Hello, and welcome to the 2007 edition of the JET Streams newsletter. This newsletter is a forum for former JET Programme participants to share their stories with each other, and to stay in contact with the development of both the JET Programme and the JET Alumni Association.

JET Streams is distributed via email once a year to all alumni who request it, and can be viewed on the JET Programme website (www.jetprogramme.org). It is also distributed to all JET participants completing their tenure this year.

On behalf of CLAIR, I would like to say a big otsukaresama to the 2,300 participants who finished the JET Programme this summer. I would also like to thank all of the JETAA chapters and individuals who have contributed articles for this issue of JET Streams. We greatly appreciate it!

Sharon Bignell - CLAIR JETAA Liaison (jet-aa@clair.or.jp)

JETAA NEWS...

JETAA Member Count and Developments
The JET Alumni Association (JETAA) currently has 47 regional chapters in sixteen of the fifty-five countries that have participated on the JET Programme (Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, and the U.S.A.). As of September 2007, there are now over 45,000 JET alumni spread across the world, of which 22,000 are JETAA members. For more information about JETAA and for links to JETAA chapter homepages, please visit the JETAA International website at www.jetalumni.org.

JET Programme Alumni Survey
Last year, CLAIR undertook its first online survey of all JET alumni to obtain insight into how the JET Programme is viewed by former participants, how successful it is, and to determine what JET alumni are doing after finishing the JET Programme. 1,106 JET alumni responded to the survey, which was accessible on the JET Programme website from September 1 to October 31, 2006. CLAIR would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey. A selection of the results can be found on pages 13-16 of this newsletter.

CLAIR hopes to undertake a similar survey again in the near future, and will send out a link by email to those JET alumni who have requested to receive information from CLAIR, once the survey is online. CLAIR greatly appreciates honest feedback, so please take the time to complete it.

JET Streams Via Email!
This is the second year that the JET Streams newsletter has been distributed via email to JET alumni who have requested to receive it and have registered their contact details with CLAIR.

Changes to CLAIR Grant-In-Aid
From the 2007 fiscal year, CLAIR has revised its Grant-In-Aid for JETAA chapters so that chapters where country representatives are based can now receive funding for the country representative to carry out their activities. These activities may include contacting...
chapter representatives in their country, or planning and attending JETAA conferences held domestically. For more information about the change, please contact your nearest CLAIR office.

**Update your Contact Information**

If you have not done so already, please take a moment to send your current contact details to CLAIR to ensure you continue to receive all CLAIR announcements. You can update your information by visiting the JET Programme website at [www.jetprogramme.org/e/former/address.html](http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/former/address.html), or alternatively, email your contact details to jet-aa@clair.or.jp.

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**Countries and Participant Numbers**

In the 2006-2007 JET Programme year, approximately 2,500 participants were welcomed from 44 countries, including Kenya and Pakistan, which joined the JET Programme for the first time. In 2007-2008, the JET Programme welcomed about 2,100 new JETs, bringing the total number of participants to approximately 5,100.

**Changes to Re-Contracting Procedures**

From the 2007-2008 JET Programme year, there has been a change to re-contracting procedures. As in previous years, JET Programme contracts are for a one-year period, and if both JET participant and Contracting Organisation are in agreement, the contract may be extended for a period of one year, with two extensions permissible in principle (allowing for a total of three years on the Programme).

From 2007-2008, JET participants whose work performance, experience, and ability are deemed to be of an exceptionally high standard may be able to re-contract an additional two times. Thus in exceptional cases, a Contracting Organisation can now have the same JET participant working for them for up to five years.

**Increases Expected in Elementary School ALTs**

The number of Contracting Organisations implementing English language activities at the elementary school level has been increasing, and in response CLAIR expects to see a significant increase in the number of JET participants coming to Japan to work as ALTs in elementary schools in the coming years.

**Pension Refund Information**

All JET participants paid Japanese Pension Insurance, which was deducted from your monthly salary while you were on JET. If you are eligible and have not yet applied for the Lump-Sum Withdrawal Payment (dattai ichijikin) and the refund on the 20% flat tax that is levied on it, please visit the “Former JETS” section of the JET Programme website (www.jetprogramme.org) for details on how to apply. Please keep in mind that there are time limits on pension and tax refund applications. We encourage you to apply for your refunds early, in order to avoid the possibility of being denied funds to which you are entitled.

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**Check out the JET Programme Website!**

To commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the JET Programme last year, CLAIR created a new JET Programme website. There is now a section entitled “Former JETS”, where JET alumni can:

- Update their contact details
- Download current and past editions of JET Streams
- Find information about the Pension Refund
- View submission criteria and deadlines for the JET Essay Competition, JET Journal, etc.
- View the latest CLAIR announcements

We hope JET alumni will find the new website useful and will check back often to see new additions and features.
On November 22, 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) were honoured by the presence of His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince, at a ceremony they hosted at the Hotel Okura in Tokyo to commemorate the JET Programme’s 20th anniversary. The ceremony was attended by approximately 600 guests, including a number of former JET Programme participants currently living in Japan and abroad.

At the ceremony, His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince of Japan, praised the JET Programme for its achievements.

Preceding this, a commemorative speech entitled “No Man is an Island” was given by Sir Graham Holbrook Fry, British Ambassador to Japan. The ceremony continued with a panel discussion, which was moderated by NHK announcer, Mr. Kazuya Matsumoto, and reflected on 20 years of the JET Programme and its potential future developments. Panelists included singer and Doctor of Education, Ms. Agnes Chan; Kyoto City Board of Education, School and Guidance Division Supervisor, Ms. Yuko Naoyama; the Deputy Governor of Tottori Prefecture, Mr. Kishin Fujii; First Secretary at the U.S. Embassy in Japan, Mr. Raymond Green, and CLAIR Secretary General, Mr. Takeshi Tanaka.

Commendations were also bestowed by the three ministries on a number of highly respected people from various fields, while CLAIR presented awards to the winners of the 14th Annual JET Programme Essay Competition and the winner of the JET Programme 20th Anniversary Logo Contest.

A commemorative video entitled “Celebrating 20 Years - The JET Programme in Perspective”, which features the lives of a number of JET alumni, was also shown at the event. This video, along with video footage of Sir Graham Holbrook Fry’s keynote speech and footage of the panel discussion can be viewed on the JET Programme website (www.jetprogramme.org).

On behalf of the hosts of the ceremony, CLAIR would like to express our thanks to JET Programme participants, both past and present; local government authorities; and other related organisations that have shown their support to the JET Programme over its 20 year history. It is their support and enthusiasm that has enabled the JET Programme to reach this important 20 year milestone.
The Sixth Annual JETAA International Meeting was held in Sydney from November 2-5, 2006. All of the JETAA International Country Representatives were invited to attend the meeting, along with JETAA International’s Executive Officers and representatives from CLAIR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In all, 16 countries were represented at the Conference – Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Russia, Scotland and the U.S.A. For the very first time, we were also pleased to welcome a delegate from the recently-established South African Chapter.

This meeting marked a significant change in the structure and development of JETAA International. From 2006, it was decided that International Conferences for all Chapter and Country Representatives would only take place once every five years and probably in Japan. Meetings of the JETAA-I Executive (Executive Officers and Country Representatives) would continue to be held on an annual basis. This change, although a challenge for JETAA-I, was unavoidable and the meeting in Sydney was a good way of testing how the new format would succeed.

As JETAA-I Executive and Country Representatives are able to meet face-to-face only once a year at the most, it is crucial that all key and current issues are discussed in the limited time available. The meeting covered:

- An update on the development and implementation of the new Content Management System
- The long-term future of JETAA International and ways of establishing stability, including the idea of two-year terms for Executive Officers and the establishment of a JETAA-I bank account
- A promotional strategy and marketing tools for JETAA International
- An online resource bank for existing and new chapters and members
- Ways to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the JET Programme
- Identifying ways of supporting international charities

A great deal of progress was made in all of these areas and Executive Officers and Country Representatives are now working hard on making these ideas a reality. More detailed information can be found in the Meeting report. Please contact Ali Bond, 2006-2007 JETAA-I Executive Chair (jetaai.chair@googlemail.com), if you would like to see a copy.

