Starting at the beginning of September 2012 the EAI began hosting a conversation club. Native Japanese speakers and Japanese University students who were interested in helping students learn more about Japanese people and culture, as well as practice their own English, were invited to participate. Since arriving in America, this conversation club’s creation completed one of my dreams, where both Japanese and American people talk with one another. These volunteers really made this club a success. Two months since the start of the club the number of students attending has continued to increase. During the school semester, the club met twice a week and more than ten Japanese people volunteered to attend. Even during the summer, when most students are on break, we have seen an increase in high school students attending these meetings.

I hope that this conversation club will continue to meet even after I have left the EAI. I am sure that both the Japanese and the students have had a great time learning from each other and exchanged a lot of culture.

More than 150 people attended the Natsu Matsuri at UTSA. There were food booths selling yakisoba, takoyaki, and even onigiri. There were also game booths for ring toss, bowling, scooping goldfish, and making kendama. As Japanese people, we cannot hold a Matsuri unless there are many different kinds of booths that offer different kinds of food and fun. Halfway through the event, UTSA students performed a Korean dance. Towards the end of the Matsuri, Soranbushi members performed the Bon dance. After the
Savor Japan

There was a lot of interest before the day of the Matsuri. I received a lot of emails from high school students and people from public libraries. A lot of people outside UTSA attended. There were high schoolers with their families, as well as people who heard about the event from the public libraries.

Everyone had a great time and thought that it was a great experience for their children and students to exchange cultures and learn more about Japan. The preparation of the event was time consuming, and I almost gave up, but with help of many students and Japanese people, the Matsuri was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who helped.

Savor Japan consisted of four segments: Obon, the film “Okuribito”, Celebrations of Japan, and Sounds of Japan.

The first segment was held on October of 2012. To coincide with the Halloween theme, we held an Obon Festival at the Institute of Texan Cultures. There I gave a presentation about Obon, introducing how Japanese people say farewell to their ancestors, the ancestors’ return during the bon season, and why the Japanese hold many festivals. At the end of the presentation, guests performed the bon odori. I also ran a lantern-making booth at this festival. Guests learned how to do calligraphy, sumie, and make lanterns.

During the second segment, we showcased the movie “Departures” otherwise known as “Okuribito” in November. Following the film, I filled in as an expert on the panel discussion. Celebrations on life in Japan was the third segment in the Savor Japan series. It was held in late January. We focused on the holidays and just the aspect of life in general. I prepared some hands on activities for both kids and adults. For each holiday an activity was held. For Children’s Day (Kodomono-hi), guests made koinobori and kabuto. For Doll’s Festival (Hinamatsuri), guests made Japanese dolls. For New Year’s guests wrote wishes on emas, drew omikuj and wrapped them with cords, and made Japanese wedding envelopes.

The last segment was Sounds of Japan which was held in February. There were several performances that introduced many guests to traditional Japanese music and storytelling. The first two performances were of the koto and shakuhachi. After which, many of the guests got to decide whether they wanted to watch a kamishibai story or listen to a lecture regarding the dimensions of Sacred Space of Shintoism.

I am very, very happy to be here in San Antonio, and I am always grateful to everyone I met. Many people around me are more than willing to help me. I don’t know how to tell them how happy I am to have met all of them.
I visited Steubing Elementary School three different times during December. On the 12th, I taught 3rd graders the correct sitting posture when writing calligraphy. They wrote the kanji for Nihon. These students practiced their calligraphy the same manner children in Japan do.

On the 14th I visited all the different grades from Kindergarten through 5th. For each grade I taught them different kanji. In Kindergarten I taught them how to write *inu* in kanji, 1st grade learned how to write *tomo* in kanji, 2nd grade learned how to write *tomodachi* in hiragana. 3rd grade learned *nihon* in kanji. 4th grade learned how to write *daisuki* in hiragana. Finally, 5th grade learned *ai* in kanji. I not only taught them how to write, but also read some Japanese words.

