

Oya No Kai

Fall 2006

JAPANESE MAGNET PROGRAM NEWSLETTER FOR RICHMOND ELEMENTARY, MT TABOR MIDDLE AND GRANT HIGH SCHOOL

oshirase

Letter from the president

GREETINGS TO PARENTS, FRIENDS and family of our JMP community. I am President of Oya No Kai for a second (and last) term.

I want to thank folks who volunteered for Oya No Kai this past year who contributed time, money or both to the success of the JMP. This organization is only as good as its volunteers. In particular I want to thank the following people: Theresa Lovett (Docent coordinator for tours at Richmond), Julie Norberg (bookkeeper), John Kodachi (ONK Attorney), Doug Lovett (ONK accountant), Jean Mittelstaedt (Website master), Phil Plummer (directory info inputter), Leslie Kowash (Scrip Queen), Barbara Osborne (Oshirase layout) and Connie Cho (t-shirt design artist). These are all folks who are not Board members that have volunteered an enormous amount of time into keeping Oya No Kai running.

I hope you will also take the time to thanks Oya No Kai board members for their time and dedication to this organization. Countless hours were spent in meetings this past year deliberating on many sensitive subjects.



As we continue to transition and change with the needs of the program, I ask you to have an open mind and ask questions if something does not make sense to you.

It seems like the JMP is continually in transition and this year was no different. Richmond had its first year as an all JMP school and with that came a myriad of changes. JMP schools were not given any additional money this year for running an immersion program which left a huge hole in the budget. We had our first ever auction that shared money with the Richmond Foundation. As we continue to transition and change with the needs of the program, I ask you to have an open mind and ask questions if something does not make sense to you.

One of our big challenges this year will be filling in for the duties that have been done by the Japanese resource teachers. Here is a list of duties Oyanokai will need to help with this year: recruitment and coordination of host families for interns, training of docents, coordination of Wednesday tours for prospective parents, community networking and responding to performance requests by various groups, communication coordination between sister schools to establish schedules, host families and buddies for their reciprocal visits, coordinate Japanese classes such as calligraphy and

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2006-2007 Oya No Kai Board Members

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Board meetings are open to all members, and are generally held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the home of one of the board members. Meeting locations and times will be posted on the ONK website 1-2 weeks ahead of time. You can also find minutes from previous meetings on the website.



The JMP Oshirase is published quarterly by Oya No Kai, Inc. You may e-mail submissions to the editor, or deliver to Richmond Oya No Kai box to the attention of:
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Reflections from the 5th grade trip – 2006

For the past couple of years, I would run across the parent of an older JMP student and ask about the 5th grade class trip. I asked, “Was it fun and worthwhile?” “Was your child ready?” “What was your child’s experience?” and, if they had chaperoned, I would ask for their perspective as a chaperone.

Everyone always spoke positively of the trip. They mentioned how some children really weren’t sure they wanted to go, but really enjoyed it or how their children gained self-esteem. Brandy Grobart, a former chaperone, mentioned how much the



kids enjoyed the onsen (mineral hot spring spa), despite their initial concerns about bathing in the nude. Some chaperones, like me, expressed initial concern about going on the trip, but came back to report that they had a good time, too.

Sometimes I would try to pinpoint what exactly was so great about the trip. I would usually get some vague responses like, “the homestays were really great,” “the food was really great,” or “everyone was really nice.” More mysteriously, all of the kids and parents of kids who have been on the 8th Grade class trip rave even more about that trip! They say things like, “we got to do everything on our own.”

Anyway, I had my doubts and I know others did, too. So, sure, someone else’s child had a good experience, but would my daughter, Madeline? As for onsens, I couldn’t understand how it could be a transformational experience for our kids. There were also things that didn’t sound particularly appealing: 1) we go in June after school is out, but during the hot, rainy season; 2) not knowing what chaperoning would really be like, and 3) the chaperone trip cost.

Almost twenty years ago, I worked with foreign students at Humboldt State University who came mostly from Japan. I learned all sorts of things about the Japanese language

and culture, but had never been there. I figured that if I didn’t go to Japan on this trip, I never would. And I am so glad I went!

If you ask any of the forty-five 5th graders or the 15 other adults affiliated with Oya No Kai’s 5th grade class to Japan if they had a good time on this year’s trip, most will tell you they had a great time! The consensus among chaperones was that it was a privilege to chaperone and well worth the money! For two weeks, we traveled to different regions of Japan and sampled some of the traditional sights, crafts, foods, and hospitality that Japan is famous for.