The meeting concluded with the Parliamentary session and election of new Executive Officers. The key decisions made at this session were:

- That the role of Country Representatives in representing the views of all of their Chapters was taking on ever increasing importance and that it is crucial that Country Representatives continue to be the link between JETAA International and regional Chapters
- That all Executive Officers should be encouraged to serve a two-year term on the JETAA-I Executive, in a drive to establish continuity for the organisation
- That JETAA-I should continue to strive to become an independent organisation, raising its own funds where possible, and having its own financial procedures
I would like to thank the delegates for supporting these necessary changes. I would also like to thank all of those people who volunteered to contribute to the development of the Small Chapter Committee and the CMS Marketing Group, as well as the CMS technical team itself for its excellent ongoing work.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to thank delegates for placing their trust in me by voting me in as JETAA-I Chair. I would like to applaud the outgoing Executive – Peter de Valda and Michael Barrett – for their work and to welcome the incoming Executive – Michael Adams (Sydney Chapter) as Vice-Chair, Cindy Pitkin (Brisbane Chapter) as Secretary (for the second year running) and Liz Aveling (London Chapter) as PR Officer. This year’s team is extremely strong and I am sure we shall achieve good things on behalf of our outstanding organisation.

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the JET Programme. Having participated in the Programme in 1988, I know what a significant and worthwhile achievement this is. Thank you to everyone who continues to make the JET Programme, the Alumni Association and JETAA International a success.

Ali Bond
2006-2007 JETAA International Executive Chair

Dear JETAA members,

My name is Michael Shu and I will be succeeding Rosalyn Adams as the AJET National Chair for 2007-2008. I am heading into my third year as an ALT in Hyogo Prefecture.

As you know, the AJET National Council is committed to improving the personal and professional lives of all participants. As JET alumni, you are in a unique position to provide support to current JET participants in ways that AJET may not be able to. In turn, AJET is able to increase awareness of JETAA and its resources amongst returning JETs. With communication and cooperation between AJET and JETAA, we can continue to improve the JET Programme and the lives of its participants.

In March next year, AJET will organise the AJET Career and Education Fair at the Conference for Returning JETs. We will invite companies, recruiters, colleges and universities to discuss employment and education opportunities with returning JET participants. We held this fair for the second time in February this year, and received an enthusiastic response from conference participants. The event is on pace to become more successful and popular every year.

If you are interested in being a part of this event, please contact us. AJET and JETAA have a long history together, and I hope that this relationship will continue to strengthen and grow.

For more information, please refer to the National AJET website, www.ajet.net. I look forward to working with you this year. Yoroshiku!

Michael Shu
AJET National Council 2007-2008
AJET National Chair: chair@ajet.net

A WORD FROM THE AJET CHAIR
I REMEMBER WHEN…

Contributed by Nicholas Klar
ALT, Omi-machi, Niigata-ken, 1995-1997
History Senior
International School of Penang (Uplands)

It’s 10.00pm in Penang, a light year away from my tiny inaka town in Niigata-ken, and I’ve been asked to put together some of my thoughts on the JET Programme. I’ve just put my young daughter to bed. She often expectedly waits up for her tired daddy who comes in late from school. I remember well how my fellow teachers at Omi chugakko would eye me with a tinge of jealousy as I waltzed out the door between four and five in the afternoon. Often I would then take my bike up into the mountains or, if the weather was warm enough, go for a swim. In the evenings I had plenty of time to indulge in my passions – literature, writing, art house movies. On the weekends it was down to the train station and time to explore Japan. It was a time like no other, a time that will never come again.

On odd occasions I still reflect on the first day at my base school. I had walked in sweating from the humidity, my shirt sticking in a clammy and most unattractive manner to my skin. I was directed by my supervisor to the desk that was to be mine, whereon were strewn over three hundred summer essays to mark. The theme - “My Family”. As I began to struggle through the multitudes of both good and bad, an assortment of gems shone out. Not for their English skills, but rather for their somewhat original claims. One made the observation that, “My mother is a tractor”. Whilst others considered, “My mother is a housewrecker” “My mother is a car propagandizer”, and “My father is a commuter marriage”.

And so began the two years of my journey into the mysterious world of teaching English in Japan. Obviously teaching some not to always directly translate from dictionaries was going to be a priority…

For me the JET Programme provided great opportunity. The teaching job market was tough when I came to Japan (qualified as a Social Studies teacher) and the Programme provided an excellent chance to get a couple of years experience under my belt, albeit not in my preferred discipline. I was very fortunate that at my school I was able to put into practice and hone my skills in lesson planning, behavior management, approaches to learning, etc. My time in Japan also stood me in good stead as I ventured out into the world of international schools - a journey that has taken me, thus far, to China and Malaysia. At the same time I began to write again and since then have published a book and several of my articles have been used in major publications, such as The Japan Times and Shanghai Daily. My main goal, to enjoy a stint as an onsen towel boy, is however yet to be achieved.

Do I miss Japan? I feel that I don’t talk about it or think of it often. Others - students, family, friends...
may think otherwise. In most ways life has just gone on. My time in the little town by the sea in Niigata-ken was not something permanent. It just was a way station on my travel through this earthy coil.

But Japan is still always in our minds and hearts. One day we will return ‘home’ again or onto some other exotic location. Then I’m sure we will miss here and inevitably compare what is the same and what is different, what we miss, all those things we are happy to have once again, and what we are glad is behind us. Perhaps time has tinted my glasses to rose colored, but I have a lot to thank the JET Programme for.

http://klarbooks.com

**JET Streams is looking for articles!**

CLAIR is always looking for people to contribute articles for the JET Streams newsletter. Articles can be about your experiences on the JET Programme or about life after JET, or on any subject that may be of interest to other alumni. CLAIR needs your help to make this newsletter interesting and relevant, so please consider submitting an article.

The next edition of *JET Streams* is due next summer. We are looking forward to some great submissions. Email all submissions to: jet-aa@clair.or.jp.

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**JET AND LIFE AFTER JET**

*Contributed by Kevin Utsunomiya*  
**ALT, Chiba Prefecture, 1990-1993**

My name is Kevin Utsunomiya and I am currently living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. I was on the JET Programme from 1990-1993, and taught in high schools in Chiba City.

I am a third generation Japanese-Canadian. My dad's parents were from Fukuoka and my mother's parents were from Shizuoka. I grew up in Brandon, Manitoba, which is a small rural city of 40,000. I think we were the only Japanese-Canadians that lived there, so we didn't have many opportunities to participate in Japanese cultural activities. Being on the JET Programme was a way for me to learn more about my roots and culture. I was also able to meet with relatives that we had little contact with and was able to connect with them.

When I returned to Canada, I was able to use my JET experience by teaching Japanese language in a high school in Winnipeg and I am currently teaching grade 5. For about 12 years, I've also been playing Taiko in a Japanese drum group called Hinode Taiko. Please check out our website for more information: www.hinodetaiko.ca.

My sister Sandi had been with the group for about 2 years and was performing at Folklorama (a yearly local cultural city-wide festival) in 1993. I was very impressed with the performance, and that it was very visual and musical. But it was the sound that made the biggest impression; you don't just hear Taiko, you feel it. At the performance they announced that they were holding workshops in the fall for those that wanted to try Taiko. I tried it and loved the fusion of music, movement, and exercise.

Hinode Taiko is Canada's best known Taiko ensemble. From humble workshop beginnings in 1982, using broomsticks and old tires as practice equipment, Hinode Taiko (in Japanese "Rising Sun Drums") went on to build concert-quality drums and study with the greatest Taiko players of modern time - rooting Taiko in the heart of the Canadian Prairies.

Over the past 24 years, Hinode Taiko's original repertoire has won fans on three continents and the group has received accolades from Taiko experts around the world. The only Canadian Taiko group selected to perform at the inaugural 1997 North American Taiko Conference in Los
Angeles, Hinode's stature in North American Taiko was affirmed in 2003 when they became the only Taiko ensemble (out of the continent's 150-plus groups) chosen for a repeat performance at the NATC. Their debut CD, "Hinode Taiko", was released independently in spring 2004.

