

Q. If you had the opportunity, would you volunteer to be a host family again?

- ✧ I live with elderly people, so it will depend on my housing situation when the next opportunity comes.
- ✧ I definitely want to try!
- ✧ I would like to host the children of those who have hosted my children if possible.
- ✧ The period in which our exchange student was with us was extremely busy. Every day was hectic; after dropping him off in the morning I would rush off to my own work, then pick him up in the evening right after work, and then do my best to entertain him all night. I wanted him to have many experiences, so I worked as hard as I could during this period. Although I would like to host students again while I still have the energy, I also think it might be better to wait until things have settled down a bit before accepting an exchange student. Either way, I would love to do it again. It was a truly special and precious experience that literally transformed our day-to-day and added color to our lives.

- ✧ We don't often come into contact with different cultures in our daily lives, so if there is anything I can do to help, I would like to do so.
- ✧ If hosting a student at my house is okay, I would like to do it again.



	The Bamboo Shoots A local newsletter quarterly issued Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association, Nara, Japan Autumn • Winter Issue, 2024	No.185 Contact: Yamato Takada Lismore Sister City Association TEL: 0745-22-1101 https://www.city.yamatotakada.nara.jp/lismore/
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We do hope The Bamboo Shoots born out of the soil of Yamato Takada will grow up and act as a bridge between the citizens in Lismore and in Yamato Takada



Lismore Exchange Students visit Yamato Takada From October 1st to 11th

This year, five students and one chaperone from Lismore visited Yamato Takada city. They experienced various aspects of Japanese culture and life in Japan and Yamato Takada city through local school visits, a tour of a traditional sock-making factory, and a visit to Hiroshima, where they learned about peace by touring the city. On the weekends, they spent exciting time with their host families, and were here for 11 days before returning home.

What did the students of Lismore have to say?

Q. What was your first impression of Yamato Takada?

- ✧ Yamato Takada was so much bigger than I expected, it was overwhelming. There was also a very different kind of beauty to it- with the tiny roads, Japanese architecture, and the rice fields weaved in throughout the city.
- ✧ Their use of space with the rice paddies surprised me but made lots of sense.
- ✧ Yamato Takada is a charming city that radiates warmth and tranquility. Its peaceful parks invite visitors to take a leisurely stroll, while a gentle river winds gracefully through the landscape, enhancing the area's serene atmosphere. The people here are known for their kindness, fostering a

strong sense of community that welcomes newcomers with open arms. Every corner of Yamato Takada seems to echo a quiet harmony, where natural beauty meets genuine hospitality, creating an inviting retreat for anyone seeking solace and connection.



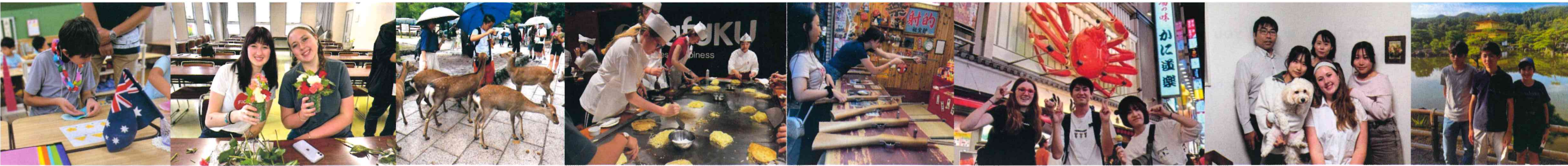
Bamboo English ~Let's have fun in English~

"Bamboo English" class is held twice a month for children aged 5 to 12 who live in Yamato Takada city. They are having fun learning English with Kristina, an ALT working in the city. This English class began as part of an international exchange program and is now in its ninth year.



In October, exchange students of Lismore and Yamatotakada participated in this "Bamboo English" class. The exchange students from Yamato Takada city studied animals that live in Australia. They had a chance to learn how to play the Australian sport of cricket together with Lismore exchange students. In addition, Bamboo English children had a Halloween event in October and Christmas event in December.





Q. While you were here in Japan, were there any differences in culture / manners / customs that surprised you?

- ✧ I feel everybody was much more aware of others around them, always welcoming and full of hospitality.
- ✧ Japanese culture is deeply rooted in respect, where kindness and helpfulness seem woven into daily life. The reverence for history, as well as for one another, shapes a unique social fabric that places a high value on courtesy and consideration. Host families, embodying unmatched hospitality, go above and beyond to make guests feel not only welcome but truly at home. The country's rich tapestry of history and traditions is carefully preserved and passed down through generations, creating a continuity that enriches both visitors and residents alike. This enduring respect for heritage and human connection is one of the most beautiful aspects of Japanese life.
- ✧ The bath and the toilet music.



