

**In this Newsletter:**

1. 2019 Japan Study Tour
2. Comments from Past KKC Fellows
3. About NCSS, Introduction of KKC staff

Contact us at: [fellowship@kkc.or.jp](mailto:fellowship@kkc.or.jp)

**Japan Study Tour:**

<http://en.kkc.or.jp/programs/stj/>

Japan Lesson Plans can be downloaded from here:



## **KKC Fellowship for North American Social Studies Teachers 2019 Japan Study Tour**

Nine American and one Canadian teacher participated in the 2019 Study Tour to Japan. This year's tour had a global perspective in the lead-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and a focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and artificial intelligence and the future workforce in the AI era.

The teachers learned about Japanese corporations at Google Japan, KDDI, Kyocera, Omron Kyoto Taiyo, Nippon Life Insurance, and MEGA WEB Toyota City Showcase, while simultaneously addressing these companies' contributions to social issues including employment, education, and aging in addition to the SDGs. Japanese institutions including the Bank of Japan, Keidanren, the Nomura Research Institute, the Japan Institute for International Affairs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs briefed the teachers on US-Japan relations, the Japanese economy, Japan's role in free trade in Asia and Japan's challenges for creating a new digital technology-supported society called "Society 5.0". Former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda met with the teachers and shared his views on the importance of our special relationship and grassroots activities like this program.

At Tokyo Metropolitan Takehaya High School, the teachers taught a variety of topics including the impact of plastic waste on the environment, cultural perceptions and stereotypes, media literacy, and more. At Kyoto Gakuen High School, teachers presented about their hometowns and listened to students' business plans for companies that solve social problems in Southeast Asia. Teachers from North America and Tokyo had an engaging discussion on issues in



*(at Meiji Jingu Shinto Shrine)*

education, from classroom diversity, to teacher workload, to curriculum content.

The program concluded with a seminar entitled "The Future of Education and Human Resources Development in the AI Era," attended by many of the representatives who had given presentations earlier in the week and other Keizai Koho Center members. After a presentation on the skills that will create employment for both humans and artificial intelligence by Hiroto Kishi of the Nomura Research Institute, three teachers presented their views on the skills that educators must foster in the next generation. Yukiko Furusawa from the Yomiuri Shimbun served as the commentator.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the KKC Fellowship Program (KKC Study Tour to Japan) which has taken place annually since 1980.



*(Meeting with former Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda)*



*(Seminar with KKC corporate members)*



## Japan: A Place of Mindfulness

Leah Bouas, 2019 Fellow

***I found Japan to be a place of mindfulness.*** Whether it was the mindfulness of sorting trash into recycle bins, or of making room for one more person on a crowded elevator, or simply taking a moment to briefly bow and smile when introduced to a new person, I found people to be mindful of things large and small.

Sustainability, guided by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was an overarching theme of our visit to Japan. Japanese organizations have fully embraced the SDGs as part of a national effort to be mindful of our earth and its people. I was awestruck by demonstrations of commitment to work with other nations to achieve environmental sustainability goals as well as commitment to help foster readiness for a se-

cure and sustainable future amongst Japan's people. I admired how the government and businesses keep an eye toward the future and mindfully (and diligently) prepare for future challenges. It was inspiring to see such interdependence and cooperation on a societal level.

Mindfulness in Japan exists at the personal level just as much as at a societal level. I was honored when an entire classroom of students simultaneously bowed their heads in respect before I began my lesson. I was awed by the silence of an entire subway car, packed at rush hour with dozens of people, that quieted the commotion of the world's largest metropolitan area. Even Tokyo itself is designed mindfully. Majestically nestled in the middle of the bustling Shibuya neighborhood is Meiji Jingu Shinto

Shrine, an oasis of 170 acres and 100,000 trees. In the midst of the flurry of the city, anyone can step through the torii gate into the shrine complex, breathe the fresh air of the forest, and re-center the spirit through prayer or by participating in a ceremony.

***This school year I have tried to bring such mindfulness into my classroom by encouraging my students to think globally and treat each other with consideration.*** We are actively connecting our personal goals to the SDGs, and continuously work to think of our classroom as an interdependent community. While the shift in mindset will take time to grow, I have already witnessed the benefit of encouraging mindfulness amongst my students.

