

2008 “Our Dreams Take Flight” 5th Grade Cultural Exchange to Japan Letter of Intention

Dear Parent or Guardian of _____;

Each year since 1995, Oya No Kai, Inc. has solely sponsored a cultural exchange trip to Japan for the recently matriculated 5th grade students of the Japanese Magnet Program (JMP) of Portland Public Schools. This trip to Japan (Exchange) occurs during the summer when the JMP is not in session. **Accordingly, the Exchange is not funded, sponsored, or endorsed by Portland Public Schools.** Consequently, there is no requirement for your child to participate in the Exchange. However, since 1995, nearly all parents have found the Exchange to be very beneficial to the cultural and language components of their children’s language immersion education.

The Exchange has the following main objectives.

- ❑ To provide students with an authentic cultural experience;
- ❑ To allow students to use their language skills and cultural knowledge
- ❑ To provide a home stay experience in Japan
- ❑ To have a culminating experience in recognition of six years of dedication to the learning of Japanese
- ❑ To encourage students as their families make the decision to continue with the JMP in middle and high school

Over the years, Oya No Kai, Inc., has established and built relationships with a number of Japanese schools and locales that help make this Exchange a successful educational experience. The Exchange is an extraordinary undertaking, requiring many volunteer hours of work on the part of every participating family. The opportunity to experience Japan in-person will establish a foundation for your child’s continued Japanese language study in middle school. The Exchange should not be confused with the Portland Public School-sponsored trip, called the Research Residency in Japan, which occurs in the 8th grade.

TRIP PLANNING

Oya No Kai, Inc., has formed a Trip Committee to plan the details for the 2008 Exchange. The Trip Committee has formed and is beginning to set up the itinerary. Based on previous experience, the Trip Committee, with its volunteer members, will work many hours on your behalf. All input from parents is welcome and should be submitted to the Trip Committee co-chairs, Alison Walcott and Jennifer Snyder. Please understand that final decisions, once made by the Trip Committee, should be accepted and supported by everyone. If you have concerns about the trip planning process

please feel free to discuss them with the trip chairs, the Oya No Kai Trip Liaison Monica Mueller, or the president of Oya No Kai, Inc., John Baumgardner.

COSTS

The cost of this trip is expected to be approximately \$2,500. However, this is a difficult amount to forecast with any precision. Airfares can move at a moment's notice, and the recent run-up in fuel prices can add unpredictable fees to the cost. The itinerary choices, particularly the balance between homestay nights and hotel nights, also have a significant effect on the total cost. The schedule for payments partially results from the need to make advance payments on certain portions of the itinerary, particularly airplane tickets.

BEHAVIOR

While in Japan, Exchange travelers will be goodwill ambassadors for the City of Portland, State of Oregon, and for the US. They will interact with Japanese students their age. The Japanese students from the schools visited during the Exchange often come to Portland for an American cultural experience. As a result, the participants of the Exchange need to be at their best behavior while in Japan. Participation in the 2008 Exchange is dependent on each participant demonstrating an ability to behave in a responsible manner and to follow directions. You will receive a list of expectations and discipline rules. Please review them with your student and seriously consider your child's readiness for this year's Exchange.

Please read and sign the following and return to the following address by June **2007**.

Oya No Kai - Trip
P.O. Box 14392
Portland, OR 97293

Or, to Trip Liaison

In order for my child to participate in the 2008 Cultural Exchange to Japan, I understand and agree to the following conditions:

- All registration forms, and trip deposits must be submitted on or before the indicated deadlines to Oya No Kai - Exchange, PO Box 14392, Portland, OR 97293.
- Failure to comply will result in your child being denied participation in the trip. _____ (initial)
- Families must review all correspondence from the Trip Committee and families must make sure that the Trip Committee has current e-mail addresses, street addresses and phone numbers for your family. _____
- No more than four excused absences for a family are allowed between June 2006 and June 2008 for **mandatory meetings, cultural series, and performance practices**. A request for an excused absence must be submitted in **advance and in writing** (e-mail is acceptable) to the Trip Committee co-chairs (Alison Walcott and Jennifer Snyder)
- In case of illness or family emergency, a phone call or e-mail will suffice. If you do not notify a Trip co-Chair of an absence **before** it takes place, absent an emergency, your absence will be considered an unexcused absence.
- Two unexcused absences for a family will result in your child being denied participation in the Exchange. _____(initial)
- I am responsible for catching up on the content of any missed meetings. _____(initial)
- Portland Public Schools does not fund, sponsor, or endorse this travel study program. The District is not responsible for conducting or supervising this trip. PPS employees who participate in travel study programs are not acting in their capacity as District employees and do so at their own risk. Students participating in travel study programs do so at their own risk. _____(initial)

I have read, understood, and agree to the preceding statements regarding the Exchange:

Student's signature

Date:

Parent's signature

Date: