

GIFU BULLETIN

Vol. III No. IV Featuring News, Events, and Updates Around the Ken January 2017

Wishing you Happy Holidays from your RPA/PA Team!



Many RPA's are going out of town, and won't be able to respond over the holidays. If you need anything, feel free to contact Peter at gifupas@gmail.com or any of the RPAs around, Check the RPAs winter break schedule below:

PAs

Peter: in the area
Meryl: away Dec 23- Jan 11

Hida

Helen: away Jan 1- Jan 14
Jim: in the area

Chuno

Kris: away Dec 22-Jan 5
Josiah: in the area

Tono

Johnny: away Dec 28-Jan 10
Laura: in the area

Gifu

Lauren: away Dec 23-Jan 10
Sarah: away Dec 30- Jan 9

Seino

Tom: away Dec 30- Jan 9
Denton: away Dec 26- Dec 29

After JET Resources by CLAIR

Tokyo After JET Conference

Date: February 20-21, 2017 (Register by Friday, January 20, 2017)

Location: Pacifico Yokohama Convention Center

For JETs who will complete their appointment in 2017. There will be workshops about finding employment both in and outside Japan, seminars on post-JET career development and opportunities to network with alumni.

Tokyo After JET Conference Career Fair

Expected Attendees: 60 companies, 500 JETs

Osaka Career Fair

Date: January 28, 2017

Location: Herbis Hall (2-2-25 Umeda, Kita-ku, Osaka)

Expected Attendees: 35 companies and 150 JETs

Please note:

- JETs must pay for all their own travel expenses.
- Schools may allow JETs to take special leave for the Tokyo After JET Conference, but if not, JETs must take nenkyuu to attend.
- The After JET Conference covers topics for people leaving Japan such as finding jobs and reverse culture shock, however past JETs have commented that the Career Fairs focus on jobs in Japan.

More information at <http://jetprogramme.org/en/after-con/>

Gifu Ben Of the Month

たわけたあけ

Idiot

(Equivalent of “馬鹿”～“ばか”)

Gifu JET Teaching Resources

We are currently accepting submissions for any share-worthy lesson plans and resources. In the near future we will make these resources accessible to all Gifu JETs! Please send relevant materials to gifujetresources@gmail.com

National AJET Logo Competition

In celebration of the JET Programs 30th anniversary, AJET is hosting a logo contest. Deadline is January 13th, 2017. Check out the contest details here: <http://ajet.net/announcement/the-jet-programs-30th-anniversary-logo-contest/>

Dealing with Winter Blues

Whether it's your first time spending a winter in snowy Gifu, or your fifth, sometimes the cold months can be rough. Last year we were lucky to have a mild winter, but this year they are predicting winter to be quite cold. Lack of sunlight and being cooped up inside to escape the cold might lead to feeling blue. It is hard when you get off work and it is already dark, but remember you're not the only one feeling this way. Not that winter is all bad: there are tons of beautiful illuminations, winter sports, nabe restaurants, hot springs and so much more to occupy your time. However, if you're feeling pretty down or just in a little bit in a funk, there is no need to struggle alone. Keep in mind the Gifu JET community is always here and there are JET Program counselling services available to help you out.



It's important to take care of yourself



Channel your inner
this guy

- ◇ Eat well
- ◇ Exercise regularly
- ◇ Get enough sleep
- ◇ Make sure to see the sunlight when you can: Open your blinds during the weekends, take a walk even if it is cold outside.
- ◇ Relax, put aside time in your schedule to do things that make you happy.
- ◇ Think about your goals coming to Japan, and what you can do in the next 8 months (or longer) to achieve them.
- ◇ Take time to chat with people (co-workers, neighbors, friends, your RPAs, and family and friends back in your home country)

JET Support System

- ◇ Talk to your supervisor and let them know what's up. They will be able to give you the hook up to services offered through the JET Program.
 - **JET Online Counselling Service** (Free anonymous professional counselling via web mail and skype)
 - **JET Mental Health Counselling Assistance Programme** (a partial subsidy for professional counselling)

