

2016 Wisconsin Goodwill Delegation Farewell Party

On September 29, 2016 (Thursday), the Farewell Party for the Wisconsin State Goodwill Delegation, which visited last September, was held at Hotel Port Plaza Chiba. 53 people attended. The Goodwill Delegation consisted of a total of 10 people: seven from the Culture and Arts Group, and three from the Education Group. Ms. Sharon Durtka, the head of the delegation, stayed for roughly one week, starting on Saturday, September 24th. The 53 people who attended the party included host families, Wisconsin ALTs, CWA members, etc.

At the beginning, Yasuhide Akada, the Vice President of the Association, expressed his gratitude to the delegation members, and thanked Mobara City, university and school officials involved, and the host families for their cooperation during this visit.

Mr. Kazuki Okamoto, the Deputy Chief of the General Planning Department of Chiba Prefecture, expressed his appreciation to the Wisconsin-Chiba Inc. and members of CWA, which was the main organization overseeing the exchange. He stated his hope for continued future, long-term exchanges. In response, Ms. Durtka, the delegation head, stated that sister exchanges will lead to a peaceful world, thanked the guests for their hospitality, and hopes for continued future exchanges.

Next, the CWA Vice Chairman, Misako Kageyama, presented a stuffed toy character called "Chiba-Kun" as a souvenir to all members of the WCI delegation. Following this, the CWA Executive Managing Director Minoru Akatsuka made a toast, and dinner was served at each table. In the relaxed atmosphere, conversations covered a wide range of topics.

After chatting for a while, a splendid performance, which was also performed at various schools and other places, was performed by members of the Mexican Dance Academy, which were part of the Culture and Arts Group. The majestic and passionate Aztec dance, and lively and cheerful Mexican music, charmed the audience.

With the party in a very lively mood, calligrapher Tsuji Naka (Akemi) (a member of the 2015 Chiba Goodwill Delegation) presented a large banner made of Japanese washi paper, with the word for "festival" written in Chinese characters, English and Aztec. She received a booming applause from the audience.

Next, the troupe of Akio Asanuma, a CWA Steering Committee member, gave a performance of Noh songs using shamisen, taiko, and shakuhachi, which at times was lively, and sometimes echoed quietly and sorrowfully. The atmosphere in the room reached its highest point. The time for conversation at each table flew by, and after taking a commemorative photo with all participants, the party ended.

Incidentally, we had received reports that some WCI delegation members were worried when they first arrived that their homestay families would not be able speak English; however, they actually had no problems. When they got together, any words they couldn't understand were easily found by looking at their Smartphones or dictionary.



Yasuhide Akada,
CWA Vice-President



Mr. Kazuki Okamoto,
Deputy Chief of the General
Planning Department,
Chiba Prefecture



Sharon Durtka,
WCI Delegation Leader



Mexican Dance Performance



The character "Festival" written by
Tsuji Fuga (Akemi)



Performance by Asanuma Troupe



Commemorative Photo of Farewell Party Attendees