noh performers. I wanted to explain it to many, so I made the presentation “Noh and Samurai.” Kentuckians are much more open to Japanese traditional culture than I expected. Sometimes I stay at a teacher’s house and talk about Japanese culture until late at night. I am also amazed that some classes made Noh masks, Bunraku doll from American dolls and have used makeup like Kabuki performers.

Comments from participants:
• It was the best presentation ever! You inspired me to learn more about Japan. (6th grader)
• All the things you showed us and the things you passed around really explained a lot about everyday life in Japan. It was awesome. (4th grader)
• The students really enjoyed hearing from you about your country and seeing the everyday artifacts that you brought to share with them. (Middle School music teacher)
• Your visit left them with a positive and enthusiastic impression of Japan, and I’ve heard many of them comment that they hope to see Japan for themselves someday. (Social Studies teacher at elementary school)

Comments from Supervisor: The groundwork laid by the JOI coordinator at JASK from 2004-2006 in designing the “Japan in a Suitcase” lesson and gathering its materials allowed Keiko to get started visiting classes right away. Keiko has also creatively turned her interests and expertise into a wide variety of lessons, as you read above. With the help of a PhD student in the UK College of Education, Keiko is turning these lessons into formal lesson plans to help the teachers use them again by themselves, or share them with others. The first “Japan in a Suitcase” lesson is finished and includes a cd with pictures in a PowerPoint presentation, a recording of a Japanese folk song and pronunciation of Japanese words. These will go a long way toward making the lessons Keiko gives have an impact when her visit is over.
Japanese Conversation Program
(JELET/ Monthly Conversation Forum 夕べの集い)

Details of Program
When I arrived in Kentucky, I saw that there was no place for Americans and Japanese to come together and enjoy conversation. Thus, I started the Japanese English Language Exchange Table (JELET) and Monthly Conversation (known as 夕べの集い) programs. JELET is a unique program where University of Kentucky Japanese Language students and Japanese wives can meet and practice Japanese and English conversation. It's a 2 hour long program which includes singing songs, playing card games in both languages, and enjoying free conversation.

I started The Monthly Conversation Forum, known in Japanese as 夕べの集い, in October of 2008 and have had 14 successful events in that time. Themes of this year included Simultaneous Interpretation, Race Horses, Life of a Maestra, Becoming a Professional Ballet Artist, Behind the Scenes at a Football Game, and Volunteering. It is held only in Japanese and presented by Japanese professionals living in Kentucky.

Both of these programs are held once a month and are supported by the UK Asia Center, the Japan/America Society of Kentucky (JASK), the Japanese language department and the Lexington public library. Each organization had a unique role and value, so we could cooperate with each other well. These two programs also satisfied these organizations’ needs. In fact, I’m glad to know that they want to continue my programs after I leave.

Comments from participants
- I have made many good friends from Japan through UK networks, attending local cultural events, as well as Japanese film and guest speaker events through her program.
- UK has allowed me to engage in conversation with Japanese wives seeking to improve their English language, at the same time helping me to improve my Japanese language skills.
- I didn’t have English native friends even if I live in U.S. This is great opportunity to make friends and

Coordinator Comments
Every time after the programs, participants stayed a little bit longer and enjoyed conversation freely. I think this is a great opportunity to make friends. It was not easy to set up JELET program each time because I needed to think about the contents. I was looking for what to do in this program. I used facilitation skills I learned in Japan and my library friend who organizes this kind of program helped me a lot. I learned so many things how to keep and attract volunteer participants.

Supervisor Comments
Both the Monthly Conversation Forum and JELET have become important community events, thanks to Keiko’s hard work. The Monthly Conversation Forum is not only a place where anyone can improve their Japanese comprehension skills, it is a gathering point for the diverse people in our community who are native or aspiring Japanese speakers—college students, businesspeople, visiting scholars, housewives, and others. The JELET became another important event. Keiko’s collaboration with the Japan Studies department and with JASK to reach Japanese housewives was crucial to get this program started. Now that the foundation is laid for both of these programs we will be able to sustain them.
Japanese traditional culture groups in Kentucky
(Noh Theater and Tea ceremony)

Details
We have lots of great cultural traditions in Japan. But when you think about Japanese culture, what you imagine may seem to be difficult and hard to get involved in. I wanted to change this image and want people to realize why these practices are so attractive. To do that, I needed to understand them better myself. There is a professor at Georgetown College in KY who loves Noh Theater and gives Noh workshops with masters from Kyoto and there is a tea ceremony group which is led by a licensed student of Tea Ceremony for over 20 years. They existed before I came. At first I just coordinated their demonstrations. Thanks to these great circumstances, after I became a member of both groups, I could not only host Japanese performing arts events, but also learn these arts with friends and give performances at festivals and K-12 schools.

