

The Fukushima Prefectural International Association would like to communicate Fukushima in the “now” in multiple languages by recording the voices of the foreign residents of Fukushima and their efforts towards restoration after the disaster, be it through international exchange, or the efforts of various organizations.

※Translated versions of the newspaper can be downloaded from the FIA’s homepage.



Voices from Fukushima

This time on Voices from Fukushima we’re featuring Naomi Oya (currently living in Fukushima City), a 4th generation Japanese-Canadian and 3rd generation Chinese-Canadian. She began working as a Coordinator for International Relations here for the FIA and the International Affairs Division in 2015. Her work includes translation, interpretation, and the some management work. She’ll be returning to Canada in August, so we asked for her thoughts on her time spent in Fukushima. (Interviewed on May 29.2018)

- Happy Birthday! Your birthday was two days ago, how did you spend it?

Thank you! I had a party with my friends. Some came from rather far away so I really enjoyed our time together.

- I get the impression you have a lot of friends.

I didn’t have a lot of friends before coming here, but I would say I’ve deepened my friendship pool quite a bit since my arrival. I’ve encountered people from different countries with different ways of thinking, and I’ve come to respect the differences that make us unique, instead of running away from them.

- What has been your most memorable job?

I have special feelings for my Global Community Cafe (aka GC Cafe). The GC Cafe is an event for experienced English speakers to practice their conversation skills. I created it because the Japanese people I met in Vancouver would always tell me they couldn’t speak English because there was nowhere to practice. However, I began to desire a stronger impact and more meaning for the people who participated. I began striving for more thought-provoking discussion topics like expressing ones own thoughts, and how we want to be seen. Thanks to the GC Cafe, I was also able to run a cooking class, which I wanted to try.

That being said, my most memorable job was the first big job I got after arriving in Japan. I was asked to check over the subtitles for a promotional video on Fukushima. My Japanese wasn’t as good as it is now, and I knew

and was incredibly jet-lagged. I really struggled with that job. I very clearly remember my sense of anxiety as I wondered “is it really okay for me to be here?” and “is it okay for someone like me to be doing such important work?”

Remembering those times gives me the strength to overcome other hurdles I encounter. I still think that I could have translated better, or used more delicate English, but regardless, the experiences I’ve gathered here in Fukushima will surely serve me well in the future.

- Did you have any concerns regarding radiation when you found out you would be in Fukushima?

My mother was more concerned than I was. She was against my working in Fukushima. We fought almost every day about it. Luckily, my mother was able to come see Fukushima before I did, and she quickly came to love it. Last year my family visited, and everyone was very happy to see the sites and especially to eat the food.

- I feel like you visit a lot of places on your business trips around Fukushima, but can you tell us how you felt visiting an evacuated area?

It was a shock. Fear, anger, sadness… none of these words quite fit with what I was feeling at the time. I thought about posting pictures on Facebook, but I was conflicted about what I should write. After being employed by Fukushima Prefecture, I understood the responsibility I now held. A single word from me could hurt Fukushima’s reputation. At the time, I spent a month carefully considering what to write, but in the end, I posted the photos without saying much.



-What would you like to convey to those outside of the prefecture?

I would like for them to visit Fukushima at least once. Almost everyone that visits tells me how wonderful Fukushima is. I have friends from other prefectures that told me not to eat the fish or vegetables here, but when they came to visit, their opinions changed. Even now there are countless misunderstandings regarding Fukushima that come from other prefectures. Therefore I would like for people throughout Japan to come to understand Fukushima better.

-What would you like to convey to the people of Fukushima?

In the world beyond Japan, the memory of the 2011 disaster is fading. I believe that the resilience and calm demeanour of the people of Fukushima has helped them to stand strong until today. However, I believe it will be necessary for Fukushima’s citizens to be more assertive in catching the attention of the world once more.

I am filled with appreciation for the people here. I believe that it is because I came to Fukushima that I was able to have so many precious experiences. I’d like to convey my heartfelt thanks to the people I’ve met along the way. Thank you.

Gearing up for the Olympics with the Japanese and American Softball Teams Going Head-to-Head at Azuma Baseball Stadium!

