Japan Outreach Initiative  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2010-2011

Japan Outreach Coordinator  
Chinese and Japanese Studies Program, Valparaiso University  
Rumi Mitsubayashi (2010-2012)
**JOI (Japan Olympiad of Indiana)**

Date: February 12th  
Place: Valparaiso University  
Participants: High school students who are learning Japanese at fifteen different high schools in Indiana and their families, friends, and community members (about 300).

**Japan Olympiad of Indiana**, JOI, is the speech bowl-style contest in Indiana, which is held every year by the Association of Indiana Teachers of Japanese. It is held among the high school students who study Japanese in Indiana. The students compete with other students from different high schools for the prize. There are several competitions in terms of the teams of the three in the quiz bowl such as Japan Kanji quiz, Japan-related quiz, and a translation section. This year, Valparaiso University was a host university. We had almost 300 students and participants from all over the Indiana. We had been planning for this JOI event since last year, 2010. Also, at the same time we had the event, we had also a Japan cultural events. I was in charge of organizing the cultural fair about Japan while Japan speech bowl was going on. I organized the Calligraphy session, set up the film series, and other Japanese seasonal activities from each month with the help of Japan club. For example, we set up the *Yukata* try as August activity and *Hinamaturi* as an activity for March. Each activity was very successful. Also, it was a great opportunity to introduce Japanese culture for both students and other participants.

**Comment**

It was such a big event for me to organize in my first year. I was in charge of the Calligraphy class offered six times that day. At the same time, we were having twelve different kinds of cultural activities and a Japanese film series. Designing the activities was fun, but we spent a lot of the time to decide and prepare for the event. On that day, I saw many people were enjoying trying Japanese culture. It was really great to see that. In addition to teaching Calligraphy, I had to make sure everything else was going well.

**Comment from my supervisor**

Japan Olympiad Indiana: This was such a great opportunity for our outreach program because it brought HS students from all over Indiana to our campus for a Japanese language contest. Rumi did a great job planning and organizing a wide range of events for the students while they were waiting for their own competitions. It was a great success.

**For more about the event and photos see the links:**

JOI (Japan Outreach Initiative)
Date: All year around
Place: Preschool, Kindergarten, Elementary school, Middle school, High School.
Participants: K-12 students

Japan Outreach is such a wonderful activity. I enjoyed visiting many schools and sharing Japanese culture with students very much this year. There were a variety of classes which I attended. I visited social studies classes, art classes, food and nutrition classes, reading classes, and Japanese classes from K-12. It was always a great opportunity to share the part of my culture with students. At each class, I make a presentation and introduce part of my culture and then, have time for hands-on activities with them. My most memorable school visiting was at Hayes Leonard Elementary School. It is because I made the presentations for all students from kindergarteners to 5th graders for a day.

Also, I have been to several communities to talk about Japan such as international centers and libraries. Especially, many people seemed interested in Japan after the earthquake and Tsunami in March 11, 2011. From that point, I got several offers from communities as well as schools. It was also a good opportunity to talk and share about Japan because many people had unrealistic image of Japan from that event. When I shared new information and shared some of my culture, they focused interest in hearing how the country was and to know about it and tend to get other more positive image about Japan.

Students Reactions
- I enjoyed having her here, I had a good time!
- I enjoyed everything about the presentation.
- I enjoyed learning how to say things in Japanese and use chopsticks. I learned about daily life as a teenager.

Comment
It was one of the most exciting activities for me to visit schools. It is first time for most of the students to meet a Japanese person. What I talked about would be key information for them to learn something about Japan. When I see students enjoying the time to learn about Japan, I always feel happy and fascinated in their questions and interest.

Comment from my supervisor
Outreach to various schools: One of our main goals was to do outreach in local elementary, middle and high schools. Rumi has been able to reach many schools teaching classes on everything from geography to art. This is something we will continue to focus on next year.

The Japan Outreach was covered by Northwest Indiana Times.
http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/porter/article_f6239563-9f9b-5fe4-bb1a-9e093b6b6604.html
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Valparaiso University
Japan Spring Dinner Festival
Date: April 30th, 2011
Place: Valparaiso University
Participants: Students and community (about 50).

Japan Spring Dinner Festival is the annual campus event by Japan Club. It takes place for both people from the university and community every year. Members of Japan Club make a plan for this event and cooked Japanese food together which is all handmade. I wanted to make festival little bigger than the past few years. I asked them to include the some entertainment such as singing and dancing. Some students became interested in doing shows so we decided to start to practice. The event itself was for two hours. We included the Japanese spring presentation, Cherry Blossoms song, Rakugo, singing and dancing and games. It was good for both Japan Club and participants. In addition, we set up the cultural events like origami, a tea ceremony, and calligraphy. I felt like Japanese Club got a strong bond while working together. Also, it is one of the easy ways for the community to know different cultures from tasting the food. I got several good comments about this year’s spring festival.