Other Resources

- ◇ **TELL (Tokyo English Life Line)**: A nonprofit offering free phone counseling from 9:00am-23:00pm
 - Call 03-5774-0992
- ◇ **AJET Peer Support Group**: Affiliated with National AJET and run by volunteer JETs from 20:00pm-7:00am daily.
 - More information:
<http://ajet.net/resources/counselling/ajet-peer-support-group/>
 - Skype "AJETPSG" or Call 050-5534-5566

January Public Holidays

*information from <http://publicholidays.jp/>

January 1st/2nd

New Years Day

元日

ganjitsu

This year since New Year's falls on a Sunday, Japan has a public holiday on the following Monday. New Years was celebrated according to the Lunar calendar until 1873, five years after the Meiji Restoration, when it was switched to coincide with the Gregorian calendar. The period between December 31st and January 3rd or Oshogatsu is a time for cleaning, and for family. Many of the local shops will be closed during this period.

January 9th

Coming of Age Day

成人の日

seijin no hi

A celebration of adulthood dating back to the 700s CE. It became a formal holiday during the Edo Period (1600's CE). In 2000, the date changed to the second Monday of January. It celebrates anyone who turned 20 between April 2nd, 2016-April 1st 2017. Each town holds a ceremony at City Hall, or a government establishment. Many young women wear *kimono*. Some young men also dress in traditional *hakama*, but more often simply wear suits.

January Events

*compiled by your RPA social team

Ongoing through January - Taruma Kanekori Illumination

What: The mineral water flowing from the Taruma waterfalls freezes between large rock formations, creating stunning icicles that are illuminated in the evening for a super wow effect!

When: every night

Where: Okuhida Onsen Hirayu, Takayama 508-1433



Thursday, January 5th - Casual English Party

What: Casual English Party is organized by one of the local bars where everyone can just come together and have a good time chatting to locals and people from around the world! Entry is free for foreigners and alcoholic beverages are available starting from only 400¥!

When: 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Where: Co-ba, Honmachi 3-chome, Takayama 506-0011

Tuesday, January 10th - Tokaishi Nakatsugawa Nishimiya-jinja Festival



What: The annual festival of Nakatsugawa's local Shinto shrine. Starting early in the morning, there will be food stalls along the river and main street, leading to the shrine where you can pray for a lucky year. There are lucky charms available for sale, and small games wherein you can win some shrine items!

When: 5:00am to sunset

Where: Nishimiya-jinja, 6 Ebisucho, Nakatsugawa 508-0037

Sunday, January 15th - Santermairi

What: Dress up in kimono, wander through Furukawa, light some candles to float down the canal, and visit three temples to pray for all those good things in life! (Note: it will be freezing, so if you want to dress up, wear multiple layers of thermals!)

When: 4:00pm to 10:00pm

Where: Hida-Furukawa Station, 8 Furukawacho Kanamoricho, Hida City 509-4225



Friday January 20th - Skill Development Conference II and Enkai

What: The second and final Skill Development Conference of the JET year. (More details below)

*Enkai details will soon be released by GifuAJET on facebook

Friday January 27th - Jikabuki Performance



What: The Tono area is known for a special brand of regional kabuki known as Jikabuki. Come check it out at this free public event! Food and sake stalls will open at 19:30, with the performance beginning at 20:30. There will also be explanations of jikabuki elements (in Japanese).

When: 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Where: Enakyo Grand Hotel

Skill Development Conference II

Friday, January 20, 2017

Location: Gifu Prefectural Library

Time: Registration starts at 9:30. The Conference will be 10:00-16:20

Lunch Options (or bring your own lunch):

Standard Bento (500 円)

Vegitarean Bento (500 円)

Sushi Bento (1000 円)

Choosing Workshops: The afternoon will be breakout workshops. Your schools will receive (or already have) the official paperwork with detailed summaries of workshops.

