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Let's Talk About the World in Kagoshima – The 22nd Japanese Speech Contest for Foreigners



Winner: Ms Jiang Hui Ling

Out of the 21 contestants from 10 countries/regions who took part in the preliminary rounds on 7 January 2017, 9 foreigners from 6 countries/regions were selected to participate in the finals held on 21 January. The winner was Ms Jiang Hui Ling from China, a student at Kamimura Gakuen High School with her speech *"The Importance of Communication"*.

Ms Jiang spoke of coming to Japan, a country she had always adored, and her delight at learning the distinctive way of communication and choice of words employed by the Japanese in their consideration of the other party. To the gathered audience of 465 people, she also cheerfully enthused about discovering the wondrous bliss of meeting, talking with, and gaining a mutual understanding with people through her interactions with classmates and teachers at school, and members of her host family, and made a wish for world peace.

The other contestants gave speeches ranging from an introduction of their home country, to what they have learnt while living in Japan, and the importance of interacting with people from other countries. Their eloquent Japanese speeches were peppered with humor and the audience was kept entertained throughout. The contestants' confident delivery of their speeches despite their nerves is a testament to their hard work so far in Japan, and it captured the hearts of the audience. We hope to continue providing the opportunity for the citizens of Kagoshima to interact with people of different nationalities and cultures.



Speech contest



Front row: participants; back row: judges

Japanese Language and Culture Class



The Japanese Language and Culture Class was held from May 2016 to February 2017 to educate foreigners living in Kagoshima on Japanese customs and useful everyday phrases. The Wednesday and Thursday classes were held 30 times each for a combined total of 60 sessions.

This fiscal year, the students introduced their home country's culture and history in Japanese, and learned practical words for daily life such as when they visit a hair salon. In addition, there was an outdoor activity in which they practiced asking Japanese people for directions to reach their destination.

The students actively engaged in learning the language, and feedback from them include "I now understand the Japanese public announcements I hear everyday", "I would like to put to use the Japanese I have learnt", and "I want to become even

better at Japanese".

Through studying the Japanese language, supporting and encouraging one another regardless of nationality, gender, age and cultural differences, the students have also deepened their friendships with one another.

Japanese Language Chat Room



The Japanese Language Chat Room, for foreigners with a grasp of conversational Japanese, was held between May 2016 and March 2017 for a total of 20 sessions.

Guest speakers including officials from the Kagoshima Sabo Volunteer Association and Kagoshima Chuo Police Station were invited to provide information useful for living in Kagoshima such as on sediment-related disaster, traffic safety, and crime prevention. We have also invited long-term foreign residents to talk about topics like education and healthcare based on their experiences in Japan.

Comments from the participants include "I want to be able to speak Japanese as well as the guest speaker one day", and "I have made many friends from all nationalities and this chat room has become something I look forward to." We hope this chat room

will provide participants with the opportunity to make new friends and fuel their desire to learn Japanese.

Cultural Seminars by Prefectural Coordinators for International Relations



The Cultural Seminars by Prefectural Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) are led by the 4 prefectural CIRs from South Korea, China, USA and Singapore to promote international understanding among Kagoshima people and raise an awareness of multiculturalism in the society. A total of 6 seminars that introduce the culture and cuisine of the CIRs' home countries were held. Many residents of Kagoshima Prefecture attended these seminars, including the "Food and Sightseeing in Singapore" seminar at Satumasendai City, the "Chinese Cuisine and Culture" seminar at Ichikikushikino City, and the "Yusui Bistro" at Yusui Town.

CIR from Singapore Quek Ying Yan led a cooking and cultural seminar at Satumasendai City, preparing three dishes – fried rice that uses copious amounts of salami, ABC soup made from

potatoes, carrots, onions and corn, and pisang goreng (fried banana). The participants expressed surprise at their discovery that these common kitchen ingredients can become such different cultural dishes. After the meal, she presented on Singapore's history, popular tourist attractions, the local pidgin English 'Singlish', and the pros and cons of living in a multicultural country. A participant commented that "it was a very interesting lecture". These seminars serve as a useful platform for the residents of each town to interact with the prefectural CIRs and learn about their home countries.

We also held a seminar in collaboration with the Gender Equality Promotion Division to provide multiple viewpoints and to promote a deeper understanding of gender equality and multiculturalism in the prefecture. The participants gave comments like "this collaborative seminar that educates you on gender equality and multiculturalism is international in itself, and I am glad I could attend it. I hope that by spreading the word little by little, we can raise awareness of gender equality and eventually build a society where it is natural for men and women to coexist on equal footing".

Public Seminar on International Understanding by Foreign Lecturers



This year, KIA organized 2 public seminars on international understanding, which are led by foreigners residing in Kagoshima who make use of the opportunity to introduce their home culture to the locals.

