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Editorial Note

【01】 Volunteer Activities of OFIX

■ The OFIX Volunteer System

OFIX is conducting this system through the participation of prefectural residents in each volunteer activities, with the aim of promoting support for foreigners, international understanding and international exchange.

In this article, 3 volunteer activities will be introduced.

《Language Volunteers》

There are community interpreters and translators, who give language support at local municipalities with regards to general living of foreign residents, and event interpreters and interpreter guides, who give language support at international events.

Especially with the increasing number of foreigners settling in Japan, the need for community interpretation and translation is growing.

Community interpreters are not only required to be interpreters, but also as bridges between foreign residents and administration.

For this reason, OFIX conducts trainings to learn the attitude and background knowledge necessary in these activities.

《Cultural Volunteers》

Cultural volunteers introduce and teach Japanese culture and traditional arts in

Japanese. Requests are gradually decreasing, but the activities are popular with foreigners experiencing Japanese culture for the first time.

《Host Family Volunteer》

Host family volunteers accept foreigners visiting Japan into their homes, regardless of whether or not they would be staying overnight, and provide for them a chance to experience and understand life and culture in Japan. Because of that, registration of volunteers is not per individual, but per family.

Trainees of the Ando Program experience homestay every year. We have received comments that the homestay was their most impressive experience during their training and they continue to keep in touch with their homestay families even after they return to their countries.

- ※ Based on the "Network Agreement for the Support of Foreigners in Times of Disasters" of Kinki CLAIR, volunteers registered in OFIX's Interpreter and Translator Volunteer in Times of Disaster System will act as Disaster interpreters and translators.

For other details, please visit the OFIX homepage.

→<http://www.ofix.or.jp/>

- Multilingual Support in Times of Disasters
--Kinki CLAIR Activities--
2015 Kinki CLAIR Chairman
(Kyoto City International Foundation)

The international exchange associations in each prefecture and designated city translate disaster information to foreign languages, change them to easy-to-understand Japanese, and give consultations to foreigners who are victims of a disaster, so that they would not be weak in getting information.

However, in the case of a large scale disaster, such as the Great earthquake of Hanshin Awaji, it is impossible for each association to provide sufficient support. Therefore, to enable the entire Kinki region to support foreigners during a disaster, an agreement was formed between international exchange associations in 2007.

Currently, there is a total of 8 organizations from 5 prefectures and 3 designated cities that have joined. These organizations operate a system for interpreter and translator volunteers (hereinafter

"Disaster Volunteers") and are conducting trainings for these disaster volunteers.

The Disaster Volunteer System presumes that when a disaster occurs anywhere in the Kinki region, it will dispatch disaster volunteer interpreters and provide multilingual translation support as requested.

No large-scale disaster has occurred in the Kinki region since 2007, which would require requesting for disaster volunteers. However, in preparation for future disasters, it would be reassuring if more people would participate as disaster volunteers and be part of foreigner support in times of disasters in their areas, that would eventually lead to support of the entire Kinki region.

- Development Course for People Specializing in Multicultural Society -Taking the Multicultural Societies Foundation Course-
Yuka Yoshikawa, Senior Planning Officer

Amidst the rapid multiculturalization of Japanese society, the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Center for Multilingual Multicultural Education and Research is promoting the training of professionals who can contribute to solving the problems in a multicultural society. This year, the course above was held with the purpose of acquiring the basic knowledge to understand the multicultural problems in a region and I, as an OFIX staff, participated.

I have learned from the course that the first step of forming a multicultural society is by recognizing the various problems behind multiculturalization. For example, even if something is considered as simply a problem of a foreigner (foreign national), there may be a case that it could also apply to a Japanese (Japanese national) who has foreign roots, or a person whose native language and home country language are different.

To conduct the multilingual support, which will help in solving multicultural symbiosis problems, the cooperation of OFIX volunteers is indispensable. As the OFIX volunteer coordinator, I will try to carefully observe the problems of a multicultural society, as well as tell the volunteers that the things that they have to consider are more than they are aware of.

