



Japan Visitation Program



Arrive in Japan



Go to Izena Island

Nov. 17, 2005

Traveling alone

☹️ "On the first night when I came down for dinner I had to make friends there. After traveling such a long way on my own, I'm a lot more independent than I was."

Homesickness

😭 "I cried that night because my mother told me to check the closets in hotels in case there was someone hiding in them. I even checked under my bed! Now I think Japan is indeed, one of the safest countries in the world!"



Nov. 18

First encounter



☹️ "I was worried because everyone was very nervous at first and had trouble communicating."

☹️ "I felt lonely because I didn't understand what the people were saying in Japanese."



Nov. 19

Study tour

Getting to know the people of Izena

☹️ "The 'Fur Elise, Beethoven' wake up call for the whole island in Izena, it is so interesting. I heard it every morning at 6 a.m., and at first I thought it was a fire alarm or something!"

☹️ "I felt that the people of Izena Island were very proud of their culture. I felt that there was a definite sense of them belonging to Okinawa over Japan. I learned from the children on Izena Island that it is important to embrace your own culture."

☹️ "There aren't the conveniences we have in the cities, but like their friendliness, the people of the island have a wealth that we don't have."

☹️ "I like that everything was so green, in Las Vegas it is all desert so you don't see green that much."

☹️ "As we grew closer, we all gathered in one another's rooms to party or just hang out, and before we knew it, we had become great friends."

The Farewell Party

Nov. 26

☹️ "It was good to be able to meet the people who had supported the project, and to tell them about all the amazing experiences we had."



Nov. 24, 25

Home stay and high school visitation

At school

☹️ "I wore the uniform, which helped me to feel like one of the students."

☹️ "I remember everyone falling asleep in class and found it humorous."

☹️ "The two days at school were the hardest out of the entire program. But thanks to the support of teachers and friends, the two days were very worthwhile."

☹️ "We were so much on the same wavelength that we would get to school late and leave early. Paul seemed bored by the classes, and I felt sorry for him."



Sightseeing

☹️ "It was great to see the modern side of Japan, and to see all the places that I've seen on so many TV programs recently."

☹️ "Even in the hustle-bustle of the city there was still welcoming atmosphere in Japan."

☹️ "We all went to Tokyo Disneyland because we were so lonely being apart from each other after having been together all the time during our stay in Okinawa."



Leave Japan



Nov. 27

☹️ "I can not explain how in ten days I became so attached to the people I had just met."

☹️ "The sadness that I felt showed me how many fantastic friends I have made."

At Izena Island

Nov. 20

Additional research and photo essay composition

☺ “Even if it was raining and we were being thrown around on a boat, we found a way to make it fun.”



Nov. 21

Photo essay presentation at Izena Junior High School



Lunch and cleaning at junior high school

☺ “I was really surprised that everyone in the class eats lunch together, and after lunch, everyone uses small toothbrushes to brush their teeth.”



Barbeque on Izena Beach

☺ “I was moved by the music we listened to on the beautiful beach, and we reveled in the memories of our five days as we ate delicious food. Some people started crying, and I had all I could do to hold back tears.”



At Kanagawa/Tokyo



At Okinawa Main Island

Nov. 23

Go to Kanagawa/Tokyo



At home

☺ “It was the first time a foreigner came to stay at our house, and for the week prior to our guest’s arrival the household was in a commotion.”

☺ “The first night, the family took me to a restaurant far away from their house just to celebrate my arrival. That was the first time I ate real Japanese sushi.”

☺ “Misa’s mother was lovely and she blow-dried my hair one night after I washed it so I wouldn’t catch a cold.”

☺ “The futon is the best bed ever! I think that is possibly better than a bed. I really liked the *kotatsu* also—something I recommend that should be an asset in NZ homes!”

☺ “I was shocked when we had *sashimi* for dinner and Vicki said that the *wasabi*—which I dislike—was delicious.”

☺ “It made me really happy when Malee said, ‘I felt like I was home.’”

☺ “I could never repay them for how well my homestay family treated me.”



Nov. 22

Return to Okinawa main island



Visit Shuri Castle and Peace Memorial Park

☺ “I wanted to hear Bai Yun and Kosoo’s candid thoughts about the Park.”

Stroll on “International Street”

☺ “I enjoyed every minute of it (except eating pigs ear)!”

