San Antonio’s 6th Annual Japanese Video Contest

‘こんな日本の夢をみた!’
“I saw a Japanese dream like this!”

On Saturday, March 30, 2019, the East Asia Institute hosted San Antonio’s 6th Annual Japanese Video Contest. This year’s theme was “こんな日本の夢をみた!” (I saw a Japanese dream like this!). This event was made possible thanks to support from the Japan Foundation and the UTSA Modern Languages and Literatures Department.

The Japanese Video Contest (formerly San Antonio’s Japanese Play Contest), is an opportunity for students to display their mastery of the Japanese language, creative storytelling abilities, acting skills, and video editing prowess. Students from local colleges and high schools submitted videos, approximately 4 minutes each in length, in hopes of placing in the contest. With a total of 19 videos submitted overall, the contest was a fun-filled evening for the audience and contestants alike!

Before the contest began, the seats in the Liu Auditorium quickly filled, and by 6:00 PM the audience was buzzing with excitement for the video screening. Mary Toland and William Smith, MCs for the evening, welcomed the eager participants and guests, and introduced the judges. The judges were Noriko Baxter, Japanese Instructor at Incarnate Word High School, Ian Cruz,
senior specialist of the San Antonio International Relations Office, Rieko Johnson, formerly Kumamoto Sister City Relations Chair of the Japan America Society of San Antonio (JASSA), and Fahad Khan, UTSA alumnus and former Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) scholar in Kyoto.

After the brief introductions, the MCs invited Mimi Yu, Associate Director of the East Asia Institute, to the stage for opening remarks. During her speech, Yu emphasized the important role learning new languages can play in our lives and encouraged all the students to continue in their language study endeavors. Once her remarks were concluded, the contest officially began with the university level videos.

Preceding each video, the MCs announced the title in both Japanese and English, before dimming the lights for a true theatre experience. The university level films were creative and fun, with themes ranging from fantasy-style dreams, dreams of visiting Japan, and wacky dreams of people with super powers. The audience was continuously delighted by the comical acting and exciting special effects showcased by the talented university groups. Immediately following each video, the teams were welcomed to the stage to introduce themselves to the audience in Japanese. As the teams introduced themselves, the judges quickly evaluated their videos on a 100-point scale, with categories including presentation/acting, content, language, and video editing.

After a short intermission following the university level entries, the viewing of the high school level videos began. Once again, the MCs announced the title of every video in Japanese and English and dimmed the lights. The high school level videos and their unique sense of humor had the whole audience roaring with laughter. Students’ videos featured exciting adventures, rivalries, and sports competitions with many teams taking inspiration from Japanese pop culture.

After the videos concluded there was a short intermission, during which the UTSA Japanese Club’s Dance Team performed the lively and energetic traditional fisherman dance, Soran Bushi. Following this performance, Yuko Kawabe, Education Chair JASSA, shared a special presentation on the opportunity to host Japanese students from San Antonio’s sister city Kumamoto, and upcoming events such as Aki Matsuri.

Finally, the awards ceremony for both levels of the contest began! The first award given was the Special Award for Best Props and Costumes, which was only awarded to one out of all 19 teams. The lucky winner of this award was “ももはなこ” (Peach Flower Girl) by the team かっこいこども (Cool Kids) of UTSA.

Following the presentation of the Special Award, the overall winners of the university and high school level were announced.

The winners of the university level are as follows:
1st Place: “ももはなこ” (Peach Flower Girl) by かっこいい子ども (Cool Kids) of UTSA

2nd Place: “なぜ日本がいいかなあ?” (Why is Japan Great?) by ウ・ラ・カ・リ・パ (U.Ra.Ka.Ri.Pa) of UTSA

3rd Place: “有名な夢” (Famous Dream) by 普通人間 (Ordinary Humans) of UTSA

The winners of the high school level are as follows:

1st Place: “片目の男” (Bye-Bye, My Eye) by 四人の滑稽な白い村の人々 (Four Funny People From the White Village) of Johnson HS

2nd Place: “私はオリンピックに出場したいです!” (I want to compete in the Olympics!) by チームピングポンポン (Team Ping Pong Pong) of Theodore Roosevelt HS

3rd Place: “ぼくのあたらしいライバル” (My New Rival) by ミー ムチーム (Meme Team) of MacArthur HS

To close the ceremony, the MCs welcomed Dr. Makiko Fukuda, senior lecturer of Japanese at UTSA, to the stage to share her closing remarks. She began by thanking the East Asia Institute for hosting the event. She then proceeded to give a quick impromptu lesson on how to express gratitude in Japanese.

Fukuda assisted the audience in thanking the participants, the Japanese teachers, the families who supported the students, and all the volunteers who had put their time and effort into making the Video Contest a success. “This is how you say thank you so much,” She instructed the crowd, “everyone say ありがとうございました!”

After the conclusion of the ceremony, the audience and participants enjoyed a casual reception and some light refreshments provided by the EAI. Students chatted happily about how much they enjoyed the contest.

Jayla Vicks, a member of the 3rd place team in the university level, commented, “Being able to work together with my friends in Japanese really helped me to improve my Japanese skill!”

Everyone, including audience members, judges, and participants, got a kick out of this year’s videos and are certainly looking forward to next year’s contest!

This event was made possible thanks to:

- CGP: The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership
- UTSA Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
- East Asia Institute: The University of Texas at San Antonio
逃げちゃいけないよ!!!
YOU CAN'T RUN!!!

OF COURSE NOT! I'LL SPEND IT IN SEVERAL!

Why are you stopping me! Do you know how hard I have worked to become a sushi chef?

Today, we will learn how to make soba.