The JET Programme Alumni Magazine from CLAIR

Clockwise from bottom left: the Satogaeri Project (p.9), JETAA British Columbia at the Yokohama Dragon Boat Races (p.22), the JET Programme Video Contest (p.5)

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)

April 2015 - March 2016
Greetings from the Department of JET Programme Management at CLAIR. Marking the 30th anniversary of the JET Programme since the first participants came to Japan, the year of 2016 offers numerous exciting new JET related projects and possibilities to re-connect with Japan, such as making a video of your Japanese ‘home town’ for the JET Programme Video Contest (p.5), reminiscing on one’s time on the Programme with the #jettbt-campaign (p.6) or by joining your local JETAA chapter and becoming an active part of the ever expanding JET alumni community (p.29).

Thank you, JET Alumni Community!
The Department of JET Programme Management issues JET Streams to JET alumni as a way of sharing information on the wide range of activities of the worldwide JETAA chapters and to strengthen the global network that exists both between JET alumni and between JET alumni and Japan. Publishing JET Streams would not be possible without all the JET alumni who keep connected to Japan and share their experiences with us. As such, we would like to sincerely thank all contributors to this edition of JET Streams.

Don’t miss out!
Information about the newest JET Streams issue is sent to JET alumni who have requested to receive it. We encourage JET alumni to sign up to receive JET Streams and to keep their contact details up to date with CLAIR, especially in view of the many exciting events for the JET Programme’s 30th anniversary. Instructions on how to update your contact information can be found here: jetprogramme.org/en/address/

Past editions of JET Streams can be accessed here: jetprogramme.org/en/jet-streams

To All Interested Alumni
We welcome all alumni interested in sharing their story or in reporting on the activities of the JET alumni community to contact us at jet-aa@clair.or.jp. We are always recruiting volunteer writers!

JETAA Chapter Websites & Contact Information
If your JETAA chapter website or chapter representative’s contact information changes, please send an email to CLAIR at jet-aa@clair.or.jp

We hope you enjoy this edition of JET Streams, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

The JET Streams Staff
Greetings from CLAIR .................................................................3
JET Participant Numbers on the Rise .................................4

The JET Programme at a Glance

JET Programme Video Contest .............................................5

Showcasing the Charms of Japan

JET Throwback Thursday .......................................................6

A new SNS campaign for the 30th Anniversary

The Arigatō Campaign ............................................................7

Let your voice be heard

The JET Programme Website ................................................8

New and Improved!

The Satogaeri Project ..............................................................9

Summary

  JET Alumni Global Forum .........................................................10
  The JET Declaration ...............................................................10
  JET Alumni and AJET Opinion Exchange Meeting .....................11
  Satogaeri ...................................................................................12
  Back to Where I Once Belonged ..............................................13
    My experiences on the Satogaeri Project and Future Plans as a JET Alumnus
    by Leah Bramhill (Australia)
  How can we unlock the power of the JET network for our home prefectures? ..........16
    by Mark Frey (United States of America)
  Best of Satogaeri ....................................................................19

The JET Programme Satogaeri Project in Pictures

Ready, JET, GO! ........................................................................22

JET Alumni Race in the Yokohama Golden Jubilee Dragon Boat Cup
by Greg Joughin & Michael Dalley (Canada)

JET ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WESTERN JAPAN ......25
by Rose Tanasugarn, Chapter Representative of JETAA Western Japan

Introducing Nippon Quest .......................................................27

A message from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

JETAA Chapter List and Contact Information .......................28

Setting Up a JETAA Chapter ...................................................33
Dear JET Alumni,

I hope this message finds you well, and that you are utilising the knowledge, skills, and experiences you acquired on the JET Programme in your various walks of life. Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all members of JETAA for your efforts in contributing to grass-roots internationalisation through the introduction of Japanese culture in your respective countries, for your work in publicising the JET Programme, and for the time you dedicate each year to advising new JET Programme participants prior to their departure.

Started in 1987, the JET Programme celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. The number of participants in the 2015-2016 JET year totals 4,800 people from 43 different countries, with the running total of participants over the programme’s 30 year history reaching 62,000 people from 65 different countries.

To celebrate the programme’s 30th anniversary, a variety of events and projects are being planned for this year. In addition, as preparatory events for this year’s anniversary celebrations, the JET Programme Video Contest and the JET Alumni Satogaeri Project were initiated last year.

Starting in April, the JET Programme Video Contest will accept submissions for the Spring and Summer Round. I hope all of you are able to participate in this exciting initiative.

The Satogaeri Project was completed last November, and you can find reports from a number of the participants in this issue of JET Streams.

In closing, I would like to express my belief that the importance of the JET Programme is growing as Japan prepares for the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. To meet the rising demands of society, the cooperation of all JET Alumni in supporting the JET Programme will be indispensable. We kindly ask for your continued cooperation and support.

Yasuhisa Kaneko
Director of the Department of JET Programme Management

CLAIR
After a period of decrease, the number of JET Programme Participants is on the rise again.

2015 saw a sharp rise in participants due to increased interest in the JET Programme from Tokyo and other cities looking to focus on English education and internationalisation leading up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

A movement to begin English education at an earlier age is also a driving force in the increase of JET Programme participants. Since 2011, 35 hours a year of ‘Foreign Language Activities’, classes focused on oral communication in English, have become mandatory at the 5th and 6th grade level of elementary school. However, these Foreign Language Activities may be introduced at the 3rd and 4th grade as early as 2018, with the 5th and 6th grade activities being replaced by full-fledged English classes. More ALTs are being called to teach at the elementary school level to assist with the introduction of these new classes.

Breakdown of Current JET Programme Participants by Country - Countries in 'Other' include South Africa (2%), Ireland (2%), and Jamaica (2%), amongst others.
To meet the increasing demand for highly capable JET Programme participants, we ask for the alumni community’s continued assistance in promoting the JET Programme abroad. If you are interested in volunteering your time and participating in or organising a JET Programme information session in your local community, please contact your closest JETAA chapter.

