During my first year, I had many wonderful opportunities to give presentations and activities at schools (K-12), universities, and community organizations. My favorite activities are Calligraphy and Tea Ceremony for upper grade students! I have met many students who have never experienced holding calligraphy brushes and have never tried matcha (Green tea) before, so they experienced and discovered cultural differences through these activities. With Art students in a high school Japanese club, I talked about “Yuru-chara” (cute mascot characters) and we created Yuru-chara symbols to represent the state of Indiana! They drew very creative and cute characters, so I was very impressed. For Kindergarten students, I danced “Yokai Taisoo” (Monster exercise) which comes from Japanese popular animation “Yokai Watch”. Even though the students attended my presentation just after a nap, they danced energetically! It was so fun! They enjoyed Japanese Pop culture through this presentation.

Comments from Khaalidah Giddens, Japanese Club President, Herron High School

“On November 19th and 22nd, 2014 I was able to volunteer at the International Festival at the Indiana State Fairgrounds where I met Ms. Chiaki Tokiwa from the Japan America Society of Indiana. And so as the president of Japanese club at Herron High School, I naturally requested her to be a special guest in our club. The club members welcomed Ms. Chiaki graciously, happy to have a new change of pace to previous club activities. Ms. Chiaki was very happy to share her information about Japan; she presented a PowerPoint about a mix of Japanese pop culture and traditional culture through the popular anime “yokai-watch”. The students were engaged with a dancing activity and a creative drawing activity, and frequent questions that tested their previous knowledge of Japan. I’m glad that the club was able to have an exciting event that had enriching information about Japan’s culture.”
For KYB Americas Corporation in Franklin, Indiana, I taught Japanese language and culture to eighteen employees during their lunch period lunch every Thursday, which I really enjoyed. We practiced basic Japanese phrases and learned about Japanese seasonal events as well. Two of the sessions featured Japanese food, including Bento boxes from a local Japanese restaurant, and home-made curry rice prepared by a Japanese volunteer and me. They really loved Japanese curry which made me happy. At the end of the program, I coordinated with Japanese ladies for the presentation of a tea ceremony. That is a wonderful change, isn’t it?

For AISIN USA Manufacturing and Navigant, I helped their American employees who were planning to travel to Japan for business learn about Japanese culture, etiquette, and travel tips.

The Japan-America Society of Indiana (JASI) offers Japanese cultural training to members as they prepare to travel to Japan or interact with Japanese businesses. During my first year, I organized language classes and cultural orientations for the employees of KYB Americas Corporation, AISIN USA Manufacturing, Inc., and Navigant Corporation.

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Among the employees whom I trained, two of American employees of AISIN Manufacturing will live in Aichi Prefecture for one year in training with AISIN. I gave three training sessions focusing on travel preparation, living in Japan, seasonal events, as well as business manners. I hope they will have a good experience in Japan!

Navigant Corporation has just started a new business relationship with a client in Japan. The American employees were very positive and enthusiastic in learning Japanese business and protocol. About 15 people are attended and I helped them to answer many questions to visit Japan for their first business trip!

Comments from Lance Clark, Vice President of Administration, KYB Americas Cooperation
Ms. Tokiwa organized and presented a series of “Lunch and Learns” to a group of approximately 20 KYB employees over a period of ten (10) weeks. The focus on the Lunch and Learns was both the Japanese Language and the Japanese culture. Ms. Tokiwa was an excellent and energetic teacher and was always well prepared. In addition, her cultural presentations were very interesting. She brought in other local Japanese professionals to provide realistic descriptions and examples of Japanese clothing, ceremony and art.
I cannot thank her enough for her dedication and professionalism.
JASİ EVENTS

I have really appreciated the Japan America Society of Indiana’s support and hospitality in welcoming me as a team member. I have had many great experiences and opportunities in working with the staff on our JASI programs. Some of the main events this year have included the **Annual Golf Classic**, the **Japan Update Conference**, the Consul General Welcome Reception, and the annual **GALA** during my first year.

**Golf Classic** (Sep 28th, 2014)

It was a beautiful day to play golf and approximately 140 people attended to our Golf Classic. JASI and Indiana Japan Chamber (IJC) cooperated for this event to have people enjoy golf and build the network in Indiana.

**Annual GALA** (June 4th, 2015)

JASI Annual Gala is the biggest event which is about 500 people attended. We invited Mr. Mitoji Yabunaka (Former Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs) as a keynote speaker and music performers “Stringraphy” from Japan. It was the debut performance in the US for them.