The third visit to Steubing Elementary School was on the 17th. I was able to hear many Japanese words and greetings from many students I taught.

On February 13th I visited Neil Armstrong Elementary. I taught one class how to make sushi rolls and three classes basic information on Japan, as well as greetings and origami. I tried to encourage students to eat veggies inside sushi roll, because there were some students who don’t eat veggies, even though vegetables are really healthy. After my lesson, I discovered that these students had eaten all the vegetables.

Tomoe made many contributions to San Antonio during her tenure as a JOI coordinator. She assisted local schools, hospitals, libraries and organizations with their Japan-related activities and helped the San Antonians deepen their understanding of Japan. Tomoe left many legacies including the city-wide *Nihongo* Circle at which both native speakers of Japanese and non-Japanese come together for language and cultural exchange. Tomoe also helped secure a grant from the Japan Foundation and co-led UTSA’s first study-abroad program in Japan. Because of Tomoe, more and more San Antonio’s students have expressed interest in going to Japan to study and for possible employment opportunities. Tomoe’s dedication to introducing Japan to our San Antonio Community was beyond description. We will miss her dearly!!

- Mimi Yu
Every year JASSA joins the Asian Festival at the University of Incarnate Word. This past year there was an omikuji and kimono booth. These allowed people to experience what New Years in Japan is like. High school students and adults were both excited to find out what their omikuji were. The most common questions asked were where omikuji were located and what the Japanese did when they finished drawing one. At the kimono booth, people would dress up in kimono and either walk around or take photos with swords or umbrellas. Guests were able to leave the festival understanding the differences and commonalities of New Year celebrations held in Japan, China, and Korea.

Every year JASSA hosted food and cultural booths at the Asian Festival held at the Institute of Texan Cultures. This past year there were yakisoba and origami booths. I was in charge of the origami booth where I taught many children and adults how to make origami. I also had a great time seeing guests who had come to the booth the year before. UTSA students of various nationalities performed the Soranbushi dance at the festival. I am always happy to see students who don’t know each other very well getting along. It was a great exchange of culture.

“I have been here in San Antonio for two years, and have many nice people through my JOI outreach program. I am thankful for all the people whom I met. I am also thankful to UTSA, CGP and The Laurasian Institution who gave me this opportunity to work at UTSA and with Mimi Yu who is my supervisor. Without meeting and being supported by these wonderful people in San Antonio, I would not have been able to outreach. Each of the schools, public libraries, hospitals, and communities I visited can never be forgotten. Meeting every child, student, and adult has been a valuable experience for me. I have so many happy and peaceful memories through the JOI outreach program. I believe everything that I have been doing and learning here for two years will be important throughout my whole life.”

- Minna Arigato!!

Coordinator:

Asian Festival
Members of UTSA’s soranbushi team perform.

Founder’s Day at the Alamo
“Ever since Tomoe arrived we have treasured her presence. Her big smile and her energetic, positive attitude charmed everybody. Tomoe is one person who can always be counted on to give her time and energy to get the job done. To say we will miss her is a genuine understatement. I wish her all the success in the world and would very much welcome her back as a member of JASSA.”

- JASSA’s Rieko Johnson
As part of the Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI), Ms. Tomoe Kumashiro, Japan Outreach Coordinator Coordinator, arrived at UTSA in August of 2011. Her duties are to promote awareness and understanding of Japan in regions of the United States that have relatively few Japan-related experiences. In addition, part of her job is intended to provide opportunities for cultural exchange.

In October 2011, she gave a presentation on the Story of One Thousand Cranes at Johnson High School. The meaning behind the story is one of understanding peace, but it was emphasized that Japanese people fold paper cranes to wish for something important. Through this, the students were taught the importance of folding cranes while thinking of someone or something that is important to them. This presentation was held over two days. During the first day the story was told using handmade kamishibai (mobile story telling theater), which successfully captured students’ interest. Following this, the students were given an assignment to think about what they would like to pray and fold cranes for. On the second day, they were instructed on how to fold paper cranes. The large earthquake that hit Japan in March was also discussed for students to have an idea of something to pray about. She presented photos of the damage taken in March as well as photos taken three months after with the purpose of showing how much has been rebuilt. She taught that this could not have been accomplished without the support and warm help from others in the world. In a similar way, it was nice to see the students help each other with folding their cranes.

