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(1) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents Notice

The Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents is now running from OFIX. Advice for foreign residents is available in 9 languages (including Japanese). You can visit to talk directly, or get in touch by phone, fax, or email.

Languages : English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai

Hours: 9:00 ~ 17:45 Mon-Fri (closed over New Year and on national holidays)

Contact: OFIX

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having worked through temp agencies, many are not used to looking for work through the Hello Work employment service. From this April the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has begun offering a one time support payment to enable those South Americans of Japanese decent who decide to leave Japan to do so. This is provided that they have no intention of returning to Japan with the same residence status. The Information Service for Foreign Residents can explain the various systems in Japan, and where necessary assist in interpreting for foreign residents when talking by phone to Hello Work.

We will continue to provide information concerning recent and common issues in future issues of OFIX News, so please be sure to have a read.

Osaka Information Service FAQ

It is predicted that the current economic uncertainty will have an impact on working employment conditions of foreign workers in Japan. We therefore expect an increase in the number of queries related to this matter. Being made unemployed brings with it numerous anxieties. Welfare aid, housing, employment insurance, and searching for new work are issues that foreign residents may seek advice about. With many people



(2) Notice

- Seeking Donations for the Osaka Exhibition at the 2010 Shanghai Expo
Shanghai Expo Osaka Exhibition Details
<http://expo2010-osaka.jp/>

Donation information (Japanese only)
<http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#syanghai>

(3) OFIX Programme/Activity Outline for 2009-2010

The programme/activity outline for this financial year was recently approved at a meeting of OFIX's Board of Directors.

The General Account Budget was set at ¥195,980,000 (a 5.7% rise from the previous year), and the Special Account Budget at ¥26,690,000 (an 81.1% decrease from the previous year).

With economic conditions affecting both the Osaka Prefectural Government and OFIX, this year's programme outline will see a strengthening of cooperation between the prefecture and OFIX to work together in order to better promote and develop grassroots international exchange and multicultural activities.

(1) Support for NPO's involved in multicultural activities

We hope to actively collaborate on events with organisations involved in multicultural/foreign resident support activities. For our International Understanding Education Programme we will continue our support of NPO activity, and also develop a new learning programme and system for the supply of speakers to schools.

(2) Development of the OFIX Volunteer System

As well as developing a new registration system, we will also organise follow-up training for the volunteer medical interpreters that took part in the course held last year by OFIX

(2) Promotion of sister city relations

Osaka will host an exhibit at the 2010 Shanghai Expo. OFIX will work together with the Prefectural Government towards this and assist in gaining support from local businesses etc.

(3) Support for Foreign Residents.

From April 1st the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents will be run from OFIX. We will also work to update the Living Guide for Foreign Residents available to view on our website.

(4) International Student Support

We will focus on careers search support for international students. Also, becoming owners of the Orion International House we will endeavor to promote exchange between the students living there and local residents. We also plan to hold an emergency/safety drill information session for students, in collaboration with local residents.

(4) 2008-2009 NPO Activity Grant Support Programme Reports

- NPO Office Facilities Directory
(Kansai NPO Alliance)

The Kansai NPO Alliance runs the pia NPO building, a focal point for NPO activity in Osaka. The building acts as a point of contact for both citizens and NPO's, providing information, holding seminars, as well as being the base for many NPO's activities. We offer NPO's located in the building an affordable and convenient base for activities, and it is also valuable as a way of widening networks. It is of course also extremely convenient for the citizens of Osaka Prefecture to have all of these organisations in the same building. Unique to pia NPO is the Osaka NPO Plaza, which is designed

and run entirely by the NPO's themselves. For this reason it is a prime example of collaboration between NPO's and the local government achieving success. At the current time there is no regulated register of NPO facilities across the country. For this reason with the support of OFIX we were able to put together a directory of facilities run collaboratively by NPO's such as the Osaka NPO Plaza. As part of this we were able to hold research meetings with people running forward looking and unique NPO facilities across the country. We also forged links with our counterpart in America, the Non Profit Centers Network. Thanks to this research we are now aware of the status of activity across the country,

and can look forward to assisting ever more effectively in

- Cycle Aid

(Japan Asian Association and Asian Friendship Society) JAFS sent bicycles for recycling to the Philippines (880 cars) and Thailand (670 cars), with the aim of developing environmental awareness and promoting international exchange. There were not enough funds to cover the charges involved in sending the bicycles overseas, which is why the funding received from OFIX proved so invaluable.