I coordinated communications with Stringraphy to make the performance successful and organized the itinerary for them. Also, I was in charge of making the program booklet, and recruiting and managing the volunteers. I was so glad because everyone had a wonderful night with the excellent keynote speech and musical performance by Stringraphy.

**Japan Update** (Feb 25th, 2015)

The “Japan Update” is a conference providing a business, economic and international relations outlook for the year with discussion of developments for Japan and Indiana. Approximately 200 business, community, government, and economic development leaders attended from throughout the state and region. I was a main communicator with a keynote speaker from Japan and local volunteers.

Comments from **Theresa Kulczak**

**Executive Director, Japan America Society of Indiana**

We have been thrilled with the great work of Chiaki Tokiwa, our JOI Coordinator. Our hope in applying for the program was to reinvigorate the educational outreach and individual cultural connections for the Japan-America Society of Indiana. Chiaki-san has more than accomplished this.... Her enthusiasm is so refreshing and her bold spirit is boundless. She has travelled (behind the wheel) to all corners of the state, visiting schools, communities, educational institutions, and companies, with programs ranging from origami for kindergarten classes to language and cultural orientations for American managers and employees. She has widened our network of Japanese and individual volunteers through her broad-ranged activities. We have appreciated the structure of the JOI program in supporting both coordinators and supervisors. Our thanks to Chiaki-san for her commitment, support, and spirit of adventure, and to the Laurasain Institution and the Center of Global Partnership for making possible such an excellent educational outreach opportunity.
Yuru-Kyara: Fun Youth Outreach!

Yuru-kyara is a mascot character to promote a place or region, event, organization or business. I thought that Yuru-kyara would be a good resource for discovering the uniqueness of each region of Japan as well as Japanese pop culture. I had great experiences using Yuru-kyara as a theme in outreach programs.

Yuru-kyara Booth at International Festival

One of our biggest events with Yuru-kyara was the Indy International Festival. We created large banners for the booth to introduce Japanese cartoon characters and Yuru-kyara culture. I created a map to introduce each prefecture’s Yuru-kyara so that participants could see all prefectures and vote for their favorite mascot. During the first two days of the festival about 5300 students from kindergarten kids to high school students enjoyed our booth seeing Japanese cute characters and voted their favorite Yuru-kyara on the map!

“Hoosier Nekko”

I designed a Yuru-kyara for JASI representing the State of Indiana. His name is “Hoosier Nekko”. Hoosier is a nickname for people in Indiana and Nekko means “cat” in Japanese. His shape represents Indiana and his mouth has the logo for the professional football team, Indianapolis Colts. Since Indiana has a lot of corn field, his hands are popcorns grown in Indiana.

School Outreach with Yuru-Kyara

“Yuru-kyara” is a good theme for school outreach. When I visited many towns throughout Indiana and offered Yuru-kyara presentations, I myself learned a lot about Indiana and American culture too! That is because in the presentations, I always asked students to create their own Yuru-kyara incorporating famous things in that place, and students enthusiastically shared the local highlights. For example, I didn’t know that there is a lot of limestone in Bloomington, and I didn’t know that there are sand dunes in Chesterton, until students described their Yuru-kyara creations. Yuru-kyara program is great way to introduce modern Japanese culture but also for me to learn about Indiana and its culture!
Eli Lilly and Company is a JASI corporate member and asked us to help facilitate its first inaugural “Japan Day”, a company-wide cultural and business event. I worked very closely with Japanese executives and researchers at Lilly to help them prepare for activities such as Tea Ceremony, Japanese Sample Food, Kendama Challenge, and Sumo, as well as recommend and coordinate the entertainment. The Japan Day also included a speaker program to share information about Lilly’s business relationships with Japan. It was a great event to introduce Japan to their employees including Japanese culture and business aspects. I hope they will continue this event and have a good relationship with Japan in the future too!

Comments from Keizo Miyazawa, Product Brand Director, Lilly Diabetes commercialization, Eli Lilly and Company

Japanese Leadership network at Eli Lilly and Company conducted first ever cultural event, “Japan Day” in Nov, 2015 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of our affiliate in Japan. Our corporate team was struggling in the beginning to know how to introduce Japanese culture to broader audiences due to limited resources and experiences. Chiaki kindly discussed with JASI and offered to support our cultural event at company. More than 300 of participants were excited and enjoyed music, dance, as well as introduction of variety of Japanese cultures. It was amazing. All team members were so impressed with her strong passion in order to develop cultural bridge. We couldn’t make this event happen without her help. We all thank her tremendous support for the success of our first event.