The course content was rich and much

could be learned. It was an intense 4 days for me.

【02】 People Active as OFIX Volunteers

■ OFIX Host Family Kenichiro Takashiba

The first time I hosted someone for a homestay was 30 years ago. After that, more than 200 people were able to experience Japanese culture and food through my home. Some of them were long term residents and there were some who came to Japan 2 or 3 times.

My first guest came only with one camera, but now it is only natural to have a digital SLR camera and a smartphone. International calls can be done through Wi-fi using Skype. The homestay environment has changed much.

My guest this time, Chaitu (nickname), was an Architect, so we visited the architectural works of Tadao Ando in Southern Osaka. We did not have much time, so I was worried if he fully enjoyed himself, but we had a very fulfilling time.

Homestay with the Takashiba Family (Bhimala Krishna Chaitanya)

I was eager to experience first-hand various aspects of Japanese culture and life. So I was looking forward to my first ever home stay. At the same time I was anxious about how the weekend would unfold with them.

When I met the Takashiba family, all my doubts disappeared. We got along well naturally.

Ken-san and Kim-san made extra effort to make sure I was involved in all their activities, be it visiting their grandchildren's school or cooking okonomiyaki or visiting temples nearby. They were very patient in answering my questions about Japanese customs and way of life. Their house was full of pictures and books and various memorabilia, almost as warm as the people who inhabit it. The conversation kept flowing and it was indeed a satisfying time.

It was an honour to spend time with such a warm and friendly couple, indeed

it was one of those experiences that I wish would not end.

■ OFIX Language Volunteer (Spanish)
Minako Inoue

It has been 5 years since I became an OFIX volunteer. Now, I live in Madrid, Spain.

When I was living in Osaka, I thought of making a living using Spanish, so I did different kinds of work, such as interpreted at hospitals and prisons, became a language teacher and translated, to gain experience.

I learned about OFIX's language volunteer from my grandfather and registered. After I registered, I received a number of opportunities to take part in and do translations and translation checks for events like OFIX's Disaster Prevention for International Students, Osaka 8.8 Million Drill (Osaka Prefecture Risk Management Office), Introductory Level Japanese Language Class (sponsored by Sakai City) and Big Eye Art Festival (sponsored by International Communication Center for Persons with Disabilities".

Everything was impressive, but I was very happy that I could realize the need to consider foreigners living in Japan and be able to make a contribution by translating and checking translations of disaster prevention materials. ◦

From Osaka, I have moved far away overseas, but as an OFIX language volunteer, I would still like to actively take part in multilingual support activities of OFIX in the future.

【03】 2015 Osaka Invitational Program for Short Term Overseas Trainees in Architecture and Arts

For the 23rd Osaka Invitational Program for Short Term Overseas Trainees in Architecture and Arts, we welcomed 8 students from 8 different Asian countries for about one month from September 25 to October 23.

Using the Carlberg Group's 1st International Architectural Award prize money won by the Architect Tadao Ando and support money from companies, it is the program's aim to provide

young people from Asian countries the chance to learn about Japanese architecture and art so they would develop an interest and understanding in Japanese culture and contribute towards the development of their own country's architecture and art fields.

At the training provided by Osaka Prefectural Government, which began last year, the Urban Policy and Urban Development departments talked about city policy and planning, infrastructure, landscape policy and earthquake-resistant measures. Also, in the discussion with prefectural staff, students gave presentations on landholding systems and landscape conservation measures and cases from their own country. After that everyone took part in a lively exchange of opinions.

During the ten-day training held at Obayashi Corporation, Zenitaka Corporation, Takenaka Corporation and Daiwa House Industry Co., Ltd., which is the core of the program, trainees were taught many things such as latest technologies, observed building sites, took part in design work in the design department.