Speech Showcase call for participants: Jealous of watching your students make speeches? Want to show off your Japanese skills? SDC II is your time to shine! ALTs will present their original, prepared Japanese speeches (3-5 mins long, no memorization required, all topics welcome) to other ALTs who want to watch or listen. Please contact gifupas@gmail.com for more details or if you would like to make a speech!

**Questions about SDC II? Your school will have official paperwork soon, or get in touch with your RPAs who have all the answers!*

JETs Doing Cool Things – Harly Lane

Interview by Denton Williams, Seino RPA



She shoots arrows. She slashes bamboo. She plays tag, and this girl is “IT.”

Harlyn “Harly” Lane, the new Municipal JET-Queen of Chuno, originally from Seattle, Washington, USA, now teaches at two junior high schools and (count ’em) five elementary schools in Mino-shi, Gifu. She has been evolving like a Pokémon during her first year on the JET Program by snatching up every opportunity around her. Now, here’s what she has to say about hitting just about every target of life in the bullseye:

Q. What has been your secret to finding new activities, and then finding the confidence necessary to participate?

I had ideas for what I wanted to do in Japan before I came here, like *iaido* (sword martial arts, 居合道) and *kyudo* (archery, 弓道), and I even made a list. However, at first I was too intimidated to try them when I actually got here, but once I started to get that antsy feeling after establishing a routine (read: watching TV all night every day after work), I told myself, “No, GET UP AND GO! I’m here, I love Japan, and I want to see it!”

Basically I’m an introverted person, but after adapting to life here and learning how to simply ask, “Why not?” and “Honestly, what is the worst thing that could happen?” when faced with opportunities, I really started to break out of my shell and try new activities.

For example, one day I looked at my list, put on my fake confidence, went straight to the people in my BOE, and asked, “Where can I try kyudo?” and just like that they helped me find locations and set up my first appointment. Now I do kyudo once a week for two hours (outside...thank gawd for #UniqloHeatTech).

As for *iaido*, the story is actually more happenstance because it began with me roaming around Seki-shi. There I went to a coffee shop, and randomly the shop owner asked if she and I could practice English. Again I thought, “Well, why not?” and so after a couple of weeks, she surprised me with research she had done about where I could practice *iaido*! Now thanks to her, I also do *iaido* once a week for about two hours, and I also have a bi-weekly conversation group with her for English practice!

Q. So, what would you say has been the biggest OMG moment for you so far?

I have two that really stick out: The first is actually when I climbed a mountain in Ogura Park near my home, looked out over my WHOLE town, and said, “Yep, this is what my life is for at least the next year.” I mean, could see my LIFE! The second is when I sliced a bamboo mat with a real sword for the first time during *iaido*.

Q. Have you ended up experiencing anything that you once thought or said you would (probably) NEVER do/try?

Honestly, teaching English and the JET Program itself. But it’s been super rewarding because I recently set up a pen-pal letter exchange with the 2nd graders at one of my elementary schools with 2nd graders in the U.S. It’s definitely something that I want to see if I can maintain all throughout my time here and afterwards, and it required some convincing at school, not gonna lie. I never thought about doing a project like this beforehand, and even

though it was difficult and the teachers thought we wouldn't or shouldn't go through with it, I made it happen by continuing to talk to the right people. It feels awesome!

Q. *What's a day in the life of Harly? Please pick and tell us about your favorite day of the workweek.*

My favorite days are the ones where I teach elementary school and have either kyudo or iaido afterwards. So on those days I get to sleep in, put on my JEANS, be at school by 9am, play games with the kids during recess, leave at school at 3pm, go to Mr. Donut with my JTE and chat over coffee, go home and prepare for *iaido*, have dinner with (the) Chisako Higashiya (AJET), go to *iaido*, come home and shower, read, and go to bed!