The JOI Program is sponsored by The Japan Foundation and The Laurasian Institute. Its mission includes the following:

1. To promote interest in and study of Japan through increasing grassroots exchange between the U.S. and Japan: This is achieved by facilitating dialogue about current Japan-U.S. issues and giving Japanese language and culture presentations in communities to promote a better understanding of Japan.
2. To cultivate a new group of individuals in both Japan and the U.S. who will take leading roles in grassroots exchange.
Kumashiro also helped with UTSA’s Kimchi Festival. The purpose of this festival was to promote Korean culture. She ran an origami booth and taught guests how to fold Korean rice, a box, watch, ribbon, and bracelet. For younger guests, she prepared the watches, ribbons, and bracelets for them. The booth was very popular and many guests could be seen wearing their creations.

In addition, Kumashiro visited Elrod Elementary School during October. She observed many classes and met with Principal Daisy Winsenant to discuss future outreach lesson plans. On November 18th, she will be teaching in the third and fifth grade classes. The fifth grade classes will learn about conservation and recycling and the third graders will learn about school in Japan using a Venn diagram. Kumashiro will also be working with special needs students in multiple grade levels over the next few weeks. The school provides her with materials and allows her access to the equipment necessary for preparing materials.

International Education Week (IEW) is taking place November 14th-18th. Kumashiro and a group of volunteer students have been preparing for this event since September. Their group, called Dai Nippon, will have seven activities set up.

Their origami group will help guests create various animals from paper. The calligraphy group will write guests names in katakana as well as teach them how to use the brush and write Japanese letters. The games group has been practicing Kendama, Darumaotoshi, and Otedama for nearly two months. They have gained a lot of skill in these games and hope that guests will enjoy learning them. They will also have kingyo sukui, or goldfish scooping, which is a common sight at Japanese festivals. The food group will make takoyaki, or dumplings with octopus inside, along with other variations such as chicken, cheese, and jam takoyaki for less adventurous eaters. To allow the guests a hand in preparing Japanese food, they also plan to teach how to make onigiri or rice balls.
The music group will introduce Japanese pop music as well songs from movies. There will be a group in charge of the chopsticks games where guests will be challenged by different difficulty levels. Beginners will have to pick up balls, while at the intermediate level, guest will have to pick up pencils. As for the advance level, the challengers will be picking up small round beans. There is also a tea ceremony group, which put together a nice slide show presentation to show guests. They will also perform a tea ceremony and make tea for guests. Kumashiro has been meeting weekly with UTSA students in preparation for the International Education Week.

Kumashiro is also collaborating with several JASSA members in planning for an International Education Week event to be held at Northwest Vista College (NVC). Many of the activities will be similar to the ones that are taking place at UTSA. However, there are a couple of small differences. The event to be held at NVC will not have as many activities as those available at UTSA, for example. Although those who attend the one that is being hosted at NVC will be allowed to try on a yukata and take pictures of a traditional Japanese kimono.

In early November 2011, Kumashiro gave a presentation on how to make paper Christmas ornaments to members of JASSA at Igo Library. It was a good time to introduce origami and kirigami, paper cutting, while people were interested in the ornaments. She chose this, as opposed to folding origami since the participants are all of different ages and some of them already know how to fold or have folded origami before.
In addition to all the aforementioned activities and events, Kumashiro also has helped with UTSA’s Japanese club. She has organized several of the club’s meetings along with advising the club officers on scheduling and planning program activities. She has also designed cultural activities to help students deepen their understanding and knowledge of Japan. Language games have also been created to help students extend and practice the Japanese language. In addition, Kumashiro organized a sushi making demonstration that was widely enjoyed by all members of the Japanese Club.