The pastoral scenery of the inaka, the excitement of a local festival, the eccentricities of the neighbourhood obāchan... As a JET Programme participant, one gets to see a side of Japan that most short-term visitors do not. Recognising that, as outsiders, JET Programme participants are often more cognisant of the elements that make a town or city appealing to tourists, CLAIR is hosting a special video contest for current and former JET Programme Participants as a way to promote tourism in Japan’s local regions.

The contest has two rounds: the Autumn and Winter round and the Spring and Summer round. Winners for each season, as well as four overall winners including most-voted, best idea, best publicity, and grand prize winner, will be selected and presented with awards at the 30th Anniversary Ceremony this Autumn. As part of their awards, winners will be presented with up to 100,000 yen in domestic travel tickets and other prizes.

The video submissions from the Autumn and Winter round, all of which are about two to three minutes in length, are currently viewable on both the Contest’s Youtube Channel and on the Contest’s website. The contest website can be accessed easily from the JET Programme’s homepage, so please check out the videos. Alumni are free to participate as well, so if you have footage from your time on the programme, consider making a submission when the Spring and Summer round begins in April 2016!
To build excitement for the JET Alumni Satogaeri Project (see pp.10-19), CLAIR initiated social media campaigns on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram last Autumn. Like the 30th Anniversary itself, many of the participants and staff involved felt that the Satogaeri Project was an opportunity for the entire JET community to reflect on the Programme’s history and to reminisce about their time on the Programme. How did this sentiment manifest itself?

#JETTBT of course!

For those who are not aware, TBT stands for ‘throwback Thursday’. On Thursday, many social media users post a nostalgic photo or recount an interesting story from days-gone-by and add the hashtag ‘TBT’.

The Satogaeri team adopted this trend for the purpose of promoting the Satogaeri Project and created ‘JET Throwback Thursday’, or ‘JETTBT’. Current and former JETs from around the globe joined us in posting old photos of their JET experiences every Thursday leading up to the Satogaeri Project. Thank you everyone for your cooperation!

However, the fun doesn’t have to stop there. There are still many JETTBTs left until the 30th Anniversary celebration this Autumn. Why not celebrate the JET Programme 30th Anniversary Year with us by posting a photo from your time as a JET participant with the hashtag #JETTBT?
'The years I spent in Japan were some of the best years of my life. Thank you JET!'

'Two years as a senior high school ALT, then one year as a CIR has taught me to be flexible and to appreciate what I am still capable of accomplishing…'

'My supervisor always went above and beyond the call of duty for me. Thank you Arai-san!'

'The person that I am today is a direct result of my year in Japan. Arigatō JET!'

'My experience in Japan began a lifelong journey that has taken me all over the world and has given me the opportunity to meet people of all walks of life.'

Do you feel the same way about your JET Programme experience or someone you met through the JET Programme? If you would like to share your own arigatō message with the JET Community, please check out the JET Programme website in May for the start of 'The JET Programme Arigatō Campaign'. Anyone, regardless of whether they are a current participant, an alumnus, or a Japanese person who has connections with JET participants or the JET Programme, can submit a photo or video message to the campaign. In principle, video submissions should be short (no longer than 5 – 10 seconds). We will assemble a selection of the submitted videos and photos for presentation on the JET Programme SNS channels and at the 30th Anniversary Ceremony. Please check the JET Programme website in May for more details!
In Autumn of 2015, the official JET Programme website was re-launched with a new design to help all users have a more streamlined and efficient experience.

In particular, the news section has been redesigned to provide easier access to important notifications, announcements, and updates regarding all aspects of the JET Programme on a more periodical basis. Greater ease of use on the management side also means that CLAIR can more readily provide the most accurate and up-to-date content and information to the JET Programme community.

Links to the 30th Anniversary projects, such as the JET Programme Video Contest and Arigatō Campaign, including coverage of the 30th Anniversary ceremony, can be found on the website, so don’t miss out on the excitement of this monumental year in the history of the JET Programme.
Home. Many JET participants find they make a new one in Japan during their time on the programme as they grow close to their students, colleagues, and neighbours, and become enchanted with the sights and sounds of their placement here. Though JET participants move on, students graduate, and colleagues are transferred to new schools or departments, the memories of everyone’s time spent together never fade. To travel back to one’s Japanese ‘home’, years after leaving, and reunite with old friends and reminisce on these halcyon days is every JET participant’s dream.

Last November, that dream came true for 12 JET alumni from 11 countries across the various continents in the JET Programme Alumni Satogaeri Project. Initiated to engage the JET alumni community in preparations for this year’s 30th Anniversary Celebrations, participants in this Satogaeri Project assembled in Tokyo for a day long ‘Global Forum’, including an opinion exchange meeting with the AJET national committee before heading back to their Japanese ‘hometown’ for a three-day adventure.
JET Alumni Global Forum

The JET Alumni Global Forum was held on 10 November 2015 with 16 JET alumni (including the 12 Satogaeri participants), current JET participants represented by 6 members of the AJET National Council, 4 representatives from the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and 11 executives and staff from CLAIR in attendance. The Global Forum saw all parties related to the JET Programme exchange ideas and opinions about the Programme’s future in preparation for the 30th Anniversary, 2019 Rugby World Cup, and 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Topics discussed at the Global Forum included cross-chapter and international collaboration between JETAA chapters to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Programme, strengthen the alumni network, and develop new career support initiatives. Revival of JETAA International was also discussed as a key first step in initiating these collaborative efforts and assisting with the creation of new JETAA Chapters.

