

「OFIX News」 Issue 5 (Dec 2008)
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Exchange ~

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【01】 OFIX Programme/Event Reports

Medical Interpreter Volunteer Training

OFIX recently held training sessions for English, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese language volunteer medical interpreters in collaboration with the AMDA International Medical Information Centre (Kansai) and the Rinku General Medical Centre.

Further information and photos

http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no5.pdf

Osaka Foreign Students Music Festival

The 18th Osaka Foreign Students Music Festival was held on Sunday 14th December at the Osaka International House. This event was organised by OFIX in collaboration with the Osaka International House and the Min-On Concert Association. Foreign students based in Osaka thrilled the visitors with traditional music and dance from their home countries.

Further information and photos

http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no5.pdf

【02】 Osaka International Club

Ivy Ang (Malaysia), OFIX Scholarship Student

Ivy wrote to us recently about her impressions of English language learning in Japan

Article and photo

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/club/ivy.pdf>

【03】 OFIX Network

Kansai International Exchange Volunteer Network (KIV-NET)

KIV-NET was established in March 1996 following the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference held in Osaka in 1995. The aim of KIV-NET is to facilitate exchange of information between international exchange organisations in Kansai, and to promote volunteer activities

in the region. Since then the 8th International Energy Forum, the 3rd World Water Forum, and the 2007 World Athletics Championships have all been held in Osaka, and KIV-NET has assisted in providing volunteers at these events.

At a recent general meeting. It was felt that as an organisation which represents volunteers in the whole of Kansai, it is of great value to the region to further the scope of activities and further assist in the support of events.

Members of the Osaka SGG Club, Friends of Asia Club, and Supporters Net for Foreigners Osaka were invited to the meeting at which it was also decided that KIV-NET will actively support and promote the upcoming events in 2010 commemorating the 1300th anniversary of the Nara Heijokyo Capital.

At the same meeting KIV-NET welcomed three new members, the Wakayama International Exchange Foundation, the Supporters Net for Foreigners Osaka, and the Kyoto City International Foundation. The total number of members is now 80.

For further information please get in touch with us.

【04】 OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

First of all let me say that I love winter in Osaka. Yes, it can get rather chilly, but I'd take that over the stifling summer heat any day of the week! (Yes, I come from London, where "stifling heat" are words seldom used).

Anyway, I thought I'd write about some of the things that are typical of a Japanese winter. First and foremost, the wonderful little things called Kairo. These are little disposable heat pads available in all shapes and sizes at convenience stores. Shake them a little, stick them to whichever part of your body you want to warm up (not directly though, make sure there is a layer of clothing in between) and you are good to go. They stay warm for anything up to 24 hours, and are a real lifesaver. How do they work? That's this month's homework!

The second indispensable item to help you through a Japanese winter is the wonder that is the Kotatsu. This is a low table fitted with an electric heater. You place a square futon over the frame, and then pop the table top over the futon. Once you are sitting comfortable at the table with the futon wrapped around you, switch on the heater, and you won't want to move again for the rest of the day! With no real central heating in homes in Japan, people rely more on space heating, with the kotatsu being a relatively inexpensive way of keeping warm over the winter months.

New Year in Japan is a relatively quiet affair (compared to the UK at least!), with most people spending it with their families at home. Over the New Year period people eat special food known as osechi-ryori. This is made up of various different foods with particular meanings. For example kazunoko ("kazu" meaning "number", and "ko" meaning child) is herring roe which is eaten to symbolize a wish to be gifted with numerous children in the New Year, and Tai (also meaning "celebrate") is red sea-bream, eaten to symbolize an auspicious event. The main dish is Ozoni, which is a soup of mochi rice cakes. Interestingly, in western Japan the broth is made from miso, whereas in eastern Japan it is a clear broth made from bonito stock.

Another important part of New Year celebrations in Japan is the first visit to a shrine or temple on the 1st January (called hatsumode). The temples and shrines are packed with people making wishes for the coming year, and enjoying the holiday atmosphere.

Although it can get a tad cold, I highly recommend being in Japan for the New Year period. And if at all possible, get yourself invited to a friends house and experience osechi ryori first hand!
Happy New Year to you all!

Click here for photos

http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no5.pdf

【05】 OFIX International Student Hall News

Exchange Party for international students and local residents

With the aim of furthering exchange between foreign students and local residents, OFIX recently held exchange parties at its two international student halls.

Sakai International Hall "Winter Party" (6th December)

Members of the local residents association gave the students Japanese calligraphy lessons, and the students introduced some fun games to the locals.

Senri International Hall "Christmas Party" (7th December)

Students joined together with local residents to make pumpkin buns, and play games such as a relay game with chopsticks.

For photos click here

http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/backnumber/mail_english_no5.pdf

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Event Calendar (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/cgi-bin/calender.cgi>

Event Calendar form (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/cgi-bin/event.cgi>

Seeking residents for the Orion International Hall

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/jigyuu/index4.html>

OFIX Volunteer Information (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index2.html>

Seeking New OFIX Supporting Members (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/sanjoyo/index.html>
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Comments/Suggestions: info@ofix.or.jp

Please send Osaka International Club reports to the following address:

clubnews@ofix.or.jp

To cancel your registration or change your registered email address

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/mail/index.html#english>

Print-out version (PDF) of OFIX News with photos

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