1. University Activities

Japanese Language Table
4:00 – 5:00 pm Beginner
5:00 – 6:00 pm Intermediate & Advanced Level

Japanese language table
Dates: Fall and spring semester when university is in session
Participants: University students
The language table is mainly set up for students who wish to improve their oral Japanese skills. They practice informal Japanese once a week for an hour or more with me and exchange students from Japan. This experience also helped to create good friendships among participants who share similar interests and between the Japanese and American students. Attendees chatted on various topics ranging from politics, classes, homework and weekend plans. I acted as a moderator and helped to facilitate the conversation among the groups. Through this activity, some students improved their speaking skill while others got more interested in Japanese and decided to enroll in a class at KU. I was always pleased to see their improvement and to welcome newcomers.

CEAS Lunar New Year Party
Date: February 15th, 2012
Participants: Public
Every year the Center for East Asian Studies holds a Lunar New Years party which is open to the public. This year I provided Japanese mochi (rice cakes) and taught several Japanese cultural activities such as making hachimaki (headbands), origami and calligraphy. Participants enjoyed their first taste of sweet red beans in mochi, writing kanji on their headbands and using Asian brushes. This was a successful event; approximately 250 people attended, more than last year. I not only enjoyed sharing my culture with others, but also learned about New Years in other Asian cultures.

Supervisor’s Comment

JOI Coordinator Erika Norikami quickly became an integral part of the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Kansas, broadening and deepening our educational outreach to the university community, K-12 students and the public. We are fortunate to have her on our team.

Nancy Hope, Associate Director, Kansas Consortium for Teaching about Asia
2. School / Community Organization Visit

After School Program

Dates: Year around
Participants: K-4th, 6-8th graders
Place: Cordley Elementary School and Southwest Middle School, Lawrence, Kansas

The students at these schools experienced basic Japanese language and culture once a week. I could see the students improving their Japanese language skills and understanding more of the cultural aspects of Japan. Since I went regularly to each school, I was able to build up a good relationship with each student. One day I unexpectedly met a girl from one of these classes. She greeted me saying, “Konnichiwa!” Her mother also told me that she sings the “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” song in Japanese at home. I was delighted to see this result.

One-Shot School / Community Organization Visit

Dates: Year around
Participants: K-12th graders and the public
Place: 24 schools (4 elementary, 9 middle, 11 high), and 5 community organizations (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, Rotary Club, Juvenile Detention Center, Japan America Friendship Society)

Thanks to the support from my supervisor and Randi Hacker, Outreach Coordinator for the Center for East Asian Studies, I was able to visit many schools and community organizations. Whenever I talked to new students, I tried to find their connection with Japan to help them realize Japan is a familiar country. Often at the end of a presentation, students will come up to me to express their appreciation. Their kind words make me realize how important the JOI program is and the impact it has on people in Kansas.

Supervisor’s Comment

Erika was able to meet the needs of a variety of audiences ranging from children in local and remote communities, to business men and women, to youthful offenders, to adult friends of Japan. She did this with a willingness and cheerfulness that endeared her to all and resulted in multiple invitations to return with more programming. (NH)
Lawrence Topics
I was asked by Hiratsuka City Hall to send monthly articles about events and news in Lawrence. Since some of the information on Hiratsuka city website about Lawrence was old, this helped them update their information and hopefully create more interest about Lawrence among Hiratsuka citizens.

Supervisor’s Comment
Erika has worked hard to strengthen the Sister City relationship between Hiratsuka and Lawrence. Prior to coming to Kansas, she even visited Hiratsuka in order to better prepare Lawrence students for their visit. She also will assist with the visit of the Hiratsuka delegation to Lawrence this summer. Her efforts have had a direct and positive impact on our community. (NH)

3. Sister City Association ~ Friends of Hiratsuka ~

Japanese language class
Dates: November 2012 - May 2013
Participants: 7-12th graders and the public
Hiratsuka City in Kanagawa has been a sister city of Lawrence, Kansas for 23 years. Every summer, 15-20 students from Lawrence go to Hiratsuka on a youth exchange program and vice versa. This language class mainly focused on the students going to Hiratsuka, but was also open to the public. Participants learned enough Japanese to be able to introduce themselves, and about Japanese holidays and proper etiquette in Japan. Because students were going to Japan, they were eager to learn. I tried to introduce at least one Japanese holiday each month and conduct a related activity. I especially enjoyed the Setsubun activity when students got to make an ogre mask and throw red beans. We also made rolled sushi.

Post cards to Hiratsuka students
As a part of class, students sent New Year cards and valentine cards to Hiratsuka students. This was a good opportunity to learn the New Year tradition of sending cards and to use their acquired Japanese. Students enjoyed creating their own cards. Some received cards back from the Hiratsuka students and became excited to meet them this summer.