The JET Declaration

To conclude the Global Forum and initiate consensus building between the various JETAA chapters and AJET in preparation for the 30th Anniversary, the 3 ministries involved with the JET Programme (MIC, MOFA, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology or ‘MEXT’) and CLAIR proposed the authoring of a ‘JET Declaration’ to be presented at the 30th Anniversary Ceremony. This JET Declaration will represent the voices of the current and former JET participants at the 30th Anniversary Ceremony. The selection of themes and the actual drafting of the Declaration will be entrusted to the JET alumni (represented by JETAA country representatives) and current JET participants (represented by National AJET), with suggested themes including:

- The bond between JET Participants, Japan, and the local Community
- The increase of supporters of Japan throughout the world
- Alumni advocacy of the JET Programme
Combined efforts to promote the 2019 Rugby World Cup and 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

In addition, the Satogaeri participants and AJET representatives in attendance advocated including the following themes:

- Building lifetime relationships between people of different nations
- Notion of global citizenship
- Development of global talent
- Importance of the roles played by JET alumni
- Recommitment to improving language instruction
- Mutual respect and understanding/overcoming cultural differences

It is our hope that this JET Declaration will become a statement of the programme’s accomplishments as well as a guideline for its future. We ask that all JET alumni become involved in the creation of this Declaration by voicing their opinions to their local JETAA chapters, as well as their country representatives, who will assemble in Tokyo the day before the 30th Anniversary Ceremony to ratify the Declaration.

JET Alumni and AJET Opinion Exchange Meeting

The representatives of the AJET National Council expressed enthusiasm in collaborating with JETAA to build new career support programmes to aid JET participants’ transition from JET life to alumni life, and presented on their plans to provide current JET participants with even more opportunities to obtain marketable career skills while on the Programme.

Of course, as this meeting was part of the Satogaeri Project, the subject of alumni re-connecting with their former contracting organisations was also discussed at length. With the average number of JET alumni per prefecture reaching over one thousand, and more and more senior alumni becoming leaders in their respective communities and workplaces, there is increasing interest in utilising the network of JET alumni to support the activities of local governments in Japan. While many agreed that local governments could be more active in reaching out to their alumni and requesting their assistance, inviting senior JET alumni to rekindle their connection with the JETAA community and the construction of a database of JET alumni were also proposed as measures to build a stronger and more accessible alumni network.
Satogaeri

Following the JET Alumni Global Forum, the 12 Satogaeri Project participants set out on their own separate adventures all across Japan. Many participants were welcomed by local government leaders, visited the schools and government offices where they worked during their time on JET, and reunited with many of their coworkers and friends through home-visits and gatherings. Some also had the opportunity to step in to the classroom again to relive their JET experience, lead a cooking class or cultural seminar to reconnect with members of the community, and hold town hall meetings with local government representatives to discuss foreign exchange activities and the promotion of tourism.

Throughout their adventures, the participants posted messages, photos, and videos to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share the fun and excitement of their Japanese 'hometowns' with the whole world. You can relive their adventures by accessing The JET Programme Alumni Satogaeri Project Facebook page, the jet_satogaeri Instagram account, or the JETSatogaeriProject Twitter feed.

Learn more about the Satogaeri Project in the following two articles and 'Best of Satogaeri' photo feature.

Felicia Lee (Singapore) meets with the Mayor of Oirase Town, Aomori, where she was appointed as an ALT.

Alexander Peterson (United States of America) visiting former students at a school in Miyakonojo City, Miyazaki.
What can I say; Japan gets under my skin. It intrigues me and I think it always will. It challenges me, makes me smile and frustrates me all at the same time. Like the best kind of relationship, just when you think you understand it, something happens to surprise you and your assumptions are blown out of the water. My relationship with Japan is complex and deep but most of all it's loyal and rewarding and so I keep coming back for more.

I was a JET for four years from 2002-2006 in Nagano Prefecture and it was then that I really cemented my affection for Japan. As a JET I experienced Japan as a land of contradictions. Little pools of hot, volcanic water surrounded by a calm, snowy landscape. Communal pools that the modest Japanese strip bear to soak in, striking up conversations with fellow bathers who just moments before, when clothed, were complete strangers. Vending machines in temples, post boxes on top of secluded mountains. A land that dictates what's fashionable, revels in cutting edge technology and yet still has a puzzling affection for The Carpenters. Everywhere you go you're 'on top of the world.'

My first year on the JET Programme as an ALT consisted of teaching English at a junior high school. This was followed by two years of undertaking international exchange activities in the community, event planning and interpreting/translating as a CIR, and a final year teaching English in a primary school. The diversity of the grass-roots internationalisation work I did over those four years was amazing. From reading picture story books to toddlers, teaching farmers conversational English, coordinating all-you-can-eat watermelon events to doing the English announcing at the World Ski Jumping Championships and interpreting on the Torch Run for the Special Olympics, I've yet to have a job since that was as fun or diverse as my time on the JET Programme.

Some 13 years later, when the opportunity to take part in the JET Satogaeri 'Homecoming' programme came up, I jumped at the opportunity. It would be a chance to do what I naturally do, talk about the wonders of Japan, but I would be able to do it while in Japan with other former JETs and reconnect with my beloved village. I'm there!
The experience of 'going home' to Matsukawa village certainly didn't disappoint. I was hosted by my former board of education and warmly welcomed by the mayor, who brought me up to speed on the recent happenings in Matsukawa and kindly presented me with a stuffed toy of the town mascot, Rinta. I was so touched when my former principal and head of the board of education made a special trip back to the village and school to visit me. It seemed like only months, let alone years had passed. I bumped into former students and colleagues in the village and taught a few English lessons with the current ALT at the school. I even went back to the taiko club that I had loved so many years before. The people of Matsukawa were so hospitable that my companion from CLAIR commented that he might want to do his own Satogaeri back to Matsukawa in the future, despite only having been there for three days.