Comment
It was great spring event. I think that we also brought the atmosphere of Ohanami in the spring at Valparaiso as Japanese enjoy the time with cherry blossoms. I think that it was good way to taste the culture to try some of the Japanese food and music, and traditional activities. It was such a great dinner gathering. Also, even though it was an end of the year event, Japan Club has already started to think about the other event for next year! Great togetherness! Good team work!

Comment from my supervisor
Japanese spring festival: Rumi helped the Japan club students with their annual spring dinner this year. Rumi especially helped with the cooking and planned great entertainment for throughout the night. We had a great turnout.

For more photos visit the website:
As Special Event for Japan Spring Trip-
Date: During the spring break from February 28th to March 4th, 2011.
Place: Kyoto, Osaka, in Japan
Participants: Students from Valparaiso University

I went to Japan with my supervisor and students from Valparaiso University as a part of the Japan Spring Trip, which is from my supervisor’s seminar. Before the Spring Trip, I went to my supervisor’s Urban Japan seminar to teach some of the basic Japanese to students in her class to be ready and be familiar with Japanese by the end of the class. In Japan, during their visit, I tried to do my best to introduce my town as a tour guide. It was also a great experience to show them around real Japan.

From my supervisor
Trip to Japan: This was a great opportunity for my students to learn about Kyoto from a native of the area on our spring break research trip.

Calligraphy: This is something I hope Rumi can do more of next year. The class she taught this year was very small but let her try it out, we have plans for more events like this throughout the year.

The list of the top events this year!

-First Year-
My first year was really great turning out well. It was challenging for me to get a lot of networks to visit schools around here. Eventually, I got several opportunities to go to the Japan outreach and design the events. Whenever I meet new people, I enjoy interacting with them and would love to share about my culture. Also, I keep in my mind how I can tell about Japan in interesting ways and try to put my effort in the presentation. I am sure I will enjoy my second year, and I want students at all levels, and community around here to enjoy the taste of Japan!
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The list of the top events this year!

My Top 5
1. JOI – Japan Olympiad of Indiana
2. JOI – Japan Outreach Initiative
3. Japan Spring Dinner festival
4. Calligraphy Class
5. Japan Spring Trip

Supervisor’s Top 5
1. JOI – Japan Olympiad of Indiana
2. JOI – Japan Outreach Initiative
3. Japan Spring Dinner festival
4. Japan Spring Trip
5. Calligraphy Class

-First Year-
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Rumi Mitsubayashi (2010-2012)
I was able to include more variety in my school outreach activities during my second year. I traveled to new schools but also I went to back to the schools I visited last year. The students remembered me and had stronger interests about Japanese culture. It was very fun for me to go back and to introduce more about Japanese culture for them, too. I went to several art classes to share my personal specialty, Japanese calligraphy. Likewise, I went to an art appreciation day at Parkview Elementary School with students’ parents to introduce Japanese art. I also worked on after-school programs at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School along with some summer camp programs with the Porter County Parks and Recreation department. During my after-school programs, we enjoyed reading Japanese stories, craft activities, and learning the Japanese language. At the summer camp I had a Japanese tent to share Japanese culture with the camp participants. It was unique to finally have an outdoor event during the summer.

Student Comments
- I like that Rumi came and taught us a lot of stuff!
- Everything was fun! I really enjoyed and liked information and presentation!
- P.S I love Japan now! I would love to visit there some day!!

My Comment
I was always interested to see what their favorite activities were, and it was so wonderful to see my young friends have their eyes opened to seeing a brand new culture. I will miss seeing them, but I hope that I gave them an interest to explore Japan and cultures around the world.

Comment from supervisor
“After establishing herself in our community in her first year, Rumi made school outreach a priority this year and really reached a wide range of classrooms throughout the Northwest Indiana area. She especially excels in teaching about calligraphy and Japanese art but she shared so much with our schools at a time when finances are very tight. The teachers and students were so happy to have her here for these two years.”

For more about the event and photos see the links:
http://www.indianadunes.com/parks-and-recreation/
https://www.facebook.com/pcparksandrec
Community Outreach - Building a strong program at Shugyo Cultural Center

Date: All year round
Place: Community Center, Library, Adult daycare Center, Cultural Center, International Center, and Civic Organization
Participants: All ages

My second year, I tried to expand my outreach network to other organizations in the community in addition to my local schools. This allowed me to share cultural activities that were more diverse than what I usually did in the schools. In my second year I set up special programs with local libraries, an adult day care center, and the Shugyo Cultural Center, which focused specifically on Japanese culture. However because this year was my last year, I wanted to make sure that these organizations can continue with these programs into the future after I leave. So I left behind some instructions for my programs along with other ideas that they could try in the future.