Besides assisting with UTSA’s Japanese Club, Kumashiro has attended several of Northwest Vista College’s Japanese Club meetings. During her visit, she has given several presentations, including Japanese culture and traditional Japanese games. She has even organized an origami folding and paper cutting activity.

Kumashiro has met with many high school Japanese teachers from the North East Independent School District (NESID) to discuss many potential ideas on collaborative efforts. In addition, she has sent out letters to libraries, hospitals, and k-12 schools to solicit presentations requests.

Kumashiro has also attended a Texas diversity council meeting and has met with representatives from the Girl Scout headquarters of Texas. More networking opportunities arose when she attended the Ikebana International San Antonio Chapter meeting. Finally, Kumashiro has met with members of Piasano, the student newspaper at UTSA for outreach. “It has been interesting to teach about Japan while observing American culture and customs,” said Kumashiro, “I am honored to be part of the JOI group to promote cultural and educational exchange on a citizen-to-citizen level.”

The JOI Program is sponsored by The Japan Foundation and The Lauraasian Institute.

For more info on The Japan Foundation, visit http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/

For more info on The Lauraasian Institute, visit http://www.laurasian.org/

Kumashiro leads a sushi making session at UTSA’s Japanese Club
Kumashiro, UTSA’s Japan Outreach Coordinator, has been quite busy with making presentations in San Antonio. With about 17 visits and events, she has been hard at work promoting awareness and understanding about Japan.

Late November 2011, Kumashiro visited the young patients at the Children’s Kidney Center inside Christus Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital. There she spent two hours with children ranging from ages 8-15 and worked with them independently. During her visit the children were able to make one of two crafts that she brought along as well as learn how to write a few Japanese words in hiragana.

Shortly after her visit to the Children’s Hospital, Kumashiro visited the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) where a member from the Japan America Society of San Antonio (JASSA) aided her as she taught participants how to make sushi. Participants were able to learn about three different types of sushi; Cup Flower, and Roll, and later were able to try to make their own. “Some students tried to make California rolls and Flower learned how to roll sushi in addition to cutting without ruining the shape and beauty. Nonetheless, Kumashiro was soon asked what all the ingredients were and where they could be purchased.

As early December came about, Kumashiro was seen at Multicultural Day at Huebner Elementary School running two Japanese booths in the hall. Visitors to her booths were able to view a display board that held general information about Japan such as the flag, the population size, food, and holidays. Visitors were also able to have a look at some elementary school textbooks, which captivated many guests, while others tried on a randoseru, or backpack, which elementary students in Japan use. Others were interested in the pencil case that was on display and were quite surprised to find that it had a pencil sharpener within it. Red and white caps that are worn by the students while
they are walking to and from school were also on display.

At another table, Kumashiro was conducting hands-on activities such as folding samurai hats called *Kabuto* from newspapers, writing visitors’ names in Japanese, and teaching some of her guest basic Japanese greetings.

“Children kept coming to fold samurai hats,” Kumashiro stated, as her younger visitors were quick to place the hats on their heads after making them.

At Kuentz Elementary School, Kumashiro attended another Multicultural Day. Unlike her last visit, Kumashiro had to give a presentation for first graders in three separate classes. For her presentation, Kumashiro introduced greetings to children followed by a small and easy quiz about Japan. Then she sang a song called *Kobutanukitsune*, also known as “Pig & Raccoon & Fox & Cat,” which was accompanied by a dance. Afterwards, she taught her students how to make *kabuto*. Kumashiro was very surprised to find that her students were able to remember the words to the song and the dance-steps with ease.