Trainees were taken to see architecture designed by Mr. Tadao Ando starting with the Osaka Prefectural Chikatsu Asuka Museum, then the Honpuku-ji temple and Awaji Yumebutai in Awaji city, Hyogo Prefecture and finally the Chichu Art Museum in Naoshima, Kagawa Prefecture. By actually viewing what they have learned through materials, they were able to deepen their understanding of the harmony of land and nature in Mr Ando's works.

In their courtesy visit to Mr Ando, they received advice on the importance of "not relying on what you have been given, but acting on your own, collecting resources, making it your nourishment and being well informed of international affairs. Upon receive this advice from such an admired person made the students feel fresh and ready.

Moreover, the training was made complete with a trip to Kyoto and discussion program conducted by architect and Director of the Institute for East Asian Architecture Guenter Nitschke and architect Ester Tsoi, a workshop with Kinki University students on the theme of tea room and exchange with the trainees' host families.

Thank you for helping us make this program such a fulfilling one.

***** OFIX Joint Projects *****

- The OFIX Disaster Prevention Drill with International Friendship Association of Ibaraki "Exchange between City Residents and Foreign Residents -Preparing Together-

Date and Time: October 3 (Saturday) 10:30-12:30

Participants: 21

Japanese and foreign residents of Ibaraki City came together and considered how to prepare when a disaster happens, like an earthquake.

During the lecture of the Ibaraki City General Affairs Department Risk Management Division, the revised "Ibaraki City Disaster Prevention Handbook" was introduced.

Furthermore, with the cooperation of the Ibaraki City Fire Department, participants experience how to use 119 and how to put out a fire.

There was also a mishap when someone pulled out the safety pin for the fire extinguisher too early, which led to spraying water at people around when it was carried. However, people had an enjoyable learning and exchange experience in that beautiful autumn day.

- Interpretation Training with Sakai City (Culture and Tourism Bureau International Affairs Department International Affairs Division) "Community Interpretation Training -First time interpreting in the field of health and welfare-

Date and Time: October 14 (Wednesday)
13:30-16:30

Participants: 14 (Sakai International Volunteers (Interpreters))

This Community Interpreter Training targeted beginners and focused on the field of health and social welfare, which is an especially difficult field in community interpretation.

Noriko Muramatsu, a Spanish Counselor from Hyogo International Association, was invited to be the lecturer. Aside from giving a lecture about the attitude of an interpreter, she also gave case studies and conducted a roleplay activity.

During the lecture, there was a comment that interpretation in the health

and social welfare field was difficult, but it seems the participants were able to discover areas where they could be active in through the roleplay activity.

■ Disaster Prevention Workshop for Staff
from Higher Educational Institutions in
charge of International Students

Date and Time: September 3 (Thursday)
14:00-16:30

Venue: My Dome Osaka 8th Floor 6th
Meeting Room

Participants: 24

A disaster prevention workshop was held for staff in charge of international students from higher educational institutions in Osaka Prefecture, such as universities and technical schools. Kita-Sakai Police Department gave a lecture about "the response and assistance for foreign residents in a disaster" and from Hagoromo University of International Studies about "the current methods and tasks for assisting foreign exchange students in a disaster". After the lecture, the participants were decided into four groups discussed about "the measures involved in assisting exchange students in a disaster" and "whether or not each institution has a manual outlining the safety confirmation procedures or what to do in case of a disaster". After exchanging opinions on the current state of these issues, the challenges and solutions, each group presented what they had discussed.

Some institutions already have safety confirmation system, while others are still developing one. The situation of disaster prevention measures differ, but each had their own challenges. Feedback from participants included "hearing about the specific methods Hagoromo University of International Studies was very informative" and "we could share the challenges with other universities through the exchange".

This workshop has opened the door to possible solutions to the challenges of disaster prevention.