In many of these areas bicycles are not only used by kids going to school, but by security groups making their rounds, doctors, and government workers. With this programme we were able to promote the ideas of

(5) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

- Spring is here!!

Hi Everyone,

Richard again! This time of year is perhaps my favourite in Japan. The winter can be a bit too cold for comfort, and the summer is pretty much unbearable. That leaves spring and autumn! Spring being the time of cherry blossom (sakura) in Japan it really is a special time of year. Before coming to Japan people told me I was in for a treat when spring came around, but I tended to just shrug my shoulders. To be honest flowers and other such pretty things have never done that much for me! However, when April came along and the cherry trees began to blossom it was very hard not to get caught up in all of the excitement. And believe me, the Japanese

get excited!

Hanami is the term given to the cherry blossom parties that take place at this time of year. What they basically involve is heading to a park, sitting under a cherry tree, and eating and drinking to your hearts content with friends. Sounds pretty good eh!

One thing I have noticed is that despite the proclaimed love of the cherry blossom, most Japanese at hanami parties seem more to focus more on the task of drinking as much beer and sake as they can! A wonderful Japanese proverb, "hana yori dango" (literally meaning

the future.

recycling and reusing in Osaka, and contribute to the circle of use. Thanks to the success of this programme, we were able to create a new network between Osaka and those around Asia that assisted us. In Japan we ran fundraising activities with the support of the Governor of Osaka (also head of the Cycle Aid Support Committee), various supporting localities, and the Consul General of the Philippines in Osaka · Kobe. We also promoted our activities on the Osaka Prefecture website, our own website and in our newsletter, as well as on trains across eastern Japan.

"dumplings over flowers" i.e. the practical over the aesthetic) reflects this perfectly. I prefer to say "hana yori beer" myself! We do have cherry blossom in the UK too, but unfortunately nobody takes the time to partake in a spot of hanami. A shame really!

Spring is a time of new starts in Japan. April 1st sees the new financial year begin with new graduates all starting their new jobs on this day too. The start of April also sees the start of the new school year (as opposed to autumn in the UK). Of course the UK shares the same financial year as Japan, but apart from this there is no real sense of change in April. One thing everyone looks forward to is the Easter Holiday. With Easter Friday and Easter Monday being public holidays, it is a rare time of year when the majority of people have 4 days off work in a row. (The UK in fact only has 8 public holidays a year, compared to 15 in Japan). At this time of year the shops are full of huge chocolate Easter Eggs. As a kid it was always a time of year I looked forward to for this very reason!

Another UK tradition is that of spring cleaning. The climate is just right in March-April to open doors and windows to let the dust out and give your house a good airing. Although letting the pollen waft into your house is



not so great for hay fever sufferers! Yup, one aspect of spring common to Japan and the UK, the dreaded arrival of hay fever. Many Japanese people are surprised to hear that hay fever is not particular to Japan. But I can

assure you there are just as many people sniffing and sneezing away at this time of year in the UK!!

(6) OFIX Volunteer News

- Home Visit Report

Ms. Chiaki Komori

OFIX International Exchange Volunteer

In March I held my first home visit as an OFIX International Exchange Volunteer. We welcomed a very friendly student from Bangladesh to our home. I have a 6 year old son, which is why I asked for the visitor to be someone with an affinity for children. I was nervous before she arrived, but when she did she gave my son a big hug.

She was in Japan to study Japanese but it turned out that she understood English better. I felt that I should perhaps have studied a bit more English in advance to ease communication.

We went to Osaka Castle together. It was still slightly chilly, and she said that winter in Japan was tough for her. She said that she wanted to try on a kimono, so I regret no being able to do so that day. She taught my

son some origami, and it was interesting for me to learn that kids in Bangladesh do origami too, playing with paper planes and boats.

This was the first time holding a home visit, and the day went by in a flash. It was great fun learning about another country and its culture.

- OFIX Volunteer System Introduction

OFIX is always looking for people to sign up to become OFIX Volunteers. There are three types of volunteers:

1. Home Stay Volunteers
2. Culture Volunteers
3. Interpreting Volunteers

For further details please see our website (Japanese only)

http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index3_2.html

At Osaka Castle



- Information for foreign residents in Osaka <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/life/index.html>
- Seeking residents for the Orion International Hall <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>
- Become a supporting member of OFIX http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3_1.html

Comments and suggestions for OFIX News: info@ofix.or.jp

Osaka International Club Reports: clubnews@ofix.or.jp

Register to OFIX News: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>

OFIX News Back Numbers:

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

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