Some



of the things I especially liked were the way we would learn about something and then apply it. For example, in the gassho-style houses in Gokayama, our hostess taught us to use “kokiriko” sticks and sasara instrument that are used in the song. The next day, we finished our own sasaras that our hosts must have put many hours into starting for us so we would have one to take home as a souvenir. I marveled at the planning that went into all we did. We also made our own soba noodles for lunch from scratch, and made a fan out of washi paper after learning about how the paper was made and used.

More than anything, I enjoyed my homestay families immensely! They were generous, warm, fun - and patient with my Japanese! I like being part of a community and through homestays, you’re instantly a small part of a community because you get to know their friends a bit and then see those same people in town or at school the next day. I appreciated the opportunity to experience Japanese customs in a natural way. Sure, I knew the toilets were different and shoes aren’t worn in the house, but you gain a deeper understanding of cultural norms when you stay in not only one homestay, but two! Two homestays helps you

understand if a rule or cultural norm has exceptions in a short period of time. Also, life in rural Fukuno has a pace and a tempo that is certainly not the same as busy Kobe or in Numazu!

As someone who has hosted several students and interns, staying in homestays helped me understand the lives of those I’ve hosted in so many little ways, even if it’s as silly as figuring out why one of our students ate hot dogs for breakfast every day!



There is so much we could tell you and so much I’m leaving out! We did have hot weather, but it was tolerable and the rain waited until after we left. We did have a couple of sick kids, but it was more of a trip marked by nosebleeds and one snake bite. Most kids had at least one moment of discomfort, but I have to remind myself that my own kids have “down” moments within a two week time period.

I’m sure everyone tried at least one new food and activity. Did you know that the winning beverage among 11 year olds was a soda called CC Lemon? Ending the trip at Nagashima Onsen, with its amusement park, onsens and all-you-can-eat buffet meals were perfect. And we could tell you about the castles, gardens, temples and shrines that we visited along the way.

We could tell you about how our children have matured – or see for yourselves how their faces light up when they talk about their experience. Of course, our kids wouldn’t have been ready without the solid trip planning and leadership of our co-trip directors, 4th Grade teacher Atsuko Ando and 3rd Grade teacher, Reiko Aya! The kids will tell you they really used their Japanese. We could tell you about all the compliments our group received everywhere we went. And if you asked us about our Japanese hosts, we will never be able to adequately express the kindnesses they offered us. ■

Class Trip Funds

(as of August 2006)

	CURRENT SCRIP BALANCE	TOTAL CLASS FUNDS*
2006/12th Grade		1,595.89
2007/11th->12th grade	39.40	3,549.80
2008/10th->11th grade	994.53	1,393.54
2009/ 9th->10th grade	1804.71	682.35
2010/ 8th->9th grade	3082.04	5,140.56
2011/ 7th->8th grade	983.79	13,742.66
2012/ 6th->7th grade	5711.95	30,391.40
2013/ 5th->6th grade	5173.03	39,259.14**
2014/ 4th->5th grade	5014.25	12,997.38***
2015/ 3rd->4th grade	5180.97	16,051.66
2016/ 2nd->3rd grade	3486.91	5,945.06
2017/ 1st->2nd grade	2243.66	2,685.53
2018/ Kinder->1st grade	1317.69	1,317.69
TOTAL TRIP FUNDS		134,752.66

*includes current scrip balance and general funds
 **does not reflect all trip expenses yet
 ***does not reflect trip deposits

Designated Intern Funds

Begin 9/1/04	14,393.22
Auction funds raised 3/2003	8,930.00
Auction funds raised 3/2004	9,850.00
Auction funds raised 3/2005	8,275.00
Action funds raised 3/2006	19,000.00
Disbursements 2003-04	(18,050.00)
Disbursements 2004-05	(13,271.01)
Disbursements 2005-06	(15,997.83)
REMAINING BALANCE	13,129.38