Japanese Cultural Meet-up

We have very active Japanese Language and Culture Meet-up Group in Indianapolis. To give more opportunities to experience Japanese culture more deeply, I cooperated with that meet-up Group and offered monthly cultural meeting. We learned seasonal events for each month together and we share the latest trends or traditions with other Japanese volunteers. Various participants from elementary school students to business men were attended. With all ages, we have a great time through Japanese culture!

Comments from Timothy Vollmer, Organizer of Japanese Language and Culture Meet-up

Chiaki Tokiwa has been a tremendous help to our Japanese Language and Culture Meetup Group. She has been exceptionally well-prepared in her presentations on Japanese culture and is especially good at engaging her audience with cultural activities. As such, her sessions have routinely reached the maximum number of participants who, incidentally, represent a broad spectrum of our membership, from those who are fluent in Japanese to our very newest members who know very little. Ms. Tokiwa’s presentation on the Japanese Tea Ceremony, which included a well-rehearsed demonstration in which everyone took part, is easily one of the most well-attended and enjoyable meetups we have had the good fortune to host. Her flexibility, too, has been greatly appreciated, since the space and convenience of our meeting locations often vary greatly. Even though Ms. Tokiwa will be greatly missed in Indianapolis, we look forward to hearing of her continued success as she moves forward in her career.
JOI ANNUAL REPORT (AUGUST 2015 – JULY 2016)

JASI Special Programs

Planting of the Japan-U.S. Cherry Tree Promenade

On April 9th, 2016, JASI's long-cherished dream finally came true! We planted 50 yoshino trees along White River in downtown Indy with 140 local volunteers. We received the trees in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the gift of the cherry trees from Japan to Washington D.C. in 1912. It was first time for us to organize a large planting event and we faced many challenges, including the weather, however, we worked as a team and everyone had great time planting with family, friends, and coworkers! I hope many people will gather under the cherry tree promenade with the spirit of Japan every spring!

Joshikai – Ladies Club

During first year, I met many people saying that they could not find Japanese friends here in Indiana. So I created Joshikai, which is the “ladies’ gathering” to build a network for both the ladies and JASI to share information and help them enjoy their life in Indiana. For Wagashi session (Japanese traditional sweets), we invited a Japanese confectionary instructor and made beautiful rose-shaped sweets called “Nerikiri”. Many ladies enjoyed the activities as well as making new friends! Through Joshikai, I met some ladies who are interested in volunteering for cultural outreach and who have helped my activity a lot. It was a great chance to make a team to share “Japan” with American people!

Annual Gala

JASI Annual Gala is the biggest event and we had almost 500 guests this year. We invited Takuma Sato, Verizon IndyCar Series Race Driver to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the year for Indy 500, and the Ibada Dance Company, a local African-American youth dance group. I coordinated the rehearsals of the dance group with Yuka Shibano, Indianapolis Colts Cheerleader. Together, we practiced “Soran-bushi” (Japanese traditional dance) with those dancers and performed at the Gala. The youth dancers practiced Japanese words such as “Soran! Soran!” and “Dokkoshi-sho!” very earnestly as well as the choreography. It was a wonderful evening. I will never forget dancing with them in front of hundreds of guests!! It was a beautiful and exciting collaboration with Japanese culture and American culture!

Comments from Theresa Kulczak, Executive Director of Japan-America Society of Indiana

Chiaki Tokiwa has become such an incredible and valued team member. It has been amazing to see her expand her wings and her network! There is no question that the words that describe her are BRAVE, BOLD, and THE BEST. She embraces every challenge with such a bright spirit, a faith in the goodness of people, and a “let’s make it happen” attitude. During the past two years she has visited schools, organizations, and businesses throughout the state of Indiana for community outreach and relationship development. Behind the wheel of her Subaru Outback, she has become the “JASI Super Road Warrior,” logging over 30,000 miles -- more distance than driving around the circumference of the globe -- all for the purpose of introducing Japan to Hoosiers. We are extremely grateful to Chiaki-san for her dedication, enthusiasm, flexibility, and friendship. And we thank The Laurasian Institution for its support of the JOI program and for sending us Chiaki-san.