The Starting Activities as the Japan Outreach Initiative Coordinator

IT HAS BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE I ARRIVED IN SAN ANTONIO!

SETTLING IN THE UNITED STATES

I arrived in San Antonio on August 2nd after a week of summer training hosted by the JOI (Japan Outreach Initiative) program in Nashville, Tennessee. Thanks to all of the kind people around me at UTSA, especially my supervisors at the East Asia Institute (EAI), from whom I have received a lot of help, so everything has gone very smoothly in terms of settling in my new city. Within a week I was able to open a bank account and buy a car in order to start my outreach activities!

DEBUTED AT SAN JAPAN ON SEPTEMBER 2ND-3RD

EAI hosted a table to introduce UTSA’s Japan-related activities and we showed how to make Totoro using Origami paper. Over 350 people stopped by the booth in the two days. In fact, it was a great opportunity to promote the JOI outreach program as I could meet some teachers in San Antonio. One of them actually has already contacted me to join another Comic-con event in October. At San Japan, I also gave presentations on calligraphy and kimono. I hope the guests had learned some of our culture and enjoyed trying calligraphy and wearing yukata.

San Japan is one of the largest Japanese comic-con events in the United States held annually in San Antonio.
Looking into more possibilities to teach Japanese Culture to People in San Antonio

EVERTHING HAS JUST STARTED MOVING FORWARD....

JAPANESE ROUND TABLE
I have been planning the round table to offer various topics just like other former coordinators had done.

The first one was given on September 14th entitled ‘How They Live in Tokyo’. The students looked very surprised by the urban life in Tokyo, which included a sample day of ‘salaryman’, interesting places to visit and some cultural manners and customs in public spaces.

JAPANESE COOKING CLASS
One of the activities I have been wanting to do as a JOI coordinator is to offer a Japanese cooking class because I had been cooking for my family since I was a child and I love cooking. Through the EAI office, I was able to book the demo kitchen in the Recreation Wellness Center at UTSA.

We now have set up four cooking classes for this Fall semester.

On September 26, I hosted the first class and taught 17 students how to make authentic miso soup, pickled cucumber and onigiri, Japanese rice ball. The participants also tried to make a couple of their own onigiri. I was impressed by how well they were able to make them. I was also surprised when I gave ‘umeboshi’, salted plum pickles, to some students, they seemed to be enjoying them! I look forward to the next cooking class in October.

JAPANESE CLUB
The club was less active after the long summer break. However, this semester is a great opportunity to give it a fresh start with the new president.

Fortunately, we found new officers and they are all passionate and cooperative to make the club better.

Thanks to all the efforts in advertising, the first general meeting attacked over 60 students and we all had fun introducing ourselves to each other and playing icebreaking games. In addition, as one of the major events for this semester, I helped organize Sports Day on September 29. It was hard to gather all the officers together and prepare enough games to fill a couple hours but we were able to enjoy playing some traditional ‘undokai’ games such as ‘tamaire’, ball toss, and ‘darumasan-ga-koronda’.

I look forward to organizing many more future events and activities for the community as well as improving my presentation skills!