Matsukawa village really is a very different place from the big city life of Tokyo. Although I love the excitement and fast pace of Tokyo, I see the potential for such a mega-city to leave one searching in the style of Lost in Translation. People are different in Matsukawa. Strangers welcome visitors, greet you as you're walking by and genuinely seem to care about each other. One day as I was waiting for the bus to go to Nagano city, the woman at the takoyaki stand at the station gave me an extra snack, free of charge, for the bus ride, she said. It reminded me of the good ol’ days back home when you would always get an extra potato cake with your Friday night order of fish and chips.

On the second day of my visit back to Matsukawa, I led a seminar for the teachers at the junior high school on the topic of multicultural education and foreign language education, which only the night before I was asked to conduct entirely in Japanese. This request brought me right back to my days on the JET Programme and reminded me of the need to be flexible, responsive and to ganbaru whenever possible. Although my Japanese is now quite rusty, I did my best to deliver the presentation, which concluded with some interesting discussion and a question from a teacher about national identity in multicultural Australia. With so much diversity, the teacher asked, how is Australia unified as a nation and what does it mean to be Australian? An excellent question, I thought, and a topic that clearly highlighted a fundamental difference between Australia and Japan. In my opinion, identity can be fluid and hybrid in nature; it doesn't have to be fixed, uniform or prescriptive.

This question got me thinking. As Japan prepares to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, it will surely need to consider how as a country it can accommodate diversity and be open, accessible and relevant to both Japanese and non-Japanese alike. It will need to consider everything from the practical, like how tourists are
going to get their suitcases up and down subway stations with no elevators, to the less tangible, like being open to the possibility of different world views.

As the Satogaeri participants heard from the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games at the JET Alumni Global Forum, 'Unity in Diversity' is a key component of the Tokyo 2020 vision and is something that Japan is committed to achieving. I think current JET Programme participants and alumni are in a good position to play a role in preparing Japan to achieve this vision. 'Culture and Education' and 'Recovery and Global Communication' are two of the five stated pillars for the Tokyo Olympics. Who better to contribute to the delivery of this vision than the JET community?

The JETAA Victoria/Tasmania/South Australia chapter, for example, has been fundraising since 2011 to support the communities impacted by the Great East Japan Earthquake through an initiative called the Big Bento Lunch. In the lead up to the Olympics and Rugby World Cup, such initiatives could be modified and contextualised to act as both a promotional and fundraising activity for Japan.

JETAA is also in a good position to promote tourism opportunities in Japan to coincide with these events, as well as the 30th anniversary of the JET Programme. In Australia, JETAA has a presence at many Japan-related festivals and activities which are open to the general public and could be used to promote the Rugby World Cup, the Olympics and broader Japan tourism. Leveraging existing sister-city and sister-state relationships such as the ones between Melbourne and Osaka and between Victoria and Aichi also presents an opportunity to further Australia-Japan engagement.

The Australian JET community originates from a sport and travel-loving nation that knows well the magnitude of events such as the Olympics. Further discussions are required amongst local JETAA chapters in Australia, but I am sure that there will be an appetite to get involved and to celebrate Japan and thirty years of JET. Opportunities to explore could range from volunteering and ambassador programs, the development of anniversary publications, fundraising activities to something as simple as a rugby jersey origami making activity.

The Satogaeri Project enabled me to reconnect with Japan, as well as my former home of Matsukawa. I left Japan optimistic that the JET community, both current and former, has a huge role to play in Japan’s future, for the Rugby World Cup, the Olympics and beyond. After all, when you’re a JET, you’re a JET all the way.
How do you feel about your hometown? If you are like me, you have very warm, nostalgic feelings about it.

These are the feelings I have for my Japanese ‘hometown,’ Aso, in Kumamoto Prefecture. I lived and worked there, at the foot of the magnificent Aso volcano, as a JET Programme participant from 2002 to 2005. I know this very beautiful area like the back of my hand. The friends I made there are like my second family.

In this article, I will share with you my very special “homecoming” trip to Aso on CLAIR’s Satogaeri Project, but I also have a special request of you: Help leverage the immense power of the JET network to boost your home prefecture’s social and economic exchange initiatives. I will suggest some easy ways to do so. If we are able to utilise this power — all 62,000 JETs around the world and all our Japanese friends and colleagues in the 47 prefectures of Japan — we have unlocked the biggest untapped potential of the JET Programme.

During the past ten years, I have held my Japanese hometown, Aso, very close to my heart. I became a volunteer Kumamon ‘Monbassador’ to promote Kumamoto in California and beyond. I became an active volunteer in the JET Alumni Association (JETAA), eventually becoming the President of my local Northern California chapter, JETAAANC. In leading the largest JETAA chapter in the world, I oversee over 30 activities a year that support the JET Programme, promote U.S.-Japan exchange, and encourage social and business networking.

My JET Satogaeri Homecoming

I now live very far away from Aso and rarely have time to visit. So imagine my joy when I was selected along with 12 other JET alumni from around the world to participate in CLAIR’s JET Programme Satogaeri Project. Last Autumn, the project sent me on a very special satogaeri or ‘homecoming’ trip back to Aso for a couple days in November to reconnect with friends and help strengthen ties between JET alumni and their Japanese hometowns.
I am very thankful to the staff members at CLAIR, Kumamoto Prefecture, and Aso City for all of their efforts in making my JET Satogaeri Project journey so special.

The JET Satogaeri Project is one of the ways CLAIR is preparing for the 30th Anniversary of the JET Programme this year. Before heading to Aso, I participated in the JET Alumni Global Forum in Tokyo, where we discussed plans for the anniversary, the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

Then, it was off to Aso! Like many JETs, I made many friends in the community, including neighbours, colleagues at the city hall, teachers and students at the middle and elementary schools where I taught, my adult English conversation students, and members of the local taiko and kimono wearing kitsuke groups in which I was active.