My most memorable workshops were at the Shugyo Culture Center. Last summer, they relocated to a new facility in order to grow their program. They originally focused on Aikido, but they requested me to help them develop other opportunities for Japanese cultural exchange. That began my year-long project. We hosted one workshop per month. These workshops included cooking, paper art, lectures, and so on. I also taught a weekly calligraphy class in the fall, which grew into one of the more successful classes at the culture center. I am very pleased to see how well the cultural center has developed over this past year. It was very wonderful that I became involved in building this new culture program with them.

My Comment

It was always fun for me to visit many different kinds of communities and interact with the different audiences and age groups. But among them all, working with the Shugyo Cultural Center was my most meaningful experience because I was able to see the community center develop from its beginnings into an energetic space for cultural exchange.

Comment from supervisor

"This year Rumi started working with the Shugyo Culture Center which is a center for learning about Japanese culture through martial arts and other cultural programs. They were so thrilled to have Rumi offer calligraphy and other cultural craft programs for their center this year. She was able to really broaden her outreach to the wider community with her work here."

The Japan Outreach was covered by Northwest Indiana Times and Post-Tribune.

Japan Spring Dinner Festival
Date: May 5th, 2012
Place: Valparaiso University
Participants: Students and community (about 130).

The Japanese Spring Festival is the biggest annual Japanese event sponsored by Japanese Club and the Chinese and Japanese Study Program at Valparaiso University. This was the second year that I was in charge of the festival. Since it was such a success last year, I was encouraged to make it even bigger. Although this was exciting for me, it was also a great challenge. The festival was now held in a banquet hall that could accommodate 100 people, which was much more than the 50 participants from last year’s festival. I had to think about how I could make an enjoyable festival for so many people and had to be thoughtful of not just the big, exciting ideas but also of the small details. I was in charge of everything, from the room layout to booking the entertainers, to organizing all the small cultural events, down to designing the buffet dinner and other refreshments. And because of the large number of people who would attend, this was a very new experience for me compared to last year. For example, last year the Japanese Club prepared all the food; this year, however, I had to ask Valparaiso University’s dining services to provide the food. Also, I wanted to schedule even more cultural activities and performances similar to a Japanese summer festival. I set up about five tables at the back of the banquet hall where people could enjoy small cultural activities, such as origami, chopstick challenges, Yukata-wearing, and paper fish-catch ing. More importantly, though, I had to book enough entertainment for the main stage to last the full two hours of the festival. Thankfully, I had made many contacts with different kinds of cultural performers and presenters through my other outreach programs. However, I really challenged myself to make this festival as exciting as possible, so I did some extra research and actually found a taiko drum group to perform the festival’s finale! The festival became such a great success, both for university and also for the performing organizations to showcase themselves and their talents. That day, we had an almost overwhelming turnout. There were over 130 people!
Japan Spring Dinner Festival

Comment from Japanese Club President
Valparaiso University’s Spring Dinner this year was very successful due in large part to Rumi Mitsubayashi. Rumi was fantastic in every step of the event, from planning, to coordinating with me on how to organize students, to the event itself. Her work truly took a lot of pressure off me as Japan Club President to use my time in other places. We had the largest crowd I have ever seen at the Spring Dinner in the 3 years I have been at Valpo. Those who attended the event enjoyed the positive attitude and fun that Rumi brought to the event.
‘Valparaiso University, President of Japanese Club, Timothy Young’

My Comment
The spring festival turned out to be the most successful event I have done in my two years at Valparaiso University. First of all, I was nervous about whether or not I would be able to plan and make such a big event from scratch. However, I wanted to try and share Japanese culture with many people, so I decided to do my best to make a fun Japanese Spring Festival. For me, the highlight of the event was performance and culture tables. I was so relieved to hear that the guests enjoyed all the aspects of the festival: the Japanese cuisine, the cultural activity tables, and the lively, interactive performances. I felt like my many months of planning and hard work truly paid off, and both the Valparaiso community and myself benefitted from it greatly!

Comment from supervisor
“This was a very important event for our community. We have a small Spring Festival organized by students each year, but this year Rumi worked really hard to make it into a big event. There were more than 150 people and she organized a wonderful lineup of entertainment. This was definitely a highpoint in Rumi’s time with us at Valparaiso. A big hit all around.”

-My Supervisor’s Reflections on My Two Years-
“We are so happy to have had Rumi with us the past two years. She was a joyful presence in our community and really enhanced our understanding and engagement with Japanese culture. She will be greatly missed.”

-Reflections on My Second Year-
My second year also turned out really great! I got more opportunities to visit new places through my Japan outreach programs. I truly enjoyed sharing more about Japan. Also, I deeply appreciate all schools and communities who were so excited to have me give them a taste of Japanese culture! They were all wonderful programs. My two years here were superb! Thank you very much to everyone who helped make it so!