Later that same day, Kumashiro paid a visit to Elrod Elementary School where she worked with kids in kindergarten through second grade along with some special needs students. The students learned how to make kites with a tray and how to write their own name in *katakana*. “They looked happy to learn their name in Japanese and tried to write it neatly and slowly while looking at the character samples. Some students enjoyed it very much, so they kept practicing their name on the other side of the page,” Kumashiro stated as she watched the children practice writing. After the students learned how to write their names, they were taught how to make kites. Within a short amount of time each student had their own kite with help from either their teacher or from Kumashiro and were happy with how it came out. Kumashiro returned later during the month to work with the third grade students and introduced them to the elementary school systems in Japan. She introduced them to school uniforms, backpacks, shoes, subjects and schedules while using photos to help the students understand schools in Japan. Since the children had just learned about Venn diagrams, Kumashiro was able to use a different teaching strategy to help the kids find similarities and differences between Japanese and American Schools. At the end of the lesson Kumashiro taught the class a Japanese song and was able to sing along with them. She was surprised to find that the students were already able to remember
some Japanese words such as *arigato* [thank you], some greetings, a few animal names as well as other words from her presentation.

Kumashiro also attended two Asian festivals. The first was held at UIW where visitors were able to enjoy a *kimono* presentation and look at the many *kimono* that were on display. At the second Asian Festival, located at the Institute of Texan Culture, Kumashiro hosted an *origami* booth with student helpers from UTSA. Visitors were able to make small boxes, bracelets, ribbons, and Pikachu from Pokémon.

Kumashiro also taught a 10-week Japanese language class for JASSA from January-March. “We have a small class of students. Most of them are adults and some are from Japanese companies,” Kumashiro explained. Needless to say there is still a group of people who are willing to learn Japanese.

In early February, Kumashiro visited Johnson High School, where she gave a presentation about Japanese schools and was able to introduce the students to items that are a common sight in a school setting.

Aside from hosting language classes, Kumashiro has also become the founder of a group called the Japanese Circle. The group was created to promote cultural exchanges between American and Japanese students. In addition, the Japanese Circle is an opportunity for Americans to practice Japanese and vice versa. “I initiated the because I had students who wanted to make Japanese friends and be able to practice Japanese with them.” At the group’s first meeting there were 22 people in attendance with 12 Americans and 10 Japanese, but for their second meeting there were appropriately 70 students in attendance with only 10 Japanese. During their meetings the group have enjoyed the opportunity to talk in either language and play traditional Japanese games such as *kendama* or read Japanese books.

For the next Japanese Circle meeting Kumashiro plans to have the group make sushi and looks forward to spreading word about the club to other campuses here in San Antonio. “Many of the Japanese members of the club come from the military bases and are happy to have the opportunity to speak to English native speakers,” said Kumashiro. “Clearly I am happy that Japanese Circle has become very popular in such a short period of time.”

On February 4th, Kumashiro attended the 23rd annual Japanese Speech Contest as a judge in San Antonio sponsored by JASSA. The speech contest is intended to encourage more American K-16 students to learn Japanese.
In early March Kumashiro attended the “2012 YMCA Expo: The Journey to Excellence” as an interpreter. The event lasted for five days with over 900 people in attendance. During the event Kumashiro helped with different activities, but also gave a speech about the earthquake that devastated her home country last year.

This past President’s Day, Kumashiro was back to visit children in hospitals. This time she visited the Children’s Cancer and Blood Center at Methodist Children’s Hospital. She helped the children play kendama, make origami or practice how to write certain words in Japanese. Her day at the hospital did not go unnoticed though as her visit was even reported by the local KSAT news. A few days after her last visit Kumashiro paid another visit to another hospital allowing patients of all ages to enjoy a change in pace as well as learn a little more about Japan through games and crafts.

In March Kumashiro spent her time doing school visits. Her latest visit was to the Alamo Heights High School where she taught the students how to make sushi in their cooking class. Though she has run out of time during this month for another school visit she already has events planned and schools listed for her next set of visits.

Kumashiro’s time spent in San Antonio has made a profound impact on the local schools, hospitals and organizations. In addition, she has been a great asset to the East Asia Institute. Due to her constant effort, awareness of Japan has significantly gone up within the city.

Ms. Kumashiro’s booth during Heburn Elementary’s Multicultural Day.