In 1999, Hinode Taiko brought Canadian Taiko back to Japan, performing at the Extasia International Taiko Festival in Matto City - the "world centre of Taiko drumming" - and at the 22nd Annual Setagaya Summer Matsuri, in Tokyo. As the only Canadian Taiko group ever invited to perform at these prestigious venues, Hinode Taiko was able to showcase their unique style live and by national telecast in the country where Taiko began.

The job of a grade 5 teacher can be stressful at times and having a hobby where you can hit things with a big stick can definitely help. Hinode Taiko does not only practice and perform but the group is also very involved with the local Japanese-Canadian community, which is another reason why I continue to be involved with the group. For the last three years I have also served on the group's board of directors as President.

On the first evening I arrived, I was escorted by Mukai-Sensei and Oe-Sensei – two male teachers (who had collected me in Kyoto) – to the mayor's house. It was night time and the mayor (a small, elderly man) greeted me warmly and then spoke to the two teachers in Japanese. They translated that the mayor had prepared a bath and I was to go and take it and they would all wait for me in the living room to have tea. I had showered that morning but got the feeling that having this bath in the mayor's house was some kind of honour being bestowed and, as much as I wanted to, I couldn’t refuse. I felt very strange though, having a bath knowing that the mayor and two teachers were waiting for me just down the hall! Needless to say, it wasn’t my most relaxing bath. The bath was boiling hot and, not yet being familiar with rites and rituals, I just got in, soaped up and rinsed off in the bath as quickly as I could. The poor person who went in after me must have been horrified at what a dirty pig the foreigner was... Anyway I returned to the living room, hotter, redder and sweater than I was before, and had tea.
After tea, they took me to my apartment, which they kept apologising for because it had no hot running water and my bath was in a corrugated iron shack outside. My toilet was inside but had no flush and the hole just dropped straight into a cesspit under the floor. I was there during the Kobe earthquake and remember praying that the floor didn’t give way, so I wouldn’t end up drowning in the sewage pit under the house. My apartment was basic but had the luxury of a Western-style bed – a luxury not to be underestimated given the abundance of cockroaches as large as my hand!

Anyway, as a relative prude from England, my bath experience at the mayor’s house was nothing, as in my first week at school I was about to lose all my dignity. The teachers at my school invited me to go to an onsen with them and the horror gradually dawned as I realised that not only was I going to see all my work colleagues buck-naked, but they were going to see me naked, as well! At the onsen, I showered as quickly as I could and jumped neck deep into a boiling tub and didn’t move for as long as I could bare it. When I eventually decided to get out, I stood up and promptly fainted. I don’t remember how I fell (but I am sure it wasn’t graceful). I next remember waking up surrounded by all my colleagues who had, of course, gathered round to help. So much for making a quiet exit.

However from the second I set foot in Japan I loved it and felt that part of me was home – I found the people so warm, courteous and kind. Leaving the doctor’s with a gift of a watermelon under my arm wasn’t a rare occurrence. I was adopted by a wonderful woman in my village called Himi-San (Sakashita) who took me under her wing. She was the local yoga, doll-making, kimono-wearing and jack of all Japanese arts teacher. She made my time in Japan so special and, through her, I felt closer to my grandmother who had died when I was only 8 years old.

My time in Japan also restored my faith in mankind – after living in London while at university and learning never to go out alone at night, it was just so wonderful to feel safe. In my first month, I lost my door keys to my ground floor apartment and never bothered to replace them for the two years I was there. I used to go running at night and away on holiday and never worried for a second that anyone would touch my home. I once left my filofax with a month’s salary in cash inside a public telephone at the train station and, before I had even noticed it was missing, it was delivered back to my school with all the money intact inside.

After leaving Japan, I spent ten years being a city rat in London, working for various large law firms and investing in the London property market to hopefully be able to retire early. Two years ago, I finally quit the rat race and moved to France to start a family and now live in Evian (where the mineral water comes from), work part-time for an international organisation in Geneva and have a wonderful, beautiful son called Raphaël, who turned two years old in May this year. I have so many brilliant memories of Japan, and my two years on the JET Programme from 1993-1995 are a golden time in my life.

Would you like to join the JET Alumni Association?

The JET Alumni Association (JETAA) was created in 1989 to strengthen and maintain the bonds of friendship developed between JET Programme participants, and to promote a broader and deeper understanding of Japan and the countries participating on the JET Programme.

For further information about JETAA or to join your nearest chapter, visit the JETAA International website at: http://www.jetalumni.org/
A total of 144 entries were received from current and former JETs for the 15th Annual JET Programme Essay Competition. 29 entries were received in the Japanese Language Category and 115 in the Foreign Language Category. After careful consideration by a judging panel made up of representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, a number of foreign embassies in Japan, and directors and staff of CLAIR, a total of 10 prizes were awarded to the following entrants:

**Japanese Language Division**

*Grand Jury Prize:* Nami Kasuya (CIR, Chiba)

*Prize for Excellence:* Jeffrey Windham (ALT, Kyoto)

*Honorary Mention:*
- Wei-ting Susie Su (CIR, Mie)
- Pierrick Grenier (CIR, Niigata)
- Lisa Mallin (CIR, Chiba)

Congratulations to the prize winners and many thanks to everyone who submitted entries. A special thanks is also extended to the number of entrants that took the time and effort to write in a language that is not their native tongue.

All winning essays have been published in the 2007 JET Journal and also appear on the JET Programme website at [www.jetprogramme.org](http://www.jetprogramme.org). The essay by the Grand Jury Prize winner in the Foreign Language Division, Ryan Seebruck, is also published below.

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**Foreign Language Division**

*Grand Jury Prize:* Ryan Seebruck (ALT, Shizuoka)

*Prize for Excellence:* Erin Walczewski (ALT, Toyama)

*Honorary Mention:*
- John Moraes (ALT, Ehime)
- Patrick Bellew (ALT, Miyazaki)
- Daniel Simmons (ALT, Gunma)

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**A PLACE CALLED CHUKATEI**

*by Ryan Seebruck*

ALT, Shizuoka Prefecture

“They say homesickness is normal,” I reassured myself. “Happens to everyone. Can happen at anytime.” I hadn’t even made it two months in Japan and I already pined for the familiarity of home. By then the initial fascination of a different milieu had been supplanted by an unsettling sense of displacement. The ubiquitous kanji had lost their charm and the green hills enveloping my rustic town had become walls. For the first time in my life I was an outsider. The curious stares and double-takes of passers-by on the streets reminded me of that whenever I ventured from my apartment. By the time the autumn leaves changed colors I decided to ride out my one-year contract and hurry back to my ‘real life’ in the States.

It was around this time that I received an email from my *sempai* announcing a gathering of ALTs at a nearby ramen restaurant owned by the “nicest people in the world”—a Mom and Pop shop called *Chukatei*. Apparently, the couple planned on closing early to throw a private party, and I was invited even though I had never met them. My visceral reaction was skepticism since no logical business would close early to host a party for strangers. In hindsight, I’ve never been more ashamed of prejudging a situation. Despite my skepticism, though, I knew I needed to get out and socialize. Confining myself to my apartment would only exacerbate my homesickness, so I emailed my *sempai* to let him know I would attend.

On the day of the party my *sempai* drove me to the ramen shop, continually reminding me that I was about to meet the “nicest people in the world.” I chuckled with amusement and said, “We’ll see.” When we arrived he eagerly ushered me inside where I was greeted by a cozy ambience and a piquant aroma that invoked nostalgia for childhood visits to Grandma’s house. Shelves of manga and little knick-knacks lined the walls. A television buzzed in the background. Behind the counter a Japanese couple labored over the stoves—their meticulous and cooperative movements a testament to their culinary skills and experience. The second they spotted us they stopped cooking and came out from behind the counter for introductions. The husband was tall and virile, with an air of confidence I found comforting. A paucity of grey hairs accentuated his black locks like a dash of salt in a bowl of black pepper. The wife was short and comely with a soft, round face and shoulder-length hair. Her gentle mien immediately put me at ease.

My *sempai* introduced me as the new ALT at a local high school. They eagerly listened and nodded as though they were meeting someone important. The husband shook my hand. “My name is Tomo, but please call me Papa,” he said in English. “And I’m Yumiko,” his wife said with a winsome smile. “No. You are Mama,” her husband corrected.