On my first night back in Aso, I had a very touching 10-year reunion dinner with many of these friends. During my two days there, I was able to meet many other old friends. We shared a lot of smiles and memories together. I also toured the Aso volcano region, which is one of the most breathtaking natural wonders I know. In fact, it is now a UNESCO Global Geopark, and features some of the best onsen hot springs on the planet.

The Power of the JET Network

On my final night in Aso, I led a workshop with members of the community to explore how we could strengthen ties between Kumamoto and the JET alumni who lived there. I put to them a simple math problem. Through JETAA, I am connected to 62,000 JET alumni in 65 countries. They work in every sector and industry, at every level, from entry-level to CEO. Through my corporate and university alumni networks, I am connected to an additional 365,000 professionals in 157 countries. This adds up to over 427,000 people in my worldwide network that everyone in Kumamoto has access to simply by knowing me.

If the size of my network is typical of the thousands of JET participants who lived in Kumamoto over the past 30 years, that means your average resident of Kumamoto has access to somewhere on the order of 850 million people worldwide through their JET alumni. That’s an astonishing number. It represents a huge global network that is largely untapped by the people of Kumamoto to advance their social and economic initiatives.

On the flip side, I have deep relationships with the people of Aso and Kumamoto. Those friends and colleagues in turn have immense networks inside Japan. Am I fully tapping this network for the benefit of my own business endeavors, volunteer organisations, and community?
How to Unlock the Power of the JET Network for your Home Prefecture

I believe this power of the JET alumni network is the greatest single area of untapped potential for the JET Programme right now. Any JET Programme participant, host prefecture, or contracting organisation (CO) that is not leveraging this network for its own benefit is missing a truly huge opportunity.

How can JET alumni leverage their network to help their Japanese hometowns and host prefectures achieve their social and economic goals? First of all, get connected. Join your home prefecture’s JET LinkedIn Group at bit.ly/jetaaken, and ask your JET friends to do the same. Connect with your home prefecture and town any way you can — through social media, email, letters, or postcards.

Then, ask your Japanese friends and colleagues how you can help promote their community. Ask your prefecture’s AJET Block Representative the same question (see the AJET homepage, ajet.net, if you are not sure who that person is). Make a rule for yourself to share news about local products and tourist spots with your social and business networks at least once a month. Post photos and memories of your time living there to your hometown and home prefecture’s social media.

Next, take your own “virtual JET Satogaeri” homecoming trip! Post pictures and stories of your Japanese hometown on the JET Satogaeri Project homepage, as well as ideas about how alumni can strengthen ties with their Japanese hometown (facebook.com/JETsatogaeri). Use the hashtag #JETsatogaeri. Every Thursday, post a JET “Throwback Thursday” picture from your time on JET and use the hashtag #jettbt.

We loved living in our Japanese towns and prefectures, and know what makes them fantastic. In Aso, I saw the power of the JET Satogaeri Project first hand. If we are able to have this “homecoming” experience while leveraging the power of our networks on behalf of the towns and prefectures of Japan, then we have tapped the JET Programme’s area of greatest potential. I can think of no better initiative for the JET Programme’s 30th Anniversary!
Best of Satogaeri
The JET Programme Satogaeri Project in Pictures

(1) The Participants

Alexis Svetlovsky (Canada), Okayama Prefecture

Caroline Pope (New Zealand), Wakayama Prefecture

Mark Frey (USA), Kumamoto Prefecture

Zhao Hanhong (China), Tottori Prefecture

Felicia Lee (Singapore), Aomori Prefecture

Fiona Uyema (Ireland), Niigata Prefecture
(2) Impressions
'Ready...! Go!' With those two English words, our first race began, fulfilling a dream that started as an idle thought almost ten years earlier: 'Why don’t we take a team of JET alumni to compete at the dragon boat festival in Yokohama?'

The JET Alumni Association of British Columbia (JETAABC), based in Vancouver, Canada, has had a strong history of dragon boating, with our ‘Ready, JET, Go!’ team practising from March through September and competing in half a dozen local races per year since 2004. We’d been trying for years to get serious about doing a 'road trip' to Japan, but it never came together before the team went on hiatus in 2012.

In mid-2014, however, we learned that a local Golden Jubilee committee was being formed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Yokohama and Vancouver during 2015, and the committee was looking for ideas from the community about how to commemorate the event.

The sister-city relationship between Vancouver and Yokohama is the second-oldest Japan/Canada sister-city pairing in Canada. For 50 years, these two cities have enjoyed a diverse range of cultural, economic, and tourism exchanges, and share many common characteristics, including being beautiful and historic port cities with well-established Chinese communities. And, since Yokohama held their first race nearly a decade ago (Vancouver’s event, a legacy of Expo ’86 nearly 30 years ago, is already established as one of the world’s largest), they also both have fun and popular dragon boat festivals.

Veteran JETAABC board member and dragon boater Greg Joughin pounced on this opportunity, proposing that a Vancouver-based ‘Golden Jubilee’ team travel to Japan to compete in Yokohama’s event. With buy-in from the Golden Jubilee committee, JETAABC, and former ‘Ready, JET, Go!’ coach Kevin Thien, Greg took on the daunting and ambitious task of building a team of paddlers who had the time, energy, and (frankly) financing to make the trip to Yokohama in late May, 2015.
From the outset, the project faced challenges. Finding the sort of people who have enough time, money, and interest in dragon boating and Japan is a lot harder than it sounds! But we still had a few tricks up our sleeves...

With assistance from Vancouver’s Dragon Zone paddling club, Air Canada, Majomo photography, and JETAABC itself, the project slowly gained momentum, and ultimately attracted a pretty diverse group—about half had been to Japan before, and about half had dragon boat experience. In the months before departure, the team weathered intense twice-weekly practices, and a local early-season race. Driven and inspired by our hugely experienced coach, Kevin, and encouraged by our *sempai* and teammate Consul General Seiji Okada (an avid kayaker who had previously joined the Yokohama dragon boat race), we built our paddling prowess, race fitness, and racecraft.