■ Crime Prevention Lecture for Orion
International House Residents

Date and Time: (1) September 18 (Friday)
and (2) October 7 (Wednesday)
Venue: Orion House 1st Floor Assembly Room
Participants: 27

We conducted crime prevention training for Orion International House Residents. After a lecture by the Kita-Sakai Police Department on crime prevention, road safety, and having your residence card (alien registration certificate) with you at all times, residents watched a DVD titled "Crime Prevention for Women- how to protect yourself".

For crime prevention, residents were told to first yell loudly while running away, maintain a distance from the individual, call 110 and make a report and to be aware of possible dangers in daily life. Regarding road safety, residents were informed of the many bicycle accidents in Osaka Prefecture. Also, potential accidents at pedestrian crossings can be mostly avoided by making eye contact with the oncoming driver of the car turning towards you, even when you have the green light to walk. In addition to that, residents were instructed to carry their residence card at all times when going outside, as it is mandated by law. Information on how to apply for a new residence card in the event the current one is lost was also given.

Orion House residents listened attentively and were proactive in asking questions about certain issues.

After the training, residents were told to be careful when out at night and they were given portable crime-prevention alarms and were instructed to carry them at all times. Residents from Osaka City University's International House also participated.

【05】 Notice

◎ Joint Activity with OFIX: Free One-Day Consultation for Foreigners

The International Friendship Association of Kishiwada is co-hosting a one-day free

consultation for foreigners. Legal professionals and consulting staff will be on hand to provide assistance.

Time and Date: December 13 (Sunday)
10:00-15:00

Place : Madoka Hall 2nd Floor
(Kishiwada-shi, Araki-cho)

Consultation Details : Status of residence,
general life, insurance and pension,
education, human rights etc.

Available languages : English, Chinese,
Spanish, Vietnamese, Indonesian

For further details please check
<http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#20151026>

【06】 Did you know ?

◎ The "Personal ID Card" with your My Number

From October 2015, Foreigner residents with a certificate of residence will start to be sent a notification card detailing their My Number.

Once applied for, from January 2016 residents will also be eligible to receive their personal number card. On the card will be their personal number, name, address, date of birth, gender and face photo. The card can be used for identification and to access services determined by local governments such as the issuing of the certificate of registered seal (inkan). However, this card is not a replacement for the residence card or special permanent resident certificate.

The card's period of validity will change depending on the classification of the applicant's status of residence.

【07】 Introduction of the New OFIX Coordinator for International Relations -I am the New CIR ! -

Hello everyone! My name is Jesse de Carteret and I have been working at OFIX as Coordinator for International Relations since October this year.

I was born and raised in Melbourne, a city in the southeast of Australia and the second largest city after Sydney. Whereas Sydney is more modernized and busy, Melbourne is known more for its historical buildings, rich culture and relaxed atmosphere.

I first took an interest in Japan thanks to the Japanese classes provided at my junior high school in Australia. Having to choose between Japanese and German, I chose Japanese simply because I was completely unfamiliar with the language and that interested me. In 2004, I studied at a high school in Nagoya as an exchange student, which piqued my interest in Japan even more. In 2008, I returned to Japan on the Monbusho Scholarship Program studying Japanese language and culture at Osaka University School of Foreign Studies for one year. It was during this time that I realized I'd like to work in the field of international relations in Osaka in the future.

From 2012, I worked for two years on the JET Program as a Coordinator for International Relations in Kochi Prefecture. I worked in Nahari-cho, a town with a population of 3000 people. Surrounded by incredible nature, I loved teaching the local people about my country and now I try to return to Kochi twice a year to visit my friends there.

Now I am finally at OFIX, it feels like a dream come true to be able to work as a Coordinator for International Relations in my beloved Osaka. While I have only just begun working at OFIX and I'm still learning the ropes, I will do my best for the future of international relations in Osaka and Japan.

Thank you very much.

Editorial Note:

Once again we have felt that many of the projects at OFIX could not be successful without the great support of our volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to deeply thank you for all of your assistance. At OFIX we will continue to promote international and multilingual assistance and to strive for an Osaka where foreign residents can live comfortable lives. So I ask for your continued support!

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