

IAC ACTIVITY



University students from France enjoyed a month stay in Chigasaki.

In July this year, there were 9 university students from France visiting Chigasaki again to do a home-stay for almost one month. They are from two top-ranking universities in France where they have studied Japanese for about one year. Their main purpose was not only to brush up their Japanese language but also to learn about Japanese culture through numerous experiences; they visited junior highs and colleges in the city, learned tea ceremonies and how to wear a kimono, made trips to Kamakura to experience *IGO* and *ZAZEN* and also to Kyoto to visit the old temples and shrines, and they also climbed Mt. Fuji.

Their communication with host families made their stay most meaningful, and how much they enjoyed it was apparent already at the time when their welcome party was held on July 12 by the IAC.

They paid a courtesy visit with the city mayor on July 23, and their *Sayonara* party was held on August 2. At the party, each student made a brief presentation in Japanese relative to what they experienced while here. This arrangement by the IAC has a good reputation in France and their visit was the tenth visit this year.

One of these students said the one month home-stay was almost equal to one year of Japanese study in France, though the time they spent for studying Japanese at the language classes was only 32 hours. He also said that he noticed Japanese think of "you" first and "we" come later, but Western people behave in totally the opposite way.

They said they could really enjoy the home-stay and would like to come back to Chigasaki again.



People In Town

Heydy Jhoanna Garcia Mendez

I learned how important recycling is living in this city.....



Heydy Garcia came to Chigasaki on September 16, 2004 together with her husband after marrying in Colombia, South America. She was living in Cali, where the population is about 2 million. *Heydy* met him at a luncheon party held at her friend's home. Her husband, *Mr. Nishiyama*, likes to travel overseas like an adventurer, according to *Heydy*, and he was visiting Columbia on his way from the neighboring country Ecuador at that time. She cannot speak English, but she has obtained Japanese Certificate Examination Level 3 and speaks Japanese very fluently. To her, *hiragana* and *katakana* are no problem but *kanji* or Chinese characters still remains problematic.

Her hobby is *Hawaiian Quilt* and she is learning whenever she has time, but her current job at a major company in Tsujido is so busy that she has no time to pursue quilting or whatever she personally wants to do. Actually, her desire is to get in touch with people or to be an interpreter for Spanish.

Heydy is a devout Christian and she goes to a church in Hon-Chiba on Sunday every other week, and there she is able to meet 100s of Columbian people visiting the church. In comparison with a number of friends of her country she meets in Hon-Chiba, a sad story was that she has almost no friends around her home, and naturally she is hoping to be able to find friends and find some other job which allows more time to relax.

Heydy and her husband returned to Columbia last year spending four months and they went to Italy and Spain this May. When she visited the Roman Colosseum, however, she said she couldn't stand the sad historical story their tour guide explained.

A little good story was that she learned the importance of recycling living in Chigasaki and she would like to develop the same way of thinking when she returns to her home country.

●People In Town Follow up

In the last issue of this CHIGASAKI BREEZE, we introduced a lady from the Philippines who came to Chigasaki in October last year, returned to her country one time, and came back again in April this year. Her name is *Shirley Bausa Yamauchi* and we reported that she was living in Hishinuma with her husband and a two year-old boy, having little communication with local people because of a language barrier.

Soon after the paper was published, we had contact from a Japanese lady *Ms. Ogisako* working at *Shorin Kominkan* (Community Center) asking us to help contact *Shirley Yamauchi* so she can come to the *Kominkan* with her little boy to join their Children's Play Day scheduled on July 23.

We conveyed the message to *Shirley*, and a few days later we received a response that *Shirley* and her husband would like to join the children's event. After all, we learned that she and her boy enjoyed participating in the event and felt happy that they could join. *Ms. Ogisako* and other staff at the *Kominkan* also felt good having *Shirley's* family and they also reportedly enjoyed the visit very much.

This enabled *Shirley* to build a close relationship with the local community, and it was such a nice experience for us. At this time, we would like to ask readers to let us know if you would like to get in touch with people in the local community. We would be willing to offer a site for you to get together with anybody from overseas regardless of nationality.

In the darkness, they could see thousands of fireflies shimmering around one solitary tree. As they lay sprawled on the country road, it looked like a myriad of dancing stars.



A GOOD LITTLE THING PLANTING YOUNG TREES IN THE PHILIPPINES

One of our friends in the IAC took a trip to a rural area of the Philippines the week of July 21 for a 5-night stay for the purpose of planting young trees in a group of 35 people, young and old, men and women. They were all volunteers including a couple of high school students and they planted 2,200 young trees of various wood species such as *mahogany*, *eucalyptus*, *oak*, *beech*, etc. The area was in a town called *Aritao*, *Kirang*, *Nueva Vizcaya*, and it took seven and half hours by bus from Manila via Cabanatuan. The tree planting project at their Farmer's Training Center NUEVA ECIHA has been carried out for 10 years already by a Japanese NPO and our friend participated in the program as a representative of a major company in Tokyo. The company supports such environmental activities. Needless to say, the purpose is to keep up the sustainability of the natural environment. Participants, however, were not only company employees but also included those who expressed their desire to join through the internet. The NPO has joined up with companies concerned in such projects as planting young trees in the Philippines, and for employees, respective companies take care of all the transportation and lodging fees. As to lodging, though, elderly members stayed in a hotel in town, while young people stayed in houses made of bamboo located closely to the plantation site. This reforestation is said to have contributed to turn double-cropping to triple cropping a year and it was an unexpected tremendous effect for local rice farmers. The time spent for the tree planting was only three days but on the day before their departure, they visited a local elementary school and exchanged greetings. The school children danced, while Japanese, in three separate groups, introduced Japanese children's songs in English with gestures. Everybody enjoyed the visit so much that later on they reportedly danced all together.

Planting trees in 35-degree temperatures wasn't so easy a task, but the humidity was low, and the lack of marshland or ponds made it free of mosquitoes and other bugs, and everything went on comfortably. Also it was enjoyable to work together with other people they never met before for a common purpose. There was a good relationship born naturally, and they agreed to visit each other again in Yamanashi Prefecture.