From top: Kumashiro playing the koto, International Day at Christian Elementary, making origami at the Asian Festival hosted by the ITC, teaching origami at Methodist Children’s hospital.
As part of the Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI), Ms. Tomoe Kumashiro, Japan Outreach Coordinator, arrived at UTSA in August of 2011. Her duties are to promote awareness and understanding of Japan in regions of the United States that have relatively few Japan-related experiences. In addition, part of her job is intended to provide opportunities for cultural exchange.

April 5th, UTSA hosted an International EXPO where Ms. Kumashiro set up many Japanese related events. Guests got to have their name written in Japanese using calligraphy. In addition they got to play kendama and kingyosukui, fold origami, and take part in a tea ceremony. More adventurous guest bought and tried takoyaki (octopus).

May Elementary hosted a Cultural Food Night on April 10th where Ms. Kumashiro ran the Japanese booth and introduced sushi and onigiri (riceballs) to students, parents and teachers. The majority of the guests knew what sushi was, but most did not know about the rice balls. Ms. Kumashiro decorated the rice balls with smiley faces to attract the students’ attention and get them to try something new.

The third Japanese Circle meeting held April 20th, had roughly sixty people in attendance. Ms. Kumashiro divided everyone into six different groups for the sushi-making event held during the meeting. She asked several Japanese students and adults prior to the event to be the sushi instructors. “It was nice to see each group making beautiful sushi,” Ms. Kumashiro reflected, “I could not have done this without help from the students. They helped the set up and clean up of this event.”

UTSA’s East Asia Institute (EAI) hosted a Japanese Tea Ceremony and Cultural Activities event on April 23rd. Ms. Kumashiro along with many volunteer students helped out with the cultural booths that were set up. Some activities included origami, which was constantly busy, a chopstick challenge game, and the writing guests’ name in Japanese.

JASSA (Japan America Society of San Antonio) had a booth at the King Williams Fair April 28th. Ms. Kumashiro helped with the preparation,
Two students from O’Connor High School making tea, a packed auditorium for Kumashiro’s presentation at Driggers Elementary

cooking, and selling of *yakisoba*. This was the first time that JASSA had a booth at the fair. It was a phenomenal success.

At Parman Library, Ms. Kumashiro hosted a *sushi* making event May 1st. Students and librarians alike, created beautiful *sushi*. Some students took it home to show their parents. A couple of students came back with their parents in tow to explain how they made the dish.

As part of Kumamoto En Day on May 5th, Ms. Kumashiro gave two *koto* performances for JASSA, in addition to giving a mini-Japanese lesson. Many people had questions regarding the instrument, while others had some background information. Some families joined the Japanese lesson, having a good time learning and speaking Japanese.

One of the most successful events this quarter was the Mother’s Day event at Igo Library. At first Ms. Kumashiro played the *koto*, followed by teaching parents and their kids how to make *sakura origami* dishes. The craft has five petals, so she expected the students to help their parents finish making the *origami*. When they first started, almost everyone had difficulty creating the first petal. Although, by the second or third petal, they were helping each other and finally, every family made at least one dish. She even saw some people had already put something in their dish.

As a favor to the president of the Japanese Club at O’Connor High School, Ms. Kumashiro gave a tea ceremony presentation on May 17th. She first met the president at the Anime Festival held at Igo Library. Basic information about the ceremony was introduced, followed by showing the students how to prepare and drink the tea.

Driggers Elementary School held a Multicultural Day on May 18th where Ms. Kumashiro gave a presentation on Japan’s elementary schools to the whole student body. Not many students knew about Asian culture, so every time she showed something about Japan, the students got excited. Most students enjoyed *randoseru* the best; even the teachers enjoyed it on a similar level. This is the first Multicultural Day hosted by the school, so it was a great opportunity to introduce Japanese culture.

On May 21st at Cibolo Elementary, Ms. Kumashiro gave a presentation on speaking and writing Japanese to all 5th grade classes. The teachers asked her to teach them how to speak and write Japanese before the event. She taught the students how to ask and answer questions, a few simple greetings, and how to write “friend” in Japanese. At first, some students were shy when they tried to speak the language. After practicing it
for a short period of time, they were able to speak more Japanese than before.