“Nice to meet you too,” they said together.

We bowed to each other, then they gestured for us to join the other guests in the backroom while they finished cooking.

In the backroom a dozen guests—an eclectic mix of Scots, Brits, Irish, Canadians, Americans, Aussies, and Japanese—sat around a low table chatting enthusiastically. I sat down and listened as the conversation bounced around like a pinball. Despite the fact that many of the guests had just met, there was a welcoming sense of camaraderie and I quickly joined the discussion. Soon thereafter Mama-san and Papa-san covered the table with a smorgasbord of dishes, refusing to let us assist them. Beer and sake followed and the party began with an official kanpai.

While enjoying the food and drink I watched Mama-san and Papa-san mingle with the crowd. They initiated conversations with everyone, keenly nodding, smiling, and responding as though nothing was more important than listening to their guests. Yet, they maintained an awareness of everyone’s needs, constantly running to the kitchen for more food and drink, but never at the expense of the conversation at hand. When it was my turn to chat they apologized for neglecting me for so long. They said it in a way that made me feel like I was the one they really wanted to converse with, which undoubtedly was how everyone else felt too. They asked the things people ask when they meet someone new. Age? Twenty-three. Nationality? American. Hobbies? Sports. Siblings? Three. When I said I came from the city of Milwaukee, Papa-san raised his beer glass and belted out a jingle: “Munich, Sapporo, Milwaukee!” Noticing my perplexity, he explained it was a famous slogan from a 1950s Sapporo Beer commercial connecting three of the world’s most well-known brewing cities. Soon the other Japanese men chimed in, sparking a second kanpai. Papa-san laughed and smiled, then quickly refilled my beer glass before we returned to our conversation. With each response they were more engrossed in my tale—and Papa-san wore a black apron over a blouse and skirt. When I opened the sliding glass door I glimpsed Mama-san and Papa-san working stoically behind the counter. Mama-san smiled, said okay, and then promptly got to work as Mama-san read aloud an order from the menu, I later realized my homesickness had dissipated, replaced by a longing for unconditional hospitality I had ever received.

“You are always welcome here,” Mama-san added.

As the week went by I realized my homesickness had dissipated, replaced by a longing for Chukatei. When Monday finally came, I met my sempai at the station and we drove to the ramen shop, parked in their lot, and walked toward the entrance. In the moment before I opened the sliding glass door I glimpsed Mama-san and Papa-san working stoically behind the counter. Papa-san wore a white chef’s coat. Mama-san wore a black apron over a blouse and skirt. When we entered the shop they perfunctorily bellowed “Irasshaimase!” but once they saw us they immediately lit up: Mama-san with that same winsome smile and Papa-san with a complacent grin. We exchanged greetings and they gestured for us to sit at the counter, which I later realized was because they wanted to chat with us while they worked. As I perused the hand-written menu, Papa-san leaned over the counter and asked for our order while Mama-san flipped noodles in the air like pancakes in a frying pan. My sempai rattled off the name of a dish. Papa-san nodded and turned to me. Unfamiliar with the menu, I gave what would later become my standard response: “Nandemo ii desu.” Anything is fine. Papa-san smiled, said okay, and then promptly got to work as Mama-san read aloud an order from the backroom.

“We are…” Papa-san began, but then paused and turned to his wife. “Tanoshimi-ni, eigo-de?”

“We are looking forward to it,” she said with a smile.

“Me too,” I said. I took out my wallet, but Mama-san and Papa-san ordered me to put it away. I argued vehemently for them to let me pay for the food and drink, and they vehemently denied me. Eventually, I succumbed, thanked them again, and followed the others out the door feeling truly heartened. The evening replayed in my head: a dozen people from a multitude of countries fraternizing, teaching and learning from each another. It was indeed a magical night, topped off by the most inspiring display of unconditional hospitality I had ever received.

“This is what it’s all about,” I thought as I stepped into my sempai’s car. “This is why I came to Japan.”

As the week went by I realized my homesickness had dissipated, replaced by a longing for Chukatei. When Monday finally came, I met my sempai at the station and we drove to the ramen shop, parked in their lot, and walked toward the entrance. In the moment before I opened the sliding glass door I glimpsed Mama-san and Papa-san working stoically behind the counter. Papa-san wore a white chef’s coat. Mama-san wore a black apron over a blouse and skirt. When we entered the shop they perfunctorily bellowed “Irasshaimase!” but once they saw us they immediately lit up: Mama-san with that same winsome smile and Papa-san with a complacent grin. We exchanged greetings and they gestured for us to sit at the counter, which I later realized was because they wanted to chat with us while they worked. As I perused the hand-written menu, Papa-san leaned over the counter and asked for our order while Mama-san flipped noodles in the air like pancakes in a frying pan. My sempai rattled off the name of a dish. Papa-san nodded and turned to me. Unfamiliar with the menu, I gave what would later become my standard response: “Nandemo ii desu.” Anything is fine. Papa-san smiled, said okay, and then promptly got to work as Mama-san read aloud an order from the backroom.
At that moment we were the only foreigners in the restaurant. A family of four sat in the back. Two men in business suits sat at a table against the wall boisterously slurping their noodles. An older man sat at the other end of the counter, reading a comic and smoking a cigarette. Shortly thereafter another foreigner came in. I recognized her as an ALT in a nearby town. When Mama-san and Papa-san spotted her their faces once again lit up. Later on another ALT came in, then another, and another. Soon a half-dozen of us occupied the counter. With each arrival Mama-san and Papa-san became more buoyant. For the next two hours we guiltily ate, drank, and chatted with each other while Mama-san and Papa-san worked.

At half past eight, Papa-san hurried outside to take down the noren curtain that dangled in front of the door while Mama-san switched off the exterior neon sign that spelled Chukatei in Chinese characters. When the last customer left they repeatedly thanked him before locking the door. They brought us more drinks, desserts, and snacks before they finally sat down. Then they mingled just as they did the night I met them, conversing with everyone and genuinely enjoying it. When they got to me we picked up right where we had left off. And again their sincere interest in my responses made me feel like they would rather talk to me than anyone else in the world.

The last train came too soon, prematurely ending our conversation. And once more Mama-san and Papa-san lined up at the door to thank us for coming. When we tried to pay for the extra food, drinks, and snacks they refused. We insisted, but they were steadfast. Finally, we relented and they smiled like children who had just talked their way out of a jam. “See you next Monday!” they said and hugged us goodbye. Then they had just talked their way out of a jam. “See you next Monday!” they said and hugged us goodbye. Then they went out of their way to make me feel at home. Yet, I felt guilty over how well they treated me as it seemed that I could not reciprocate their munificence. Obsequious politeness and a plethora of omiyage could never balance the scales, so one night I told them I regretted not being able to demonstrate my appreciation for them and that the other ALTs felt the same. Papa-san furrowed his brow; Mama-san looked askance. They said they were confused. Mama-san brought out green tea and snacks as Papa-san explained that, as far as they were concerned, they were in our debt. Now I was confused, but with the aid of a bilingual dictionary Mama-san clarified their feelings.

“Two years ago,” she said. “We met our first ALT by chance when she wandered into our restaurant. We were immediately impressed by her friendliness. Soon she visited regularly, introducing us to other ALTs. With each new introduction we became more impressed. You are all so sincere, honest, and amiable—to each other and to us—even though you all come from different places. Meeting you all has changed our lives.”

I was flabbergasted. I told them they had it backwards—they had changed our lives. They smiled and for a few minutes we sipped our tea in silence, contemplating each other’s words. Mama-san went to the backroom and returned with a postcard from the ALT that first wandered into the restaurant two years earlier. They still kept in contact. Mama-san and Papa-san said they planned on visiting her in America. It would be their first trip abroad. I found comfort in this as the thought of leaving Japan and never seeing them again had depressed me for months. It was then that I realized the true purpose of the JET Programme: I had made lifelong friends, despite lingual and cultural barriers, and it would take much more than the Pacific Ocean to come between us. I told them that I hoped they would
visit me someday too when I returned home. “Yorokon-de,” they said. They’d love to.
“I’m looking forward to it,” I said, and then paused to recall its Japanese equivalent. “Nihongo-de?” “Tanoshimi-ni shite-imasu,” Papa-san replied. I repeated the phrase with a smile.