Noh performance and Tea ceremony demonstration locations …
Japan! Summer Festival, Shin Nen Kai, Louisville World Fest, Japanese Butterfly Show in Cincinnati, Sakura Redbud Festival at Yukoen Garden, Speed Museum, several K-12 schools

Comments from teachers
— This is great! I become a big fan of Japanese culture.
— We could see not only actual demonstration but also Japanese traditional mat (Tatami), how to sit traditional way, how to bow….Japanese people’s custom, how they live in Japan!! I like the way thinking that each movement, each tool, each conversation has its own meaning.

Coordinator Comments
Learning these practices from great teachers with friends, gradually I understand that Japanese culture is so deep and interwoven with religion and customs. You can learn how to communicate with others, how to show respect to people, how to show appreciation to nature, art, and even everyday objects that you use. When I did Tea Ceremony demonstrations or presented about Noh theatre, students watched closely, concentrated on what was going on and what I was saying. You can find friends who share the same ideas as you do easily. That’s why I’m enjoying learning and spreading them to many people.
At the same time, as a coordinator, it’s very important to understand a volunteer's mind when you set up events; why they cooperate with your event, what the purpose of these groups is, how they feel when asked to participate. Being a participant myself was a great opportunity to understand that.

Supervisor Comments
Arts are a great entryway for all kinds and ages of people to learn about a culture and its people. Keiko’s study of Noh and tea ceremony really added to her repertoire of material she could present about Japan in her work around the state and everyone from young children to adults clearly enjoyed learning about these practices. Keiko’s dedication to these local groups also helped them to get started and grow in their early stages. Both groups will continue after the JOI program and will be available to continue teaching about and demonstrating Japanese traditional arts. They are great resources for our community.
Matsuri in Kentucky
Matsuri - (mah tsew ree) - Japanese traditional Festival or Carnival

Details
Festivals are a great way for students to develop an understanding and appreciation for a culture and have fun in the process. This project started at the Louisville World Fest with a Japan Booth including games and activities, and Taiko and Noh performances. Then, I visited several schools and gave presentations on Noh and Samurai, Tea Ceremony, Geography and Food, Calligraphy, Origami and Japanese traditional clothes and pattern. The next time I visited the schools, it was the students’ turn to give presentations about what they had learned people in the community and to other students at their festival.
We also made a website (www.uky.edu/Centers/Asia/k12/matsuri) which is designed to guide teachers or students through five traditional Japanese activities, providing the necessary information to create a “Matsuri” at their school.

Comments from students
- It was valuable and the Japanese tea ceremony was fun!
- We learned from other classes with equal effort put into presentations.

Comments from teachers
We wanted to share with others what she shared with us. Of course studying school subject is very important, but also it’s necessary to learn how to communicate and cooperate with others, other cultures and arts, how to give presentation and express what they want to say. This is what books will not teach you. In this Matsuri project, students learned these things, creating presentation with friends as a group work.

Coordinator Comments
I’m so impressed how students researched for their presentation. They talked details about Tatami mat, lemoto system, Japanese pattern which I didn’t even know. There are many students who gave presentation in front of people for the first time. They feel responsible for what they are presenting. After I leave the US, they can give Japanese festival next year by themselves!

Supervisor Comments
This project successfully met the dual goals of bringing Japanese cultural activities to the widely attended Louisville World Fest (with 100,000+ attendees) and helping teachers and students around Kentucky learn some of these activities in order to hold their own Japanese or cultural festivals. It was great to see how different schools and classes adapted the activities for their own circumstances. With the super website and lessons that Keiko has made I expect the Matsuri activities will be enjoyed by more schools and classes in the future.