## Understanding Other Nationalities

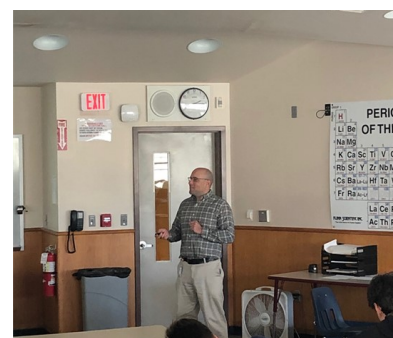
Joel Hinrichs, 2017 Fellow

When I went to Japan in 2017, I knew it was something that would greatly impact my classes. I was eager to learn about the Japanese view of security in East Asia and as China became more aggressive in the region, North Korea continued to act erratically while Japanese and South Korean tensions simmered under the surface.

***When I returned, I taught students, who were fascinated by North Korea, to look at the issues from a Japanese perspective which helped them to better understand the region and gain an empathic understanding about other nationalities.*** When I was in Japan, I was careful to read about the security situation in Northeast Asia and listen to people's thoughts and opinions

when these topics were discussed in both formal and casual situations. The fact that we had a breakfast meeting with Taro Kono shortly before he became the Japanese Foreign Minister was truly serendipitous for my focus.

The other ways my experiences in Japan have impacted my classroom are just as important although not something I had anticipated when I started my adventure. When we cover new regions of the world in my classes, we frequently begin with a demographic overview. In Japan, I saw the impact of demographic changes on a society. This in turn has led to great discussions about how cultural norms in education and work can impact people's decisions in their personal lives using Japan as an example. These discussions have made stu-



dents more curious about Japan and more reflective about their own culture. Security concerns and demographic shifts are the types of materials that easily lend themselves to being taught in class. Other experiences like going to baseball games in Japan, touring an anime studio, and eating sushi at a conveyor belt restaurant have allowed me to share my unique experiences in casual conversations that help me build rapport with students while teaching them about an unfamiliar place.

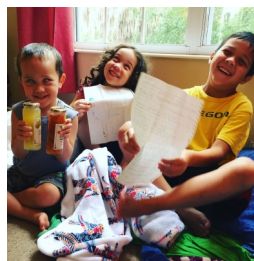
## Homestay in Japan

Joshua Keliheleua

2017 Fellow

So many positive impressions of Japan have stayed with me since my 2017 fellowship with the Keizai Koho Center—school visits and teaching opportunities, cultural experiences, learning about the economy, exploring with fellow teachers and KKC guides. But the one experience I am most influenced by is my homestay with the Kofuku family in Yokohama.

During my stay I was able to experience daily life in the home of a typ-



ical Japanese family. An afternoon walk around the neighborhood, a home cooked dinner, and trip to the onsen are just a few of the things my host family kindly shared with me. ***Getting to know the family in such a personal way as a guest in their home was a priceless gift.*** KKC did a

great job matching me up with a family who also had young children like me. While in the Kofuku home I was able to video call my own three little children and introduce them to the Kofuku children. An instant friendship started. They spoke with one another, showed each other their favorite toys, smiled and laughed. Our children have remained pen pals sending letters, videos, and gifts to each other over the past two years. Someday we hope to visit Japan as a family and stay with the Kofuku family again. We also look forward to their visit to us in Orlando, Florida in the near future.



The KKC Fellowship Program to Japan hosted by the Keizai Koho Center was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity and experience. I was overwhelmed by the level of organization and coordination that was made to host this Fellowship tour.

The first area I enjoyed the most were the tours and learning about the historical sites. One topic I cover in my classroom is the Meiji Period and I was really hoping to see some of that in Japan. The Meiji Jingu Shinto Shrine was my favorite site. Our guide did a wonderful job of explaining the many aspects of the shrine to honor Emperor Meiji and also explained the Shinto Religion, which was fascinating. By having the opportunity to take part in a Shinto ceremony was also very spiritual for me.

I also enjoyed the other shrines and temples in Kyoto. The Golden Pavilion was truly a work of beauty and the meaning behind that sacred site was as important. The Zen Shrine with the rock garden was also something I have always wanted to see and experience. The many pictures I took and notes I wrote will be put to use in my World History class.

The next area I enjoyed the most was the opportunity to tour, teach, and discuss Japan's schools and education system. Teaching the lessons at both the private and public schools was a unique experience and I never

dreamed I would be teaching and interacting with students in Japan. I really love teaching and coaching and this experience challenged and deepened my teaching skills. Anytime I can interact with students and share our experiences helps me grow professionally. Discussions with students and educational leaders from our different countries is a rare opportunity. Through listening, seeing, and comparing Japan's education system to the United States', I realized we face many of the same challenges with the direction of education, technology usage, and preparing our students to work more collaboratively and less in a lecture setting.