As the months rolled on a new class of ALTs arrived. I became the sempai, and I found that it was now my duty to make the newcomers feel at home. I remembered that I once felt like an outsider—alone and homesick. And I remembered the cure for that problem. I sent an email to the new ALTs just as my sempai had sent to me. I grinned as I referred to Mama-san and Papa-san as the “nicest people in the world”—not because it wasn’t true, but because it was. I imagined that’s how my sempai felt when he first drove me to meet them nearly a year before. He knew I disregarded the claim as hyperbole, and that in a few hours I would be disillusioned. That is why it did not surprise me when, after I drove my kohai to the station after their first visit to Chukatei, they asked the same question I once asked: “Why are they so nice?”

And I responded, “They just are.”

In the two years I’ve lived in Japan, I’ve witnessed ‘Monday Night Ramen’ evolve from a small gathering of local ALTs into a prefectural event. Through word-of-mouth alone, the number of foreigners visiting Chukatei on any given Monday has increased three-fold—some traveling hours on a work night. These ALTs pass dozens of ramen shops along the way, but they keep coming back because Mama-san and Papa-san truly are that special. Whenever friends or family visit from abroad I always say, “Forget Kyoto. Forget Tokyo. Come to Chukatei. That’s where you will find the true spirit of Japan and the true spirit of humanity.” And like everyone before them they enter Chukatei a skeptic and leave in awe. Mama-san and Papa-san are, simply put, the most amazing people I’ve ever met. They changed my outlook on life and taught me more about human compassion than I could’ve hoped to learn in a lifetime.

So often we are told that as members of the JET Programme we are cultural ambassadors and that the locals will form opinions about our homelands based on our interactions with them. But we often overlook the impressions the locals make on us—certainly an equally important aspect of the internationalization process. With that in mind, I am happy that the foreigners who have met Mama-san and Papa-san have left a positive impression on them, but I am forever grateful for the impression they have left on us. And I know anyone who has ever met them feels the same way.

That said, if you’re ever lucky enough to visit the Izu peninsula, there is a great ramen shop fifteen minutes by foot from Nirayama station on Route 136—a place called Chukatei that just so happens to be owned by the nicest people in the world. The food is superb, the company is even better, and—as melodramatic as it sounds—I guarantee it will change your life forever. And if you do stop by, tell the couple behind the counter I say hello, I miss them, and I love them.

**2006 JETAA SURVEY RESULTS**

Up until last year, CLAIR conducted a survey of JETAA members who left the JET Programme two years previously. In 2006, for the first time, CLAIR undertook an online survey, and expanded it to include the views of all JET alumni, in order to have a better understanding of how the JET Programme is viewed by former participants, how successful it is, and to determine the activities that alumni are involved in after finishing the JET Programme. 1,106 former JET participants responded to the online survey, which was accessible on the JET Programme website from September 1 to October 31, 2006. A selection of the results are given below.

**As a JET Programme Participant**

**What was your job type?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALT</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIR</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALT and CIR</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What country did you represent on the JET Programme?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Overall, how would you rate your experience on the JET Programme?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely enjoyable</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enjoyable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enjoyable at all</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**About Lump-Sum Withdrawal**

Approximately how long did it take for the lump-sum withdrawal payment to reach you (from the date of application)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one month</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between two and four months</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between four and six months</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than six months</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**After Leaving the JET Programme**

Did you experience reverse culture shock after leaving Japan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contingency</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still living in Japan</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not certain</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you answered “YES”, when did this occur?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the first two months</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within two to six months</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within six months to one year</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After one year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What form did your reverse culture shock take? (selection of survey responses)**

- “Felt that people in my home country were all loud and looked the same! People were unable to understand my experiences in Japan and I missed being there very much.”
- “People seemed rude because they were not following the predictable social codes of Japan… A general feeling of shock and distaste for American culture overwhelmed me.”
- “I was shocked how slow the trains were and how slack people did their daily jobs. There was no pride in their work!”
- “Going through job interviews here was difficult - I had learned to not boast about myself.”
- “I missed speaking Japanese. Being back in my country felt dull and boring at times.”

**Your Current Activities**

Which of the following best describes your current state of employment?

- Employed full-time: 64.2%
- Self-employed: 7.1%
- Employed part-time: 7.3%
- Student: 11.8%
- Unemployed: 6.4%
- Not Specified: 3.2%

For those who are students, to what level are you currently studying?

- Teaching certification: 20
- Other professional diploma: 10
- Other professional degree: 23
- Masters: 139
- Language school: 6
- Doctors: 53
For those who are currently employed, please select the industry area which best represents your current occupation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Area</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Work</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating / Interpreting</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade (import/export)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism / Hospitality</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences / Humanities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing / Editing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology / Psychiatry</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical / Dental / Nursing</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing / Advertising / Sales</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing / Industry</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law / Legal Services</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism / Communication / Media</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government / Diplomatic Service</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts / Performing Arts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education / Childcare</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration / Secretarial Services</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting / Finance</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How long did it take you to find a satisfying job after completion of your contract?

- I had it arranged before I completed the JET Programme: 172
- Within a month of job hunting: 168
- Up to six months: 194
- Six months to one year: 171
- Up to two years: 142
- I have not yet found a satisfying job: 60

What is your current annual salary? (approximately, in US dollars)

- $0-20,000: 112
- $20,000-30,000: 159
- $30,000-40,000: 181
- $40,000-50,000: 104
- $50,000-60,000: 104
- $60,000-70,000: 18
- $70,000-80,000: 38
- over $80,000: 112

Do you still keep in contact with people you met while on JET (mark all that apply)?

- Yes, Japanese co-workers: 853
- Yes, Japanese friends from the local community: 691
- Yes, fellow JETs or other non-Japanese friends: 555
- Yes, other: 106
- No: 37

Have you been able to keep up your interest in Japan?

- Yes: 858
- No: 117
- Did not answer: 131

In what ways have you been able to keep up your interest in Japan? (selection of survey responses)

- “We have Japanese homestay students.”
- “I enrolled in a Masters program related to Japan and am now studying Japanese intensively.”
- “I married a Japanese man from the city where I was an ALT.”
- “I sometimes cook my favourite Japanese food; watch Japanese movies; buy Japanese literature and read the Japan Times online.”
- “There is a Japanese Centre here that I visit from time to time. I still have my CLAIR Japanese language books and occasionally refer to them. I have made some Japanese friends back home.”
- “After a period out of Japan post-JET, I have been back in Japan for more than ten years.”
- “I was a Japanese language partner for a local foreign language school. I speak Japanese to my Japanese customers at work.”
2006 JETAA Survey Results

JETAA

Are you active in your local JETAA chapter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, I am a member of the committee</th>
<th>Yes, I am a member and am actively involved</th>
<th>Yes, I am a member, but not actively involved</th>
<th>No, but I would like to be</th>
<th>No, I am not interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the JET Programme

As a JET Programme participant, to what extent were you satisfied with the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The amount of salary</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of annual leave days</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of sick leave and other special leave days</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of your contract</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The living conditions in your local community</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your work environment</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JET Programme orientations and conferences</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and counselling services available to JET participants</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAIR Japanese language courses</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe my participation on the JET Programme assisted in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the international outlook of my local community</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving foreign language education in my local community</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting international exchange activities in my local community</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating ties between my country and my local community</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forging relationships between myself and other JET participants</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To what degree do you believe the JET Programme has allowed you to realise the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Japanese language skills</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved public speaking skills</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved self-confidence</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
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JETAA Honored at the Japanese American National Museum’s 2007 Gala Dinner & Silent Auction

Contributed by Shannon Quinn & Shannon Spisak, US Co-Country Representatives

The Japan Exchange & Teaching Alumni Association (JETAA) was one of three organizations recognized for an exceptional level of dedication to their role in United States-Japan relations this spring. In honor of JETAA’s continued commitment to fostering global education, the Japanese American National Museum honored JETAA at the Museum’s 2007 Annual Gala Dinner. The Annual Gala Dinner is the major fundraising event for the year with all proceeds supporting the Museum’s education programs.