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1. Events

Japan Festival
Dates: April 2nd 2014
Participants: Public
Place: Spencer Museum of Art at University of Kansas
Thanks to the support from the Spencer Museum, we were able to have a wonderful Japan festival for the public. We conducted a teacher’s workshop in the morning where our supervisor, Nancy Hope, spoke about traditions of Japan and I talked about education in Japan. In the afternoon, we had an activity booth making Japanese headbands, hachimaki and origami. Besides the activity booth, two university scholars gave lectures on the tea ceremony and Japanese appreciation for the four seasons, followed by the gallery talks by museum staff. At the end of the festival, we had a local taiko group, Three Trails Taiko, who gave a tremendous performance. With an audience of 205 people, the festival ended up being a successful event. I was very pleased to hold this festival in my 2nd year, and happy to have so many people in attendance.

Scouting 500 Festival
Date: May 16th 2014
Participants: Boy Scouts troops
This was the biggest event that I participated in during my two year outreach program. About 12,000 scouts from 19 different communities participated in this event. We estimated that more than 1,000 children stopped by our booths. Our center was kindly invited this year since the Boy Scouts will be having World Scouts Jamboree in Yamaguchi prefecture, Japan next year. This was a great learning experience for children who attended, and was also a good introduction to Japan for those who are interested in the trip next year. Our set up had five booths including making hachimaki, Japanese calligraphy, chopstick practice, origami and kimono display.

Supervisor’s Comment
Erika’s work throughout this year consistently expanded the Center for East Asian Studies client base by partnering with other organizations including the Spencer Museum of Art and the Boy Scouts of America. Furthermore, the impact of the Japan Festival was not limited to one day as the Museum's exhibition of tea ceremony utensils and associated art from its collection was shown for two weeks, and some of the Boy Scouts who visited the Japanese booths during the Scouting 500 Festival will experience Yamaguchi firsthand next year.
Nancy Hope, Associate Director, Kansas Consortium for Teaching about Asia
2. School / Community Organization Visit

Dates: Year around

Participants: K-12th / College and public

Place: 51 schools (33 elementary, 12 middle, 3 high, 3 college), and 10 community organizations (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Juvenile Detention Center, The Heart of America Japan -America Society, Lawrence public library, Retirement homes)

My second year finished successfully as I visited more schools and community organizations. I continued visiting places that I had been to during my 1st year, as well as expanded my outreach to new schools and organizations. The most memorable school visit was when my supervisor Nancy and I visited some schools located 6 hours away from Lawrence. I was nervous and curious to see how students would react when I gave my presentation. Surprisingly, students were very friendly and enthusiastic to learn about Japan. I was very happy to answer their many questions and see their smiles at the end of class. Visiting schools was my favorite, and the most interesting type of outreach activity that I have done. I enjoyed teaching all grades. I will miss teaching and seeing the smiles of the children as they learn about Japan.

Finally, I would like to give a big thanks to my supervisor, Nancy and our outreach director, Randi. I couldn’t have done such a tremendous amount of outreach activities without their help!

Comments from students:

- I enjoyed the presentation. It was involved and I didn’t feel bored at all.
- I enjoyed learning how to make sushi.
- I would like to go visit Japan someday!
- Everything was very interesting.

Supervisor’s Comment

School / Community Organization Visit Randi Hacker, the Center for East Asian Studies Outreach Director, asked me if the Center could get another JOI Coordinator to replace Erika. Alas, that is not possible not only due to the way the JOI program is structured, but also because I doubt that anyone could top what Erika has done during her time here. (NH)
Helping students ambassador from Hiratsuka

Last year there were about 20 students who came to Lawrence from Hiratsuka. They spent two weeks in Lawrence to learn about language and culture. While they visited different places, I helped them as a translator. It was sometimes very difficult to translate technical terms, but I enjoyed interacting with the Japanese students. Also, my host family hosted two high school girls and we had good time together.

Supervisor’s Comment

Erika’s efforts directly contributed to the success of our city’s student delegation to Hiratsuka. First, she shared her enthusiasm for the program face-to-face with students in Lawrence schools so that applications for the program doubled compared to earlier years. Then she helped to better prepare the selected students by creating a handbook about Japanese culture for them which also can be utilized in the years to come. (NH)

3. Sister City Association ~ Friends of Hiratsuka ~

Japanese language and culture lesson

Dates: December 2013 - June 2014

Participants: 7-12th graders and the public

Starting in my 2nd year, we decided to have Japanese language and culture lessons once a month on Saturdays along with trip orientation as opposed to having them every week. It worked out better that way as most students could attend the lesson and be on the same page.

Every summer Friend of Hiratsuka tries to send about 20 student ambassadors to Hiratsuka, but unfortunately the program had been failing over the past few years. This year we decided to start promoting the program earlier to recruit more students. We visited local middle and high schools and I gave a presentation on Japan at each class. As a result, we were able to choose 20 students from an applicant pool of 30. I was very happy that there were more students applying for the program this year. Hopefully, a similar number of students will apply in years to come.

Friend of Hiratsuka Handbook

One of my missions with Friend of Hiratsuka was to create a handbook for student ambassadors. There used to be a handbook, but apparently it was lost as the community members changed. In my second year, I started creating a new handbook before starting the class. The handbook contains information on etiquette, customs, and traditions in Japan as well as basic language phrases which will be useful during their trip. I believe this helped the sustainability of the student ambassador program. The handbook will be a resource for future students and volunteers as they prepare to make their trip to Hiratsuka.

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