The next area high on my list was the family homestay. My family showed so much hospitality. The food that was cooked was traditional Japanese and could have fed twenty people. The highlight of the homestay was simply the conversations and discussions that took place not just with the mother of the house, but with the two children. I learned of their desire to learn English and have a more global perspective. They also shared their desire to have a very good quality and well-rounded education. This homestay aspect of the Fellowship tour is one of the most valuable parts of the trip.

A few of the top cultural items that stood out were respect, ap-

preciation, and cleanliness. Everywhere we went, the people were so respectful and polite. The bow to acknowledge each other or a firm handshake, you could really feel the respectfulness towards each other and to us. I really noticed a high level of appreciation for their country, jobs, homes, and communities. It seemed to me people in Japan don't take things for granted and work hard for what they have. The most remarkable thing to me was how amazingly clean it was everywhere we went. I have never seen a city so clean. A person could see the sense of pride and responsibility all around. During our roundtable discussion with Japanese Social Studies Teachers, I asked them why they thought this was and the teachers' felt it is a combination of part of the old cultural influence and teachings of Japan mixed with the fact that in many schools, the students are responsible for cleaning their classrooms. This cleanliness factor was more than impressive and something I want to try to implement into the students in my classroom and school building.

The planning and details that were put into this Fellowship trip was impressive. ***I sat there every day thinking I can really use this in my classroom. This is the big value for me, to share a global experience and perspective with my students in rural North Dakota.***

## A Global Experience

Brian Filibeck, 2019 Fellow



# Keizai Koho Center will be at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) November 22-23, 2019 Austin, Texas

## **KKC Fellowship Program Booth**

Nov. 22-23  
Booth Number: 525  
Austin Convention Center

What can we learn from Japan's society and economy today?

Get insights for your classroom and learn more about Japan by attending our events at NCSS.

## **Keizai Koho Center (KKC) Annual Japan Reception**

Friday, Nov. 22, 6:00-8:00 PM  
Venue: Hilton Austin,  
Austin Taco Project Restaurant  
500 E 4th St, Austin, TX 78701  
TEL (512) 682-2739

This year marks the 40th year of the KKC Fellowship Program. Stop in to meet old and new friends, alumni and applicants. Light refreshments will be served.

## **KKC Japan Information Session**

Saturday, November 23,  
9:35-10:30 AM  
Venue: Room 10C, Level 3,  
Austin Convention Center

Hear from past fellows about how the KKC fellowship has affected their teaching.

Learn about what kind of Japan related activities fellows have continued after the tour, at their schools and in their communities.

## About the 41st KKC Fellowship program in 2020

### **Arihiro Yokota, Senior Fellow, KKC**

Japan is a unique country where tradition and innovation are integrated in harmony. Since ancient times, we have created a unique society and culture through learning and incorporating various technologies, cultures and arts from overseas. Now, Japan is taking on the challenge of creating a sustainable new society by incorporating new technologies and methods into existing industries and lifestyles.

I am a senior fellow of Keizai Koho Center, on loan from OMRON, an electronics manufacturer headquartered in Kyoto, the ancient capital where tradition and modernity meet.

In Japan, there is a "spirit of harmony" which we call "Wa no seishin". Japanese people have a mentality that values counter-parts; teamwork rather than the individual, collaboration rather than confrontation. We love new

things and we are good at incorporating the new into the old.

Historically, Japan has developed its own politics, economy, religion, art and sports through this spirit. This small island country, which doesn't have energy resources, solved various social issues after World War II, and now has the 3rd highest GDP after the United States and China. Japan is facing new social issues due to the aging population and climate change. We take in new technologies and methods, fuse and "harmonize" them with existing ones, to solve various social issues and take on the challenge of building a sustainable new society.

KKC is hosting this Fellowship Program to share Japan's challenge with the children responsible for the future of the United States, Canada, and eventually the global society. We introduce Japan through visits to companies, gov-



(Akemi Handa, Arihiro Yokota (Author) and Ikuyo Watanabe at the Emperor Naruhito's enthronement parade)

ernment agencies, cultural facilities, educational sites and discussions with experts.

KKC will host the 41st inviting program in 2020 when Tokyo hosts the summer Olympics for the second time. We welcome you to join our program and come to experience Japanese tradition, innovation, and creation of a new society.

We look forward to your applications.

一般財団法人  
経済広報センター