At the seminar led by a speaker from the Philippines, the local Filipino residents sang the national anthem and performed a folk dance. At the seminar led by a speaker from Paraguay, there was Spanish conversation practice (Spanish is the official language of Paraguay) and an introduction to Paraguay dishes and mate tea.

The atmosphere at both seminars was lighthearted, with the speakers blending humor as they introduced their home country and interacted with the local residents. Feedback from

participants include "I was able to learn about the Philippines' complex and diverse cultural background, rather than the biased image projected by TV news reports", "before, I had no knowledge of Paraguay and it felt like a faraway country, but through this seminar Paraguay doesn't seem so distant anymore". We would like to organize more of such seminars to allow for mutual interaction between foreign residents and locals, and to provide them the opportunity to become better acquainted with one another's cultures.

Alumni of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and Foreign Students as Teachers



This school visit program is jointly organized by Kagoshima International Association, the Supporting Organization of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) in Kagoshima, and the JOCV Kagoshima Alumni Association. The program dispatches returnee JOCVs and international students to over 40 schools every year, and since its inauguration in 1995 the guest speakers have visited more than 870 elementary and junior high schools in the prefecture. The program began dispatching speakers to special needs schools from 2016.

Comments from the children include "The phrase 'never give up your dream' strongly resonated within me. I learnt that it is important to try everything", and "I felt that the world I know now

is but a small circle around myself. I want to make efforts to widen my horizons." It appears that through listening to the JOCVs' activities and the experiences of international students, the students gain not just an interest in foreign countries, but also the opportunity to reflect about themselves and think about their dreams and goals.

Regional International Exchange Promotion Program



This initiative aims to stimulate interest in international exchange through the setting up of international exchange booths at local festivals with the cooperation of foreign residents and international exchange associations. This fiscal year we have participated in the MBC Summer Festival in Kagoshima City, the Koyama Yabusame Festival in Kimotsuki Town, the Chi Kaete Matsuri in Ichikikushikino City, and the Marugoto Ijuin Festival in Hioki City.

At the MBC Summer Festival in July 2016, we set up a booth together with Kagoshima International Exchange Foundation. Besides distributing our Association's pamphlets, we carried out activities where children collected stamped greetings in various

languages, made bookmarks using stamps from around the world, designed their own postcards using hand-carved rubber stamps of Singapore's motifs, and played a Korean tangram puzzle with the help of prefectural CIRs and international students. Adults and children alike searched for their favorite stamp design to incorporate into their own bookmark. The Korean tangram puzzle involves arranging the parts to form shapes like a boat or a mountain.

Multiculturalism Project



Seminar on assisting foreigners in times of crises and at medical facilities (during the interpretation workshop)

On 20 November 2016, Kagoshima International Association organized a study group for volunteer interpreters and foreign residents to introduce the difficulties faced by foreigners in times of crises and when they visit a medical facility. A member of NPO Multi-language Information Center Kanagawa was invited to speak to the 19 participants gathered.

At the seminar, participants learnt basic interpretation skills and knowledge, and experienced firsthand interpreting for a simulated health consultation conducted by an evacuation center's disaster relief nurse. The participants gave feedback such as "it was an impressive talk that got me interested in the field of medical interpretation", and "as a foreigner myself, I would like to be able to help in any way fellow foreigners who are experiencing trouble."

On 17 December 2016, Kagoshima International Association organized a seminar "Multiculturalism in the Amami Islands" at Amami City. A lecturer from NPO Council of Multicultural Co-habitation Managers of Japan spoke to the 24 participants about reevaluating tourism promotion of the Amami Islands' attractions from the viewpoint of a foreign resident. Highlighting the foreign residents' cultural, language and lifestyle differences, the participants then held discussions on community revitalization through collaborations with them and harnessing such differences.

Three foreign residents in Amami from China, Cambodia and Vietnam were also invited to talk about the attractions of the Amami Islands. A participant commented that "I would like to collaborate with foreigners living in the Amami Islands to promote the region".

Services at the International Exchange Plaza

- Events bulletin board
- Rental of flags, ethnic costumes, maps, and UNICEF videos
- Foreign language newspapers, books and magazines for browsing
- Consultation for foreign residents
- Chinese Language Lunchtime Conversation (Tue; 12:00 - 13:00)
- Korean Language Lunchtime Conversation (Wed; 12:30 - 13:30)
- Lunchtime English Club (Fri; 12:00 - 13:00)



We also handle queries on international exchange matters and JICA volunteer work, registration of homestay host families, volunteer interpreters, etc. All personal information will be kept confidential, so do not hesitate to stop by if you have any enquiries.

Opening hours: Tue – Sun; 9:00 – 17:00

Closed on Mondays (if Monday is a public holiday, the office will be closed on Tuesday) and during the New Year holiday (29 Dec – 3 Jan).



To contact us about the International Exchange Plaza and/or South Wing publication,

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