The bulk of the team departed Vancouver on Air Canada on the last Thursday in May, arriving at Narita the following afternoon. Most of us activated JR passes, and took the Narita Express to Kannai, in downtown Yokohama. Disaster nearly struck early, as somehow we either didn’t get or misplaced a single-fare ticket. But the crisis was averted by the unsurpassable Japanese customer service, as JR employees let us all complete our nearly two-hour trip, regardless.

Although exhausted and soaking wet, that excellent customer service almost made us not notice the late-spring downpour. We were nonetheless very pleased to see former JETAA Canada Rep and JETAABC member Joseph Luk waiting to discuss the final details of our race weekend when we arrived at the hotel in Kannai.

In response to our initial call out for paddlers some months earlier, Joseph had replied that he would love to steer the boat for the Yokohama race. But subsequently, he did far more than that—he organized a whole team consisting of his co-workers from Google Japan in Tokyo, to fill our boat with paddlers in case we were short. We were thrilled that before we arrived, the ‘G-Dragons’ dragon boat team had already been practicing regularly, competed in the Tokyo dragon boat race, and even had their own jerseys made. (Yes, that’s really how addicting dragon boating is.)

After enjoying a jet-lagged Saturday morning being tourists in Yokohama—visiting sites like the Akarenga Souko, Chinatown, Minato Mirai 21, and Mega Don Quixote—we put on our team jerseys and walked to Yamashita Park through streets bustling with Port Opening Festival activities for our first practice together with the G-Dragons.

As soon as we boarded the boat and paddled away from the dock, it was shockingly clear that these weren’t the calm waters of False Creek, our usual practice area. The boat was completely unfamiliar, and conditions were much rougher than anything we had practiced in. The paddles were too short. The boat was cramped and lacked footrests. Big waves in a
big bay meant lots of water in the boat. We practiced hard, but it was still apparent that we’d have our work cut out for us on race day.

Sunday morning—race day—was gorgeous, but already warm when we left the hotel before 8 am. Because we were an overseas team, the race organisers allowed us the luxury of having a quick practice with the G-Dragons before official racing began. Not too surprisingly, the water conditions were similar (read: 'rough and unpredictable') to our practice the day before. But Coach Kevin again showed his experience and expertise, and melded our two teams together seamlessly. Or at least as seamlessly as two practices totalling less than an hour could allow.

Yokohama’s dragon boat race format has each team compete against the same two teams in two heats over a distance of 260 meters each. The race course runs parallel to the seawall in Yamashita Park, with the finish line close to the Hikawa-maru—an ocean liner that, incidentally, ran regularly between Yokohama, Seattle, and Vancouver during the 1930s, and which carried many 'Sugihara Jews' to the USA and Canada in 1940/41. With the large 'Lane 3' marker on Hikawa-maru as our target, and with our months—plus a scant hour—of training behind us, we paddled hard and were rewarded with wins in both of our heats in the morning session. While our best time was good for only fourth place overall, we felt we had made the most of our hybrid team (especially considering the youth and fitness of the almost-all-male teams that finished ahead of us). After almost a year of planning, four months of training, and some disappointing logistical challenges along the way, we’d completed what we had come to do.

While that was our final day together as a team, most of us stayed in Japan for another week or two, making the most of our airfare. Whether solo or in small groups, our team members visited locations like the Tsukiji fish market and the Ghibli museum in Tokyo, Nagashima Spa-land near Nagoya, Fuji Speedway and Hakone near Fuji-san, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Kanazawa—even Fukuoka, thanks to the incredible value of the Japan Rail Pass. In our own version of the Satogaeri Project, most of our alumni members visited their JET furusato, some with new-to-Japan teammates in tow.

No matter how much longer each of us spent in Japan, every single member of the team—old pros and first-timers alike—had an amazing time. This trip was everything we’d hoped and planned it would be, and so much more. Which, for our alumni members, wasn’t too surprising; we had returned to the country we had grown to love on the JET Programme, and got to share that feeling with a bunch of our friends. The fact that we also represented our home city well at a major festival, while doing something we enjoy, to celebrate the
50th anniversary of a strong sister-city friendship, was just icing on the cake.

This sort of experience might normally be described as ‘once in a lifetime’, but we had so much fun that we’re already thinking and planning of where to travel next. Hawaii in 2016? Taiwan in 2017? Japan again in 2018?! We can’t wait to see if we can make it happen.

My name is Rose Tanasugarn, and I was honoured to represent the JET Alumni Association Western Japan (JETAAWJ) at the JETAA Japan Opinion Exchange Meeting with CLAIR in July of 2015 and the JET Alumni Global Forum in November 2015. Meeting fellow JETAA chapter officers from around the world and hearing about best practices has provided me with many contacts and new ideas for activities and collaboration, especially with the upcoming 30th Anniversary of the JET Programme. Members of the organising committees of the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games are also looking to the JET community for potential collaboration during these major sporting events. Take it from me, there is no better time than NOW to participate in your local JETAA chapter!

JETAAWJ is in the process of revitalising the chapter by accessing professional networks and collaborating with various organisations to develop a wider range of career opportunities for alumni and JET participants finishing their tenure on the programme.

The other day, I met two former JET participants, Sandy Cheng and Louise Dendy, at a reception at the Kobe Portopia Hotel, where I have worked since 2008. Sandy Cheng is a former Kobe
ALT and the former National Chair of the Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (AJET), but here she was serving as the master of ceremonies for the Association of Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques (SIGGRAPH) Asia 2015 Welcome Reception. Louise Dendy was a former Kobe ALT and later CIR, and now works as the official PR Specialist of Kobe City. It was by coincidence that we bumped into each other at the event, but our current positions prove that language instruction is not the only career path in Japan after JET, especially if JET participants develop relevant Japanese language skills.

