

## People in Town

### Vesna Pavlovic

ベスナ パブロビッチ



*Vesna Pavlovic* came from Serbia to Japan in 1996 and she spent the first 4 years in Shin Koiwa, Tokyo, then in November 2002 she moved to Chigasaki. Her hometown is Belgrade and there she was working with a Japanese NGO; JEN (Japan Emergency NGO) which was working under the auspices of UNHCR. For their activity, a Japanese representative had the role of coordination while local staff who speak English were supporting the so-called psycho-social program for refugees. *Vesna* was one of them and she came to Japan with the Japanese representative. She speaks English because she used to live in Long Island, NY for 4 years until she was 12 years old. Her father was a representative for a Serbian textile company headquartered in New York.

At present she is teaching English for kids at Higashi-kaigan but she likes graphic design and is interested in writing books for kids as well as drama for kids though she hasn't been able to accomplish the same as yet. For IAC's International Understanding Education program, however, she has attended classes at junior high school in Chigasaki or she has participated in an activity at Kominkan to introduce her country and their culture. She is trying to get involved in local community life this way.

She speaks Japanese very well, she has a 6 year-old boy, and she likes Chigasaki very much as it's bright, clean, calm and it has a nice beach. Initially, Japanese people looked too shy or some of them seemed even reluctant to speak to foreigners but she now understands it's not necessarily coming from ill will. In contrast, Serbian people talk loudly, they are talkative and they don't keep much inside, according to her.

On the present social problems in Japan, she feels there is lack of communication in many areas but is sympathetic that housewives are required to spend a long time outside of home.

She is now reading "The Book of Tea" written in English in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Kakuzo Okakura. In the book she learns the art of Tea, it's cultural background and its influence on every aspect of Japanese culture, thought and life.

*Vesna Pavlovic* would like to stay in Japan for a long time hoping to develop her talent of writing books and making and playing drama with/for children. She goes to Tokyo often and she is a very active woman enjoying her life in Chigasaki.

## A Letter from and Exchange Student My stay in Japan

My name is Grant Smith. I am from Melbourne, Australia and I have stayed in Japan for the last 10 months and have had some of the hardest and some of the most enjoyable moments of my life this year.

I started head strong, seeing as I had studied Japanese for 9 years before last year. I thought I would be able to survive easily....I was wrong. I actually found that in the first 3 months I was just learning how to listen to Japanese rather than how to speak Japanese, which was a very long process. The people around me were very supporting of me during this time though, which am very thankful for, otherwise I wouldn't be here in Japan at the moment. During the next 4 months I was learning lots of grammar and increasing my vocabulary as fast as I could so that I was able to speak with more people about more things.

For the last 3 months I was revising all of the Japanese grammar and vocabulary that I had learnt, so that I will be able to continue on my Japanese at university and further into my life. I have experienced many different cultures while I have been her in Japan, including tea ceremony, judo, temples, meditation and learning how to play "Go".

I am very sad to be leaving Japan soon, but at the same time, I know that I have accomplished every single goal that I set out to do this previous year.

I found that the Japanese students were very interested in English speaking countries, and I also found out that there were students who had been to Australia and America in my grade, some of whom can speak English much better than I can. I enjoyed practicing Japanese with them. Over all, I am thankful to Chigasaki for letting me stay for 10 months and I hope to return sometime in the near future. But for now, I have to return to Australia to complete my education.

## IAC Orientation

IAC orientation will be given on February 6, or the first Tuesday in February, and on March 3, the first Saturday in March at the Support Center from 13:30 through 15:00. The center is located on the other side of JUSCO Super Store on the Chuō-Dōri. Whoever are interested to know about our activity or considering to participate in IAC, please feel free to join.

## IAC ACTIVITIES

### Assistance to Overseas

One of IAC'S major activities is to support children in overseas countries who are unable to get an adequate education nor medical care because of poverty.

In the year of 2006, IAC's monetary assistance was ¥200,000 to Cambodia through Asia Children Educational Fund, ¥100,000 to Peru through Gracias Amigo, ¥50,000 to Nepal through Lalupate, and ¥50,000 to Laos through Japan/Laos Exchange Association. Additionally in the previous year, they supported Indonesia by sending ¥50,000 for people suffered from Tsunami, and ¥50,000 to Malawi of SADC (South Africa Development Community). Such monetary support is not necessarily large in amount, but IAC is hopeful that their assistance will help children grow up desirably in each countries.

### Representative of NPO in Cambodia Passed Away

Relative to our activity mentioned above, we have to tell you a sad story. A representative of Asia Children Educational Fund, Mr. Takashi Horimoto died at 39 of a traffic accident in Battambang, Cambodia on November 10, 2006. The accident actually occurred only one day before the opening ceremony of newly built occupational training school. In the ceremony, he was to receive a scroll of appreciation in the name of Cambodia premier.

IAC had continued to support his activity in the last 10 years. The news of his death gave a big shock not only to people in Cambodia but also in Japan including those of IAC's Sewing Box group. They were working hard to make fancy handicrafts and sharing a large part of the IAC's monetary assistance.

### 2006 IAC End-Of-Year Party

The IAC end-of-year party was held on December 17, inviting a number of foreign residents who have some connections with the IAC. They are from various overseas countries, and one representative person was Mr. Shimane L. Kelatse, Counselor of Embassy of The Republic of Botswana. There were about 100 people in total to see a magic show and percussion drumming played with a number of the visitors participating. The party was very lively and enjoyable. These parties are open to everyone and you don't have to be a member of the IAC. If you are interested, please join us at the end of December.

### International Understanding

The IAC has a program that asks foreigners in town to make a presentation about their country and culture at schools for students to learn about it and study what is international understanding. These are done at primary, junior-high and high Schools in the city.

In a year, the number of countries being introduced reaches almost 20 and it is appreciated by students and schools. One of the recent exciting things was a map presented by Australian university students. The map showed Japan upside down with the North Pole shown at the bottom.

### IAC Mission Statement

We will contribute to the peace in the world community through mutual understanding, friendship, cooperativeness, solidarity and human dignity so all people, as earth citizens, respect and live together beyond the borders of nationality.