To commemorate Fukushima City's Azuma Baseball Stadium being used for select Baseball and Softball games at the 2020 Olympics, women's softball held an international goodwill match. Japan was able to pull out a win of 2-0 thanks to outstanding effort by ace and pitcher Yukiko Ueno and outfielder Eri Yamada. Approximately 8000 people came out to support the match between world ranking number 1, America, and number 2, Japan.

Volunteers came from all over the prefecture to help out with the big day, all in preparation for the Olympics. One language volunteer from Fukushima City commented on her reasons for volunteering "I wanted to catch a glimpse of the star players and bask in the overflowing atmosphere and energy of the stadium. It is my hope that visitors from all over the world will be able to enjoy the matches that will take place in Fukushima in 2020."

After the match, both teams gathered to take a commemorative photo, and the match wrapped up with an amicable mood. Japanese coach, Reika Utsugi said "the atmosphere of Azuma stadium was good, and easy to be in. We were very moved by the sheer number of Fukushima citizens who came out to support us." Pitcher Ueno said "I think that being able to play a match in one of the stadiums that will be used for the Olympics has given not only us, but the spectators an image of what the Olympics will be like. I'm looking forward to the Olympics more and more."



Experiencing Aizu's Traditional Culture

The event was hosted by the NPO Aizu International Women's Association which gathers women with an interest in international exchanged, and fosters cultural exchanges between Americans and children of Aizu.

This time, young people from Dallas, Texas were invited to do two nights and three days of homestay, visit schools, and see local tourist spots for a total of 5 days spent in the Aizu region.

Participants observed Aizu Xaverio Academy's Naginata Club, made their own Akabeko, enjoyed traditional Japanese cooking, tea ceremony, and a welcome step into the rich culture found in the castle town of Aizu.

During their stay, a newly married couple were surprised with traditional Japanese wedding photos, giving them the opportunity to dress up in Japanese wedding kimonos and take commemorative pictures.

This year, Aizu Wakamatsu celebrates 150 years since the end of the Boshin war, with various events being held in the area. Amidst the celebrations, the participants were able to get a taste for and a better understanding of Aizu's deep culture and history.



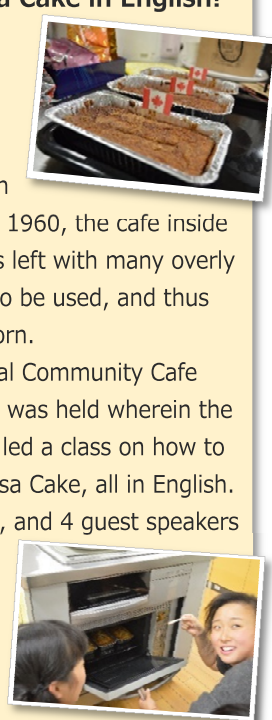
Let's make Ponderosa Cake in English!

Ponderosa Cake was first conceived at the University of British Columbia in Canada. It is a banana, chocolate cake, topped with a cinnamon sugar crust. In 1960, the cafe inside the Ponderosa Building was left with many overly ripe bananas that needed to be used, and thus the Ponderosa Cake was born.

On May 19th, the "Global Community Cafe ~Cooking Class Edition!!~" was held wherein the Canadian CIR, Naomi Oya, led a class on how to make Vancouver's Ponderosa Cake, all in English. There were 15 participants, and 4 guest speakers who worked together to bake their cakes, using phrases like "mix more!" "what should we do next?" and "how do we preheat the oven?". The American guest speaker said "holding a class while cooking is a different kind of communication, so it's a lot of fun." You can

find the Ponderosa Cake recipe on the FIA home page. Definitely take a look!

http://www.worldvillage.org/files/news_release/files/2496_file01.pdf



Multilingual information on the Revitalization effort from "Fukushima Restoration Station"

On Fukushima Prefecture's official revitalization related information portal site "Fukushima Restoration Station" hosts the latest data on food safety efforts and the activities of those supporting Fukushima in 9 different languages (Japanese, English, Mandarin, Korean, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese).

Fukushima Restoration Station

<http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal-english/>



● FIA Information

Support Desk for Foreign Residents

Here at the FIA, we provide consultation services for foreigners in English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Portuguese.

English, Chinese, Japanese Consultation
Every Tuesday to Saturday from 9:00 to 17:15

Korean, Tagalog, Portuguese Consultation
Thursday from 10:00 to 14:00 ※Appointment necessary for 4th and 5th

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