GENKIYARUKIYUKI

Racing on bamboo poles
 Singing songs of our seasons
 Morning radio taiso
 Throwing soy beans to ward off oni
 Kite making and flying
 Singing-singing-singing-singing
 Tea tasting using all five senses
 Koi no bori decorating
 Catching and eating nagashi somen noisily
 Shopping for Nomi ichi bargains
 Creating ikebana arrangements
 Entering Kurabu through our torii
 "OHAYO"
 Riding Tri Met
 Honoring elders at Ikoi No Kai
 Walking to our make believe "Onsen"
 Sharing -----
 Dancing yosakoi with energy
 Relaxing under the kotatsu and in the chashitsu
 Making dango
 Performing with (or listening to) an impromptu violin/viola ensemble of Kurabu Kids
 Kneading udon dough with our feet
 Making wishes each season
 Enjoying fish with a filling
 Dressing up
 Dipping mochi in shoyu or kinako
 Printing our own t-shirts
 Watching 300 lbs of ice become an eagle and fish... and puddle
 Making curry rice
 Playing taiko for 1 ½ hours
 Smashing suika
 Greeting new friends
 Teaching classmates
 Eating kakigori
 Laughing, swimming, folding
 Running, swimming, playing
 Tossing otedama and kamifusen and beach balls

Thank you to all who made Kurabu 2006 such a success- What a fun and busy 'year'!

Daniel Cruse comes in second in national Japanese speech contest!

Congratulations to Daniel, who was invited by the Portland Japanese Consulate to participate in a national speech contest sponsored by the Aurora Foundation, held last May in Irvine, CA. Daniel, a JMP student entering the 12th grade, has participated in the past 4 annual Japanese speech contests sponsored by the Portland Japanese Consulate. In addition to winning his division at the local speech competition last year, he came in second in the national contest! Contestants included 14 other teens from Berkeley to New York. Daniel's winning speech addressed US-Japan relations.

Well done, Daniel!

Letter from the president

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raphy and taiko, translation from English to Japanese for native Japanese families. If you can help with any of the above duties, please contact Masako Wieber, masako.w@comcast.net the Oya No Kai board member who is spearheading this enormous task.

This year's "Our Dreams Take Flight" auction will be co-sponsored by the Richmond PTA. The auctions proceeds will be split as follows: 10% Oyanokai, 25% Richmond PTA and 65% towards cultural exchanges. Next year the auction proceeds will be 10% Oyanokai, 45% Cultural exchanges and 45% Richmond PTA. While this decision will require parents to contribute more for the cultural exchanges, it will provide much needed funds that will support the Richmond JMP throughout the entire school year. Our hope is that this auction will be bigger and better than ever. Oyanokai's portion of auction proceeds remain the same throughout this transition.

I am pleased that Kathryn Anderson is now the permanent Principal at Richmond.

She spent literally hundreds of hours this past year in meetings with parents, parent

organizations, auction and cultural exchange related issues. I applaud her dedication to the JMP at Richmond and her seemingly endless supply of energy. I am excited to have a principal who has gone to Japan with the 5th grade students and has a working knowledge of this cultural exchange.

We are very sad to be losing Cynthia Gilliam as Principal at Mt. Tabor MS. Cynthia has been one of the JMP's best advocates. The strength of the 8th grade research residency was due in part to her understanding and support of the Taborsan teachers. We wish her well in her new position with the District.

Some of our goals for 2006-07 are to work towards a solution to replacing the Japanese resource teacher position, supporting the cultural exchanges, integrating 75 additional families as the program is doubled starting with this year's kindergarten class, finding grants to support our needs, getting more fund raising participation from the upper JMP grades, supporting the 2nd annual Spring Festival, building on last year's success, further support of Homework club and helping to make this year's Our Dreams take flight auction the best ever.

Sincerely,
Monica Mueller

ONK Listserv etiquette:

It is important that we all adhere to some simple rules in keeping our ONK listserv a valuable tool for sharing information:

- When replying to information, reply to sender only;
 - The listserv is not to be used as a forum to debate issues or as a personal blog;
 - Please do not include child specific information in any messages;
 - Use the listserv only as an information sharing tool.
- All listserv messages are screened by a moderator before going out. Attachments are not allowed on the listserv.

Photo collection donated to JMP

Thanks to Mr. Bill Robinson for his donation of a large collection of beautiful slides from his 1983 trip to Japan! Mr. Robinson is a respected gardener, having helped establish the Japanese Garden and Crystal Springs Rhododendron garden, and recipient of the Emperor's Award. We are fortunate to have his great-granddaughter, Riley Bosca, in the JMP at Richmond, and we are honored to receive this collection of photos.



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