

Spring 2017 TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

TO: Current Sophomores/Juniors enrolled in Japanese classes and their parents
FROM: Michael Van Krey
RE: 2018 Japan Exchange
DATE: March 6, 2017



Hello everyone,

OVERVIEW - This letter is to inform you about the Japan Exchange that I sponsor. There are two components to our program: hosting students from our sister school, and going to Japan for two weeks of sightseeing and a home stay. The Japan trip occurs every other year but the hosting of students from our sister school happens every year. The trip is first and foremost a *group study trip of up to 20 EHS students*. Qualities of successful candidates for the study trip include: enthusiasm, involvement in the Japanese Program and specifically aspects of the exchange program, academic and personal responsibility, flexibility, open-mindedness, curiosity, punctuality and the ability to work with a variety of people.

THE TRIP ITSELF - The next trip is tentatively set for January 27 – February 10, 2018 (pending board approval). Check out the link to our last trip itinerary bit.ly/2017japantrip. The itinerary will be altered somewhat, but the kind of experiences you have relate to gaining a greater cultural understanding of Japan. The Kanto/Chubu regions of Japan are where we will concentrate our touring. As you can imagine, we travel through a lot of Japan and see a tremendous amount during the time that we are there. This trip is not for those who dislike walking! Add in the homestay in Niigata and visit with our sister school and this will be a trip like no other! Check out our blogs in the website for the range of what we encounter.

APPLICATION PROCESS – There are over 50 current sophomores and juniors who are eligible to apply for our next trip. **EVERYONE IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY!** If you want to be a part of this exciting opportunity, the following is a list of ways that you can bolster your candidacy. Think of them as “résumé builders” for the actual application:

- Host a Japanese student in your home
- Guest host a Japanese student for a day within the school day
- Unplug!!! I want to know you will engage with the world around you, not tune it out.
- Recruit donors to our Yakusoku Opportunity Fund (monthly giving program for as little as \$5/month). Visit our website at www.ethsjapanese.org/support.html
- Involvement in fundraising activities along the way – t-shirts, fun run, other ideas
- Demonstrate teamwork and openness by working well in groups during class, greeting your Japanese teachers when you see them in the hall or entering class, helping students who struggle with material in class, asking for help from students when you struggle with material in class.
- General enthusiasm and inquisitiveness for the language and culture
- Have a B- average in your classes with no grades dipping below a C-
- No history of disciplinary action for alcohol or drug use, non-smoking, as well as having a strong attendance record with minimal tardies to class.
- Demonstrating responsibility, for example, by making up assessments in a timely fashion, and a myriad of other ways.

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The more of the above bullet points that you do, the better your "résumé" will look. The application process will launch in mid March 2017, and includes an essay, a résumé, an interview in front of a panel of teachers, faculty recommendations, a "group interaction" session, and your school transcripts. The delegation will be selected by mid-April, 2017.

FUNDING – I am proud to work in the diverse community of Evanston/Skokie and am proud that the diversity of Evanston/Skokie is represented by the students enrolled in Japanese. Therefore, it is important that our delegation represents the diversity of the Japanese program and the richness of the experiences and backgrounds that you bring. With nearly 40% of our student population on free or reduced lunch, funding is crucial to this being an equitable experience.

As you can see, the application process is rigorous and we will select the best delegation based on the criteria laid out above. This group trip truly encompasses the "collectiveness" of the experience that we will have from the moment the group is selected. From funding the trip, to the trip itself, and any possible connection we will have for years to come, you are a part of something big.

The group trip cost is \$56,000. The trip will run if there is \$56,000 in the account on December 1st, 2017. An individual's "fair share" is \$2,800. If you are selected and can contribute that amount or more, it will go toward the goal of \$56,000. (Additional donations are tax-deductible). Whether you can afford your fair share or not, *the group* is responsible to raise the \$56,000. Students who need financial assistance will be able to apply for some outside funding and I personally am spearheading collection of \$4,000 from private donors, but *the group* will rely on your enthusiasm, creativity and resourcefulness to raise the money for this trip. All trip participants and their families are expected to actively fundraise. I'm excited about the energy and connectedness that this approach will foster.

In the case that we don't reach the \$56,000 goal by December 1st, 2017, all individual contributions will be refunded. Donations and other fundraising efforts will remain in the account for participants of future trips. Also know that *any other student trip of this length and quality costs over \$4,000* (I've done the research) and the reason this trip is so reasonable is because I plan and execute every last detail of the trip.

Lastly, please understand that the selection of participants is a multi-faceted process. A committee of teachers/adults who have travel experience with students abroad selects participants. Every effort is made to make this a fair process, but unfortunately, not every student who applies will be accepted. Frankly, this is the hardest part of my job here as a Japanese teacher.

Thank you for your interest in the Japan Exchange. I may be contacted most easily by e-mail – vankreym@eths202.org voice mail – (847)424-7457

Sincerely,
Michael Van Krey