The theme for the 2007 Annual Gala Dinner was “United States-Japan Relations: Celebrating People to People Connections”. The Japanese American National Museum believes there is tremendous value in strengthening U.S.-Japan relations by furthering people-to-people relationships and has initiated and presented a number of programs that connect Japanese-Americans with their Japanese counterparts.

The following were the invited honorees for the 2007 Annual Gala Dinner:
- Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) (Award of Excellence for Global Corporate Philanthropy)
- JET Alumni Association (Award of Excellence for Global Education)
- The Nippon Foundation (Award of Excellence for Global Vision)
- Japanese Community Organizations with more than 100 years of service to the community:
  - The Japanese American Association of New York, Inc.
  - Japanese American Association of Northern California (Hokka Nichi Bei Kai)
  - Japanese Association of Colorado
  - Sacramento Hiroshima Nikkeijin Kai
  - Members of Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai (Cultural Ambassador Award)

Over 1,000 guests were in attendance on Saturday, April 14, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Co-country representatives Shannon Quinn and Shannon Spisak agree that this was a huge honor for JETAA and would like to thank the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) for making it possible for a country representative to receive the award in person. Ms. Spisak noted, “It is a tremendous honor to receive such an award since it marks the first time that the national level of JETAA has been recognized outside of our own network for contributions to U.S.-Japan relations and global education.”

In addition, Pearl Omiya and Margaret Chai, Co-Presidents of the Southern California Chapter of JETAA, joined the Museum’s Board of Trustees and Board of Governors for dinner at the George and Sakaye Aratani Central Hall of the Japanese American National Museum on Friday, April 13.

The Museum’s recent press release included the following information about JETAA:

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, a remarkable international exchange program between college graduates from 44 countries and Japan, celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2007. Over that time thousands of individuals have lived, worked and interacted with people throughout Japan with the main goal of increasing mutual understanding. JET participants, the majority of whom are from the United States, have the opportunity to teach English in public and private primary, junior and senior high schools. The JET Alumni Association, an independent organization composed of individuals who participated in the program, and its 20,000 members, are honored with the Award of Excellence for Global Education.

For more information on the Japanese American National Museum, please visit: www.janm.org/
As part of the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange, JETAA Australia coordinated a National Photographic Competition – the first national collaboration between JETAA chapters in Australia.

Photographic competitions were held by all 5 Australian JETAA Chapters in each state from July to October, 2006. The national finalists were then exhibited in Sydney from November 3–5, 2006 at the JETAA International Meeting, with the winner announced at the JETAA Photo Exhibition & Christmas Party on Saturday, November 4, 2006.

The photo competition was a huge success, with entrants submitting photos from all over Australia. Most photographs were taken in Japan, and showed unique aspects of life in Japan and cross-cultural relationships.

The theme of the national competition was “Crossing Boundaries, Building Relationships: The Japan-Australia Relationship”. State competitions were held in Sydney, Queensland, Victoria/Tasmania, Western Australia and Canberra, and the top three photographs from each state competition were brought together and exhibited in Sydney during the JETAA International Meeting.

This meeting was attended by JETAA delegates from over 20 countries, and VIPs from CLAIR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, with the delegates and VIPs voting for the winning pictures.

The winners were announced at a gala event in Darling Harbour on Saturday, November 4, which was attended by over 100 people. The 15 finalists were displayed for all attendees to view, and the winning photographers were presented with prizes from SONY.

The winners were as follows:

1st Prize: “Making Things Perfect”, by Christie Harvey, JETAA Canberra

2nd Prize: “Zen Before the Storm”, by Emily Zitkevicius, JETAA Victoria/Tasmania

3rd Prize: “Black & White”, by Belinda Gallaher, JETAA Queensland

The event was a great success because the photographs themselves and the exhibition helped to promote Japan, Japanese culture and the JET Programme particularly in the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange. It was a great way to collaborate and communicate across chapters and to experience the photographic talent that our JET alumni have to offer.
Here are some highlights of the activities that JETAA chapters have been doing over the past year. Chapter updates are only included for those JETAA chapters that submitted information to CLAIR.

**AUSTRALIA**

**Sydney**
- Christmas party, Yum Cha morning tea for departing JETs, Shabu Shabu Trivia night, Returnees’ Reception, Careers Night, Japanese Festival, Hanami

**Victoria/Tasmania (Melbourne)**
- Moonlight Cinema Picnic, Onsen trip, AGM dinner (April), “Diners Club” evenings, Izakaya night, Orientation Seminar lunch, Hanami Picnic (Melbourne and Hobart), Careers seminar, Bonenkai/Christmas Party (Melbourne and Hobart)

**Western Australia/Northern Territory**
- Japan Festival, film nights, quiz nights, enkais, exhibitions, promoting the JET Programme at local universities

**Canberra**
- Shinnenkai Dinner (February), AGM (April), Pre-departure Orientation (June-July), Hanami Picnic (September), Canberranara Nara Candle Festival (October), Okarinsasi Kani Oltapi Drinks (November), Bonenkai (December), Movie Nights/Dinners, monthly Oshaberikai Meetings, Quarterly General Meetings

**Queensland**
- Distribution of an electronic newsletter, Photo Competition, Hanami, sponsoring a sushi-making course and holding an Australia-Japan Trivia Night during Japan Week, helping with JET recruitment

**BRAZIL**
- Helping Consulates and Embassy in recruitment of new JETs, and with pre-departure orientation; introducing the JET Programme at various events; special committees for the 100th Celebration of Japanese Immigration in Brazil (2008 event)

**FRANCE**
- Visits to universities to promote the JET Programme; cooperation with Japanese Embassy for interviews and pre-departure meeting; display at the CLAIR Paris Office’s booth at the French Mayor Congress; promoting the JET experience to professionals; promoting grass-roots exchanges through presentations on Japanese culture at the Japan House of the Paris Campus; organizing annual Shinnenkai, Hanami, etc.

**GERMANY**
- Mailing-list with information, job offers, etc; networking database and openBC group: JETAA Deutschland Alumni; Returners’ Meeting in Berlin; photo contests

**CANADA**

**Ottawa**
- Monthly social event, e.g. movie nights, pub nights, karaoke, visits to Japanese restaurants; Japanese lessons, Ottawa Natsu Matsuri, Katakana Name Writing (Ottawa Tulip Festival), Departing JETs Cooking Class (June), Re-entry Seminar for Returning JETs, Networking Wine & Cheese, JET recruiting and orientation

**Toronto**
- Re-entry seminar for returning JETs (Fall), a Toronto harbour boat cruise, shinnenkai, events done in partnership with the Japanese Visitor’s Association (JAVA) and the Canada Japan Society (CJS)

**Montreal**
- Monthly hanasukais where members can get together with the Japanese community to chat in Japanese; hiking, winter sports, and onsen days; photo exhibition, karaoke and bowling nights, Shinnenkai, and events coordinated with local Japanese cultural groups: mochi making, Matsuri Japan

**Manitoba**
- Movie nights, cuisine nights, supporting the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre events, Orientation for outgoing JETs (June), Folklorama volunteers (August), Dragon Boat racing for CancerCare (September)

**Northern Alberta**
- Japanese Cooking Party (January), Volunteer Appreciation/Curling Bonspiel (March), weekend orientation for new JETs; Japanese Spring Festival (June), Sayonara BBQ for new JETs (July), Japanese Pavillion, Heritage Festival (August), activities for returning JETs (October), AGM, Bonenkai (December)

**British Columbia and Yukon**
- Co-coordinating JET Preparation Seminars with the local Japanese Consulate (Vancouver), hosting an active online-discussion forum, publishing newsletters, participating in local Japanese culture festivals, and organizing a returnee career/networking seminar; numerous other social events such as dine-outs and pub nights, Japanese cooking class, ikebana class, sake tasting, etc.