Q. What impressed you about your host family?

- ✧ My host family were incredibly kind and I had the best time with them. I was very impressed with their fluently speaking English. The cooking was incredible. And having dinner together every night was very lovely.
- ✧ I felt truly fortunate to have my host mum, who went above and beyond to make me feel both welcome and supported. She took special care in accommodating my complex dietary needs, and was there whenever I needed extra assistance. Her warmth created a home-like atmosphere where I felt completely at ease. We shared many wonderful conversations, each one deepening our connection and leaving me grateful for her kindness and genuine hospitality.
- ✧ Their kindness and hospitality.

Q. Did you enjoy yourself in Hiroshima? What was your impression of Hiroshima?

- ✧ Hiroshima was a very overwhelming experience and the museum was very emotional as was expected. It is a devastating history but I definitely feel I know so much more essential information of humanities history and future.
- ✧ Our time in Hiroshima was unforgettable, offering a deeper glimpse into Japan's rich layers. Visiting Miyajima Island for the first time was a delightful experience, blending cultural discovery with leisurely exploration amidst breathtaking scenery.



- ✧ Having a knowledgeable guide added meaningful context, enriching each moment of our journey. The visit to the A-bomb Museum was somber yet deeply impactful, highlighting the profound tragedy of war—a vital experience for students to witness and reflect upon. The entire trip was both moving and memorable, leaving a lasting impression on all of us.



Host Family Feedback 2024

Q. Was there anything that surprised you while hosting the exchange students?

- ✧ There was a difference in how we experienced temperature. Even though it was cold, my exchange student was fine just wearing a T-shirt.
- ✧ I didn't have any problems, but since my exchange student was tall, I felt bad that she seemed a bit cramped in our compact car.
- ✧ On the morning of the third day, he became homesick and started crying. I was worried about how to comfort him, but as we cooked together, played games, and talked, he gradually opened up to me and began to feel relaxed as if he was at home.
- ✧ How much money he spent!
- ✧ My exchange student knew a lot more about Japanese anime and game characters than I had expected, and he bought a suitcase full of anime goods and game character merchandise to take back with them.
- ✧ There was nothing in particular that surprised me.
- ✧ She was a vegetarian so I was careful about what she ate.



Q. Did you notice any cultural or custom differences?

- ✧ Differences in hand-washing habits. Differences in hygiene - not paying attention to the small details.
- ✧ Early bedtime (they normally go to bed by 9:30pm)
- ✧ I noticed a difference in eating habits. He ate a lot of his favorite foods, like sushi and ramen, but when he didn't feel like eating, he only drank water.
- ✧ He chose Japanese sweets to bring home as souvenirs because he contained the least amount of plastic waste. I told him that this is very important and that we Japanese people also need to adopt this perspective.

Q. What was the most fun or enjoyable thing you did together?

- ✧ She honestly expressed what made them happy. She told me a lot about herself.
- ✧ We had a great time after dinner, playing games together and talking about Australia and Japan. Although it was a lot of work to prepare, we had an autumn festival and enjoyed candy fishing, yo-yo fishing, fireworks, and other activities.
- ✧ The time we spent together was so special that my family wanted to do something for him. He seemed to feel the same way, so I'm glad we were able to have such a heart-to-heart exchange. We went out with him on the weekend and had a great time.



- ✧ I told him a lot about my life and my family, and he told me about his dream for the future. He spoke passionately about how he plans to achieve his dream, what his current school life is like, and his enthusiasm for his studies after returning to Australia. Even though my English was poor, when I tried hard to think about the other person and talk to him, he responded by opening up to me. I was also delighted to hear them speak enthusiastically about his future aspirations, as if we were a real family. I was so happy that he wanted to do his best after he returned home and that he was thinking about his future while spending a lot of time with us in Japan. I was moved to tears. I hope I have had a positive impact on his life.
- ✧ I felt that he was trying to understand me even though we didn't speak the same language, and that he was keen to try things that he wouldn't do in Australia (food and lifestyle).
- ✧ Everything was fun. I especially loved the souvenirs she brought me.