As examples of our chapter’s collaborative activities, JETAAWJ has worked with U.S. Consul General Allen Greenberg and his staff to connect the consulate to current JETs participants and JET alumni in Nagoya and Shimane during consulate outreach events. For the last several years, the Japan-America Society of Osaka (JASO) has asked JETAAWJ to help publicise their Thanksgiving dinner and spring barbecue events to JET participants and alumni. Many JASO members are high-ranking managers at major Japanese corporations, and therefore, attending these events is a good way for JET participants and alumni to start building their professional networks.

JETAAWJ has hosted events with hospitality industry professionals and translators to allow current JET participants and alumni to learn more about these career fields. Additionally, JETAAWJ provided financial support for the Kansai subchapter’s networking and professional development events.

Events planned for early 2016 include a disaster preparedness event in Kobe which will be jointly conducted by JETAAWJ, AJET, and the U.S. Consulate General Osaka-Kobe. Jeff Anderson, a first-year JET participant in Nara, has been invited to speak about his sister Taylor who tragically lost her life after helping her students evacuate in Ishinomaki in March 2011. The chapter also hopes to host regional networking events in Nagoya, Hiroshima, and Kyushu.

Over the next year, the chapter aims to increase membership, particularly seeking to reconnect with alumni who have lived in Japan for ten years or more, while also continuing to strengthen ties with more recent alumni and current JET Programme participants through joint projects with JETAAWJ subchapters, AJET National Council, and the AJET blocks within the chapter’s jurisdiction.
JETAA Western Japan would love to hear from you if you would like to get involved in starting a regional subchapter, particularly in Hiroshima, Nagoya, or Kyushu. Please contact Rose at jetaawj@gmail.com for more information.

Article 7

Introducing *Nippon Quest*

*A message from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry*

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan (METI) would like to introduce the JET community to the following services and campaigns aimed at promoting Japan tourism and Japanese goods and services abroad.

1) The 'Cool Japan Promotion Office' at METI has opened a Facebook page offering information on 'cool' Japanese topics, such as Japanese food, products, services, events, and more. If you are interested in assisting in their efforts, please follow them on Facebook, share their posts, and thus share your favourite parts of Japanese culture with the world!

2) *Nippon Quest* is an online platform created by METI for Japanese people who love their hometowns, and for foreigners who love Japan. Users can post photos of foods, goods, interesting activities that can be enjoyed in the various localities of Japan, etc. Check out the site if you are interested in planning a trip or sharing your memories from a vacation in Japan. [http://nipponquest.com/about](http://nipponquest.com/about)

3) 'The Wonder 500' is an exclusive collection of 500 carefully selected goods, foods, and travel experiences from across Japan. The purpose is to promote local products that are innovative, exceptional, and known throughout Japan, but have not yet gained popularity abroad. Visit their website to find out more about what products made it in to the 'Wonder 500' list. [https://thewonder500.com](https://thewonder500.com)
JETAA Chapter List and Contact Information

Please check the JET Programme website for the most up to date contact information.

**Australia**

AU1-New South Wales
Eden Law
info@jetaansw.org
www.jetaansw.org

AU2-Victoria/Tasmania/South
Emma Libbis
president@victassa.jetaa.org.au
www.victassa.jetaa.org.au

AU3-Western Australia
Will Perera
president@jetaawa.com
www.jetaawa.com

AU4-Canberra
Andrea Carroll
president@jetaacanberra.org
www.jetaacanberra.org

AU5-Queensland
Richard Wilding
president@jetaaqld.org
www.jetaaqld.org

**Brazil**

Lina Harumi Shimizu
linashimizu@gmail.com
www.jetprogramme.org.br

**Canada**

CN-1 Ottawa
Alex Svetlovsky
president@jetaaottawa.ca
www.facebook.com/JETAAOttawa

CN-2 Ottawa
Nicholas Jones & Carl Sachs
chair@jetaatoronto.ca
www.jetaatoronto.ca

CN-3 Quebec/Atlantic
Moti Lieberman
info@jetaaqa.ca
jetaaqa.ca
CN-4 Manitoba/Saskatchewan
Erynne Sjoblom
jetaambsk.ca

CN-5 Northern Alberta
Jesse Moore
www.jetaasa.ca

CN-6 British Columbia & Yukon
Mike Dalley
president@jetaabc.ca
www.jetaabc.ca

CN-7 Southern Alberta
Jennifer Carter
sajetaa@gmail.com
www.jetaasa.ca

India
Divya Jha
divyajha@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/JETAA-India-100100753444063/

Ireland
Ms. Sinéad Silva
jetaaireland@gmail.com
ijetaa.wordpress.com

Jamaica
Roxanne Seaton-Chambers
jamjeta@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/
JamaicaJETAlumniAssociation

Japan
West Japan
Rose Tanasugarn
jetaawj@gmail.com

Tokyo
Jennifer Be: jetaatokyo@yahoo.com
Joseph Yount: co-chair@jetaa-tokyo.org
www.facebook.com/groups/
113283805361185/

France
Aurélie Noel
contact@clairparis.org
jetaafrance.blogspot.fr

Germany
Sven Traschewski
sven.traschewski@gmx.net
East Japan
John Ghanotakis
jghanotakis@yahoo.com
www.jetaaa.com