**Southern Alberta**
- Social events, e.g. pub nights, karaoke, Japanese restaurants; Japanese lessons (Oct-Dec); Taiko Workshop (March); Cooking Class; Re-entry Seminar for Returning JETs (shared with NAJETAA); JET Recruiting & Orientation
JETAA CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

JAMAICA
Planning and execution of school visits; engage in JET Programme promotions and promotion of Japanese culture at various events such as International Days; assist in the recruitment, screening and selection of new ALTs, and in pre-departure orientations; prepare and circulate an Annual Newsletter to current JETs and JET Programme stakeholders; and hold an essay competition for high school students to promote awareness of Japan.

JAPAN
Eastern Japan
Provide Internet-based information for living in Japan, including Internet-based employment information; sponsor frequent networking events and informal gatherings; support and attend events held by different Japanese government ministries and related organizations; undertake volunteer activities in collaboration with different foreign embassies; support and attend JET Program(me)-related events such as the Returnees Conference, JET Program(me) Welcome Receptions, JET Program(me) anniversary events, etc.; promote the JET Program(me) and promote and represent the JET Alumni Association to Japanese and foreign media and a variety of Japanese domestic and international organizations; work with JET Alumni groups worldwide in a variety of areas, including networking, promoting the JET Program(me), etc.

Western Japan
Career forum in Osaka; hosted the Far East Regional Conference/JETAA International Conference in 2005; regular monthly general meetings; Returnees Party (November), social events, monthly general meetings.

NEW ZEALAND
Wellington
Japan Through Our Eyes - a photo exhibition to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the JET Programme, karaoke evenings, Japan-themed quiz nights, a sake-tasting event, a hiking trip to Tongariro, high school and university visits to promote the JET Programme, BBQs, Bonenkai, and AGM (end of March).

South Island
AGM/returnees reception, photo exhibition, Hanami, Bonenkai; JET interview panel participation, Pre-departure Q+A session participation, high school visits to present information about the JET Programme, Onsen visit (Maruia Springs), JET information sessions with Consular Office at universities, polytechnics, etc.

Auckland
AGM dinner; Japanese cooking classes; assisting with pre-departure Q&A sessions and orientations; regular social drinks; Hanami; NCEA Japanese language workshop for high school students studying Japanese; high school video competition; quiz nights; trip to Rangitoto Island; ‘Roll your own sushi’ nights; Bonenkai.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Taiko drumming concert, sponsored a prize in a national Japanese speech contest, held Japanese film nights and karaoke parties, and assisted with the selection and orientation of JET Programme candidates.

SOUTH AFRICA
AGM (February), Pre-departure Q&A session (June), Pre-departure Orientation (July), Returnees Party (November), social events, monthly general meetings.

UNITED KINGDOM
London
JETConnect networking evenings; monthly pub nights in Fluid bar, Farringdon; Speed Dating (two/three events held a year); Japanese restaurant nights (continuing the mission to visit every Japanese restaurant in London); Pre-departure Q&A Day for New JETs and Parents (a chance to offer your words of wisdom to the newbies); Returner’s Party – September; Careers Information Day (for returning JETs) – late September; The JETAA Ball – usually held in summer; other events such as sake tasting and sushi making with the Japan National Tourist Organisation.

Midlands
Annual taiko workshop led by Joji Hirota; regular Japanese cinema evenings; bi-monthly Japanese restaurant visit; pre-departure event; returners’ Christmas party; sake workshop; visit to Tatton Park Japanese gardens; go workshop; cookery days; kimono appreciation event.

North West
Tatton Park - Japanese gardens; links with Japan Centre (Manchester) and the Japan Society; links with Japanese students in Manchester; Cornerhouse cinema - Asian films; Japanese restaurant nights, Pre-departure Q&A Day for JETs and Parents (July), Annual Gathering (meeting up with JETAA Ireland to catch up and exchange ideas), The Mikado, Japanese film evenings, and cookery night at Armagh.

Northern Ireland
Japanese restaurant nights, Pre-departure Q&A Day for JETs and Parents (July), Annual Gathering (meeting up with JETAA Ireland to catch up and exchange ideas), The Mikado, Japanese film evenings, and cookery night at Armagh.
## JETAA Chapter Activities

### United States

#### Washington D.C.
Monthly Happy Hours; Bonenkai and Shinnenkai (winter); Japan-America Society of Washington D.C.’s Annual *Sakura Matsuri* Street Festival (Spring); social event with new JETs and pre-departure orientation/reception (summer); Career Night, Welcome Back Reception and JETAADC Rally (scavenger hunt); volunteer events, Nihongo Dake/Hanbun dinners, karaoke nights, sento outings, sporting events, hiking, tubing, etc.

#### New York
Asia Society “If You Knew Sushi Like We Did”; Big Brother/Big Sister Japan-o-Mania Event; Brooklyn Botanical Garden *Sakura Matsuri*; Career Forum and Welcome Back Reception; Cultural Exchange Networking Event; Japan Society Contemporary Clay: *Japanese Ceramics for the New Century* Gallery Tour and discounted membership for JETAAANY members; Japanese language classes for new JETs; Shinnenkai with food, guest speaker; Special Representative for “Visit Japan Campaign” (Tampa); Tanabata Happy Hour at Astoria Beer Garden; Urasanke Tea Ceremony demonstration; World Cup Breakfast Viewing Party.

#### New England
Returnee Barbecue and Friendship Circle with Showa Women’s University (Boston campus), Japanese chat & cultural events with Japanese Language School of Greater Boston, happy hours, shamanic concert & demonstration, visits to special exhibits, shinnenkai, nihongo-dake dinners, and pre-departure orientation.

#### Southeast
Shinnenkai (January), assist Consulate with JET interviews (February), International Luncheon (March), Ohanami Picnic at Dogwood Festival in Atlanta (April), Weekend Camping Trip (May), Q&A for Departing JETs (June), Pre-Departure Social (July), Welcome Back Picnic for Returning JETs (August), booth at Jast Fest at Stone Mountain Park (September), Nihongo Dake dinners, outings to events such as the Japan Film Festival, volunteer with local and international organizations.

#### Mid-South
JETAA-Consulate events for the 2006 JETs (e.g. Q&A Session, Pre-Departure Orientation, etc), social activities with local JETAA.

#### Florida
January - Annual Shinnenkai (Tampa); February - Mikoshi Carrying at Morikami Museum (Palm Beach); June - JET Pre-departure Q&A Sessions (Tampa and Miami); July/August - Natsu-Matsuri (Tampa); August - Games and JET Info at Oboi Summer Festival (Palm Beach); October/November - JET Information Sessions (universities state-wide); Support Mentor Program - outgoing JETs are given JETAA mentors; regionally organized social events.

#### Chicago
Consulte Returnees Reception; Shinnenkai (Winter); Yakiniku/Karaoke Night (Spring); *Q&A* Session and Reception with new JETs, baseball game with Japan America Society of Chicago, Welcome Back Picnic (Summer); Career Fair, Marathon Chess Station, Lincoln Park “Spooky Zoo” Volunteer Event (Fall); Nihongo Dake dinners; music concerts; summer festival outings, etc.

#### Heartland
Monthly meetings, Welcome Home Reception, Career Advancement Seminar, Regional Japan and Ethnic Festivals, Co-Sponsor Japanese Language Contest, Taiko group sponsorship, JET promotional visits, interviews, Pre-Departure receptions and orientation, Martial Arts and Mochi-making Demo’s, Japanese classes, school visits, and group outings - films, hanami, festivals, Quarterly Newsletter and website, Bonenkai and Shinnenkai.

### Houston: Texas and Oklahoma
JET Returnee Reception (January), participation in Japan Festival (April), new officer elections/AGM, JETAA Region 9 Happy Hour (6-8pm, 1st Wednesday of month, Osaka Restaurant, Houston), Meishi Kokan (November).

### Rocky Mountain
Shinnenkai (January), Sing into Spring (Karaoke and sushi) (April), JET Q&A (June), Sushi Rolling Demonstration/JET Welcome Back Party (September), Happy Hour Social Event for all JETAA and friends (October), RMJETAA Ski and Onsen Trip to Breckenridge (December), monthly planning meetings at Japanese restaurants to encourage more participation.