Q. *"New Year, new me, goodbye, sayonara, 2016." Do you have any goals for the New Year and/or the rest of your first year on the JET Program?*

I want to keep the pen-pal relationship alive and make it stronger, and I want to TRAVEL more!

Q. *If you were to describe yourself as an original prefecture mascot, what would you look like?*

A fox with *hakama* pants, a bow and arrow, and a sword...and a *shuincho* seal book.

Q. *What else would you like to share – anecdotes, advice, questions?*

1) My learnings and advice summed up on JET: If you feel afraid to do something, think, "What's the WORST thing that could happen?" and if you can deal with it, then JUST DO IT!!!

2) If anyone wants to travel, please let me know! I will plan trips regardless, but it will be fun to go with even more people! *shoots arrow at introversion*

A JTE's Perspective — Morikawa 先生 from Ogaki Technical HS

Interview by Tom Black, Seino RPA

Q: *How long have you worked with ALTs and how many ALTs have you worked with?*

10 years (1 year 4 months with current ALT) and 8 ALTs

Q: *What do you think are ALT's biggest strengths or advantages?*

Their ability to attract students and motivate them.

Q: *What are the biggest challenge working with ALTs?*

Finding ways to make good use of ALTs, not only in the classroom but in the whole school.

Q: *What is your advice for ALTs?*

Feel free to speak to other teachers who don't speak English. You can teach English, use gestures, practice Japanese and make a lot of friends.

Q: *What is your advice for JTEs working with ALTs?*

- Make teaching plans together with ALTs
- Tell ALTs exactly what JTEs want ALTs to teach i.e. the aims for the lesson
- Think about the roles of ALTs and JTEs in the classroom

Q: *What impact do you think ALTs have on students?*

They give students the opportunity to communicate with native speakers of English. They can learn about different cultures and broaden their view of the world

Easy Recipes from your JET Community



Katsu Curry

The ultimate winter warmer and a chance for you to finally say you've learnt how to cook a Japanese dish (sort of)!

Details

Time required: 10 minutes preparation, 30 minutes cooking

Equipment: A single burner cook-top, one large pot, a rice cooker, and either a steamer or a microwave, microwavable bowl and cling wrap.

Cost: About ¥1500, serves 2-4 people

Ingredients (serves 2-4)

Include whatever vegetables you want! I generally include:

- 1 large potato (or 2 small ones)
- 1 carrot
- 1 half stick of broccoli
- 1 small bag of green bell peppers and/or shishito peppers
- 1 brown onion

1/2 a box (about 120g) of curry cubes

2 chicken katsu (comes premade from supermarkets like Valor)

1/2 a cup of rice per serving (or more if you just love rice)

Method

1. Start cooking your rice (you can buy pre-cooked rice from valor if you'd prefer).
Rice tip: Washing your rice beforehand will remove the surface starch and make it less sticky.
2. Wash and cut the vegetables into bite size pieces (I don't bother peeling the potatoes).
3. Start cooking the potatoes, either by boiling or steaming them over the burner, or steaming them in the microwave (put them in a microwavable bowl with a cup of hot water in it, then cover it with cling wrap). Both ways will take about 10 minutes, but try a piece to make sure.
4. After 5 minutes of cooking the potatoes, add the carrots to cook with them for the last 5 minutes.
5. Sauté the onion in the pot and then add the broccoli and peppers to cook for 5 minutes.
6. Add the cooked potato and carrot to the rest of the vegetables in the pot.
7. Add hot water to the pot and bring it to the boil. The box suggests 3 cups/half box of curry, but I add 1.5 cups/half box because I like my curry thicker (you can add more water later if needed).
8. Once it's boiling, add the curry cubes and mix them in (this will thicken it up significantly).
9. Bring the pot back down to simmer for 10 minutes, making sure to stir it regularly so that it doesn't burn on the bottom (a common problem if you have a cheap ¥100 pot like I do).
10. Serve the curry over rice and top it off with strips of chicken katsu. Enjoy!