June 8th-10th, Ms. Kumashiro helped JASSA at the Texas Folklife Festival. She helped in the preparation, cooking and selling of yakisoba, chicken and rice balls, cucumber salad, and

drinks of all kinds. It was hot every day but she was happy getting to know new people. On June 9th, she and a few other people wore kimono and took part in a photo shoot. People from across the globe were dressed in their traditional clothes, and each took part in the photo shoot as well.

UTSA’s EAI held a Japanese Language and Culture Camp from June 11th-15th where Ms. Kumashiro played a very big and vital role. She gave the campers cultural presentations on Japanese Festivals: New Year’s Day, Girl’s Day, Children’s Day, and the Star Festival along with elementary schools in Japan. She taught the children how to fold origami and write calligraphy. In addition, she taught the students how to cook dango and prepare sushi rolls, and even how to play some Japanese games. In addition, they did art and crafts, Ms. Kumashiro played the koto and ran some hands-on activities.

In additions to the Japanese Camp, Ms. Kumashiro helped out the following week during the Chinese Language and Culture Camp, which was held from June 18th-22nd. She taught the children how to make origami animals to coincide with the Chinese Zodiac lessons. Many of the animals included the rabbit, snake, horse, monkey, dog, and rat. In addition, she taught them how to fold a flower box and a spinning top. This batch of kids was really interested in the origami. Most children usually love the origami and cooking.

“One thing that really impressed me,” mused Ms. Kumashiro, was that some students were very interested in playing the koto. They had little trouble playing it while reading the music scores.”

At Forest Hills Library on June 27th, worked with people who ranged from children to adults and introduced them to origami. She taught them how to fold jumping frogs, snakes, and a transforming ninja star. Some young children remembered how to fold the frogs, so they kept making them for their families. She also taught guests how to write their name in Japanese. Many were surprised to find out that Japan has three types of syllabaries, hiragana, katakana, and kanji.

At Parman Library Ms. Kumashiro worked with roughly twenty tweens making art and crafts. They made origami snakes, cranes and jumping frogs. Seven students were working hard to learn how to write their names and animals’ name in Japanese, so they wrote each animal’s name and their Japanese name on their origami creations. Students also tried to speak a few Japanese words.
The first event Ms. Kumashiro held at Landa Library was on June 30th, where she played the koto. Each time she finished playing music, she introduced something about Japan. The audience was quite interactive when they asked many questions. Some guest seemed really interested in the koto, while others wanted to know more about Japan. At the end of the concert, about ten people from the audience tried to play the instrument. Those people seemed to really enjoy it.

At Northwest Vista College, Ms. Kumashiro gave a presentation on anime, manga, and the Japanese school system on July 3rd. It was one of her longest lectures yet. She introduced the Japanese education system, school life, and problems, both new and old, which they are currently facing. The students found many similarities and differences between their own and the Japanese school system. The audience was quite inquisitive and kept asking many questions. Occasionally, Ms. Kumashiro would ask hard questions to those who attended. She left knowing that they knew more about Japan than from when they started.

On July 5th at Forest Hill Library, Ms. Kumashiro hosted a sushi making demonstration. She taught guests how to prepare the rice for the sushi, how to make California rolls, and which rice would be best for the sushi. Some people who attended had some background knowledge, but were willing to learn new things. It’s nice to see guest have such a great interest in Japan.

Ms. Kumashiro’s time spent in San Antonio has made a profound impact on the local schools, hospitals and organizations. In addition, she has been a valuable asset to the East Asia Institute. Due to her constant effort, awareness of Japan has significantly gone up within the city. We look forward to more events that she has planned.

Koto, a Japanese string instrument

From top: Playing the koto at Kumamoto En day, giving a presentation on anime and manga at Northwest Vista, sushi making at Forest Hill Library, and folding origami at Forest Hill Library.