### Pacific Northwest
Happy Hours, Movie Nights, Karaoke, Japanese Cooking Night, Taiko Workshop, Walk for Rice team charity event, pizza party after JET pre-departure training, summer picnic, Bon Odori, annual meetings and Shinnenkai.

### Portland
Festival Japan/Okaeri-kai, Job Panel, Halloween Party (Fall); Bonenkai, Shinnenkai, Mochitsuki (Winter); chapter elections, Hanamikai, Iron Chef Competition (Spring); new JET Pre-Departure Orientation, Japanese lessons, Sayonara BBQ, Masters Golf Tournament, Obon Festival (Summer); monthly *J-Kaiwa, Book Club*, movie nights, sporting events (soccer team).

### Northern California
Activities range from dinner clubs, ski trips and pub nights to participating in pre-departure training for new JETs. We are also active in Northern California’s many Japan-related cultural and artistic events and serve as a resource to the community in their educational, cultural and international exchange activities.

### Southern California
Monthly Second Weekend Socials (Shinnenkai, Bonenkai, picnics, rock wall climbing, hikes, trying new things in the greater Los Angeles area), bi-monthly Nihongo Dake Dinners (to keep up our Japanese), numerous volunteer opportunities in the local Japanese community, annual networking events in the Fall and Spring, and Pre-Departure Seminar for new JETs. Area representatives also organize local events.

### Hawaii
Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii Festival - volunteers, Shinnenkai - Nabe Taikai, Japan Wizards Competition - Questions Committee & Volunteer Opportunity, JET Interviews - assisting Consulate, Q&A for new JETs, Cultural Workshops: Enkai Renshyuu with new JETs, Natsu Beppu Picnic, Karaoke Night, Bowling Taikai, Welcome Back Reception & Career Workshop, JETAA Happy Hour.

### Great Lakes
Karaoke Night, Career Fair, Bonenkai, Happy Hours, other events our members suggest and plan.

### Minnesota
Monthly happy hours, sushi making and sake tasting afternoon, JETAA/JASM barbeque, booth at the St. Paul Lantern Lighting Festival, Send-off party, Returnees’ party.
Would you like to join the JET Alumni Association? Do you live in a country or area which does not have a JET Alumni Association Chapter?

JETAA-I can help you to get started by setting up a Chapter local to you. Here’s how…

1. You will need to find some local members
   This can be accomplished via word of mouth, and also with the help of your local Japanese Consulate. From there you can start to build your membership numbers slowly.

2. You’ll need to set up a working group
   This will include you and anyone else keen on helping you get things set up. This need not be a formal committee at this stage, although later on, when you get bigger, you will want to appoint a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

3. You need to think about the kind of activities you would like to do
   Depending on where you are and how many people are around, you can hold various events:
   - Japanese cultural events - hanami, cookery, ikebana, taiko
   - Socials - Drinks nights, Japanese meals
   - Pre-departure events (for people about to go out on JET)
   - Careers/Networking events
   - Welcome back night (for Returnees)
   - Japanese language lessons
   - Newsletters and email forums

4. You can apply to become a member of JETAA International
   This is the umbrella organisation for JETAA Chapters and we will be happy to welcome you in to the group. Membership of JETAA-I means that you can participate in regional meetings with other Chapters, use the JETAA logo, access resources and advice and network with other Chapters and members.

5. You can apply for funding for activities
   Funding for activities may be obtained from CLAIR as they provide funds to Chapters with over 50 members. If you have fewer than 50 members there may be other ways you can get help. Japanese Consulates may also provide funds for various cultural events - you will need to liaise with your local Consulate.

6. You can look at what other Chapters are doing
   The JETAA website is a great place to start (www.jetalumni.org). We are currently working hard on getting lots of new resources on to this site, including advice on accessing funding, chapter newsletters, templates for planning events, event brochures and pre-departure guides. From this site, you can also visit other JETAA Chapter websites around the world.

7. You will need to set up a database of members
   JETAA International is setting up an online database for members to nominate the Chapter they belong to (along with their contact details). However, this is still in the process of being created. In the meantime, a simple spreadsheet can be used. For Chapters that require funding from CLAIR, keeping a detailed and up-to-date list is essential.
8. You could set up a website
The www.jetalumni.org site can host your website but you will need someone to create a website for you so it can be uploaded.

Sounds like a lot to do? Don’t be concerned as we can help you with everything! JETAA International has a group of people dedicated to helping ex-JETs set up new Chapters anywhere in the world. If you are interested, why not get in touch?

Contact Ali Bond, 2006-2007 JETAA International Executive Chair at jetaai.chair@googlemail.com
**United Kingdom**

**UK1-London**
David Giddings  
Email: london@jetaa.org.uk  
URL: www.jetaa.org.uk

**UK2-Midlands**
Ali Bond  
Email: jetaai.chair@googlemail.com  
URL: www.jetaa.org.uk

**UK3-North West**
Helen Coulson  
Email: Helen_Coulson@hotmail.com

**UK4-Scotland and Northern England (Edinburgh)**
Annie Grieve  
Email: anniegrieve@hotmail.com  
URL: www.jetaa.org.uk

**UK6-Northern Ireland**
Suzanne McMillan  
Email: suzannekito@yahoo.com  
URL: www.jetaa.org.uk

**United States**

**US1-Washington D.C.**
Stephanie Chang  
Email: president@dc.jetalumni.org  
URL: www.dc.jetalumni.org

**US2-New York (Philadelphia)**
Rob Tuck  
Email: president@jetaany.org  
URL: www.jetaany.org

**US3-New England (Boston)**
Chrisann Newransky  
Email: chrisann@alumni.brandeis.edu  
URL: www.nejetaa.org

**US4-Southeast (Atlanta)**
Millie Linville  
Email: president@jetaase.org  
URL: www.jetaase.org

**US5-Mid-South (New Orleans)**
Emily Winckler  
Email: info@easneworleans.org

**US6-Florida (Miami)**
Alissa Restivo  
Email: floridajetaa@gmail.com  
URL: www.florida.jetalumni.org

**US7-Chicago**
Melinda Finkral  
Email: melindafinkral@hotmail.com  
URL: www.chicago.jetalumni.org

**US8-Heartland (Kansas City)**
Warren McAllen  
Email: chapter_rep@heartlandjetaa.org  
URL: www.heartlandjetaa.org

**US9-Texas-Oklahoma (Houston)**
Kelvin Chatman  
Email: kelvin@jetaa9.com  
URL: www.jetaa9.com

**US10-Rocky Mountain (Denver)**
Gina Carosa  
Email: info@rmjetalumni.org  
URL: www.rmjetalumni.org

**US11-Pacific Northwest (Seattle)**
Ryan Hart  
Email: pwnjetaa.president@yahoo.com  
URL: www.pwn.jetalumni.org

**US12-Portland**
Stephanie Coombs  
Email: president@jetaaportland.com  
URL: www.jetaaportland.com

**US13-Northern California (San Francisco)**
Betty Lok  
Email: president@jetaanc.org  
URL: www.jetaanc.org

**US14-Southern California (Los Angeles)**
Pearl Omiya & Margaret Chai  
Email: officers@jetaase.org  
URL: www.jetaase.org

**US15-Hawaii (Honolulu)**
Mark Soeda  
Email: jetaahawaii@gmail.com  
URL: www.jetaahawaii.com

**US16-Anchorarge**
Erik Shaw  
Email: ejak@ak.net

**US17-Great Lakes (Detroit)**
Scott Norman  
Email: president@greatlakes.jetalumni.org  
URL: www.greatlakes.jetalumni.org

**US18-Minnesota (Minneapolis)**
Nichola & Matt Schoenfelder  
Email: jetaa_mn@yahoo.com  
URL: www.minnesota.jetalumni.org

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**JET Streams**

JET Streams is published yearly by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). It provides information and updates about the JET Programme and its Alumni Association (JETAA) to former JET Programme participants. For further enquiries, please contact CLAIR at:

**Council of Local Authorities for International Relations**  
Shin Kasumigaseki Building 19F  
3-3-2 Kasumigaseki  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0013  
JAPAN

Tel: 03-3591-5968  
Fax: 03-3591-5350  
www.jetprogramme.org  
Email: jet-aa@clair.or.jp