What's Catching? -



By Jim Hendricks, Hida RPA

Pokemon celebrated its 20th anniversary throughout 2016, and because of that, it saw one of its best years to date. Following a series of other pokemon related releases, in November, the new games Pokemon Sun and Moon were released. Because of the leading hype and marketing, they were the most ever pre-sold games in Nintendo history, and are now Nintendo's fastest-selling games.

The games take place in the Alola region, based on Hawaii. Pokemon continues to struggle to find ways of making the original 151 relevant today, but they find success by showing how they would adapt to the region. Adaptation



is more of a consistent parallel to evolution rather than the Mega stones that were introduced in Pokemon X and Y. By changing the old Pokemon based on the new region, it helps make the region of Alola feel real and consistent in the world of Pokemon.

Sun and Moon make several more changes on Pokemon's original formula, too, which has been a recent trend among high profile traditional Japanese developed games (Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy, Legend of Zelda). It does away with the idea of Gyms and Gym Leaders. You now have Trials, in which actual Pokemon tend to be the bosses. Z-Crystals chart your progress, and can be used in battle. HMs have been removed. Both IVs and EVs are now surfaced. Super-effective and ineffective moves are labeled during battle.

The story is obviously written for a younger audience, but contains several references and callbacks to previous games and other regions, which are more for older fans of the series. The new villains, Team Skull, act more as a parody and clearly shows that Pokemon doesn't take itself too seriously.

Pokemon continues to apply itself to everyone. Most of my elementary school students and JHS girls love the cute new Pokemon in the game. My junior high school boys care more about the strong powerful Ultra Beast Pokemon available after you complete the story. For me and other adults, the new versions of old Pokemon, references, quality-of-life changes, and general light-heartedness work really well.

The games are still region-locked, so you must have a Japanese 3ds in order to play the Japanese game. But, no matter which region you have, you can choose to play in any one of the 18 languages offered.

Also, if it's your birthday month, you can bring your 3ds with Sun or Moon to the Pokemon Center in Nagoya, and get a free birthday Pokemon for your game. You can choose between any Eevee evolution, Pikachu, or Comfey, the new Pokemon styled after a Hawaiian lei. You get a sweet Pokemon crown, too.



Regional Spotlight: Tono

Gifu Crystal Park – Ena Skating Rink

By Johnney Wilson, Seino RPA



With winter weather now upon us, the images of winter sports begin to enter our mind. While Nagano is renowned for their most excellent slopes, Gifu too has its share of cozy skiing spots. However, one rarely considers the Tono area as a mecca for winter sport, at least in regards to skiing. However, it does offer one of Gifu's unique winter treasures. Nestled amongst the mountains surrounding Ena lays Gifu Crystal Park. It is the westernmost outdoor 400m skating rink in Japan.

Every winter the rink fills with avid ice skaters and speed skaters alike. While Crystal Park has a 400 meter international standard double track for speed skating, it also sports a 30 by 60 meter sub-rink that can be used for beginner skaters and curling. The park is highly accessible via public transportation and being surrounded by mountains reduces strong winds, making it ideal for easy skating. It has also proved to be a popular location for regional students to visit on school trips in December. Furthermore, it doubles as an inline skating and futsal facility in warmer weather, but its allure comes to life during the winter months.

Gifu Crystal Park in Ena is currently open seven days a week, from 9am to 8:30pm on weekdays, and 8:30am to 8:30pm on weekends and holidays. General admission is 1,000 yen during the day and 500 yen at night. Helmets and other equipment are available to rent on-site, so feel free to show up empty-handed and they'll take care of the rest. It's about an 8-minute walk from JR Takenami Station or 10 minutes off the Ena IC of the Chuo Expressway. I encourage you to take a trip down to Tono and enjoy a day on the ice this winter.



What did you think?

What would you like to see in future issues? Have a recipe?

Know a JET or JTE doing something cool

Send us an email at gifupas@gmail.com



See you next
time!