**New Zealand**
NZ1-Wellington
Jess Clarke
jetaawellington@gmail.com
www.jetaawgtn.co.nz

NZ2-South Island
Caroline Pope
president@jetaasi.org
www.jetaasi.org

NZ3-Auckland
Amelia Sirimanne
president@aucklandjetaa.org
www.aucklandjetaa.org

**Singapore**
Yeo Yi Hua
jetaaSingap@gmail.com
www.jetaasg.wordpress.com

**South Africa**
Nicky Furniss
https://www.facebook.com/JETAA-SOUTH-AFRICA-112320878782773/
nickyfurniss@yahoo.co.uk

**South Korea**
Joohyun Kwon（權珠賢）
cafe.daum.net/jetprogramme
jetaakorea@gmail.com

**United Kingdom**
Ms. Sarah Parsons
chair@jetaa.org.uk
www.jetaa.org.uk

**United States**
US-1 Washington DC
Ryan Bedford
president@jetaadc.org
www.jetaadc.org

US-2 New York
Pamela Kavalam
president@jetaany.org
www.jetaany.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US-3 New England</td>
<td>Leslie Risak</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@nejetaa.com">president@nejetaa.com</a></td>
<td>nejetaa.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-4 Southeast (Atlanta)</td>
<td>Stephen Haverfield</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jetaase@yahoo.com">jetaase@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jetaase.org">www.jetaase.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-5 Mid-South (New Orleans)</td>
<td>Megan Geeck</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@jetaanola.com">info@jetaanola.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jetaanola.com">www.jetaanola.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-6 Florida (Miami)</td>
<td>Bahia Simons-Lane</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@floridajetaa.org">president@floridajetaa.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.floridajetaa.org">www.floridajetaa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-7 Chicago</td>
<td>Wesley Julian</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@jetaachicago.com">president@jetaachicago.com</a></td>
<td>jetaachicago.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-8 Heartland</td>
<td>Michael Bugajski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@heartlandjetaa.org">president@heartlandjetaa.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.heartlandjetaa.org">www.heartlandjetaa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-9 Texoma</td>
<td>Timothy Roller</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@texomajetaa.org">info@texomajetaa.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.texomajetaa.org">www.texomajetaa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-10 Rocky Mountain</td>
<td>Emily Freeman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@jetaarockymountain.org">president@jetaarockymountain.org</a></td>
<td>jetaarockymountain.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-11 Pacific Northwest (Seattle)</td>
<td>Jennifer Kawakami</td>
<td><a href="mailto:officers@pnwjetaa.org">officers@pnwjetaa.org</a></td>
<td>pnwjetaa.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-12 Portland</td>
<td>Jeffrey Houser</td>
<td><a href="mailto:president@jetaaportland.com">president@jetaaportland.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jetaaportland.com">www.jetaaportland.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-13 Northern California (San Francisco)</td>
<td>Mark Frey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@jetaanc.org">info@jetaanc.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.jetaanc.org">www.jetaanc.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
US-14 Southern California and Arizona (Los Angeles)
Tiffany Dyer
Kelley Rich
officers@jetaasc.org
jetaasc.org

US-15 Hawaii
John Anbe
jetaahawaii@gmail.com
jetaahawaii.org/

US-16 Alaska (Anchorage)
Christopher Vaughan
https://www.facebook.com/groups/168479171220/

US-17 Great Lakes (Detroit)
Faye Valtadoros
https://www.facebook.com/groups/JETAAGreatLakes/

US-18 Minneapolis (Minnesota)
Kate Thersleff
president@jetaamn.org
www.jetaamn.org

US-19 Music City (Nashville)
Leah Brooks
president@jetaamc.org
www.jetaamc.org
Setting Up a JETAA Chapter

JETAA chapters can be a great resource for staying connected to Japan and the JET Programme, and for networking with other JET alumni in your country or region. In addition, setting up new JETAA chapters is integral to the growth and development of the worldwide JET alumni network. Currently there are 52 chapters in 15 countries/regions around the world. Some chapters have only 20 or so members; others have thousands. To start a new JETAA chapter the following steps are recommended:

1. Find Local JET Alumni

Get the word out that you are interested in starting a chapter. Make contact with the local Japanese Embassy or Consulate General, and spread the word by mouth and through the use of social media. If there is a local CLAIR office, find out if they may also be able to help.

2. Get in Touch With Established JETAA Chapters

Your JETAA sempai in neighbouring countries or areas may be able to give you valuable advice on how to create bylaws, hold elections, etc., based on their own experience. You can find chapter contact information in this issue of JET Streams or on the JETAA section of the JET Programme website.

3. Set up a Working Group/Chapter

This will include you and other interested alumni you find. The group does not need to be a formal committee at this stage but you may want to meet informally to get the ‘ball rolling’. However, please note that to be fully recognised by JETAA International, a formal committee needs to be appointed, including a chair, treasurer, secretary, etc. To make the working group formal, documentation including chapter by-laws will need to be composed. For help with documentation please contact JETAA International.

4. Plan Activities and Events

Depending on where you are located and how many alumni are nearby, you can hold various activities and events. Here are some ideas:

- Japanese cultural events - *ikebana*, *hanami*, tea ceremony, sushi-making, etc.
- Assisting the local Japanese Embassy or Consulate General with JET Programme recruitment and pre-departure events
- Welcome events for newly returned JET alumni
· Career and/or networking events
· Events related to promoting Japan and local regions of Japan
· Events linking with local Japanese groups (universities, companies, organisations, etc.)
· Japanese language classes

For more ideas please contact JETAA International.

5. Apply to Become a Chapter Member of JETAA International

JETAA International (www.jetalumni.org/) is the umbrella organisation for JETAA chapters. Once you have gathered 20 members for your chapter, you can apply to JETAA International to become a recognised chapter. Please note that JETAA International is currently undergoing a revision and will be available for future support again later this year.

6. Set up a Website or Social Networking Page

It is advisable to set up a website and/or use other social networking pages to promote your activities and events. Once this website or social networking page has been set up we encourage you to share it with us so that we can post a link to it on the JET Programme website.

Thank you for reading!