

Report by Wisconsin Goodwill Delegation Education Group Members

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As members of the 2016 Wisconsin Chiba, Inc. (WCI) Goodwill Delegation, we had the opportunity to visit a variety of sites throughout the Prefecture of Chiba that focused on nursing and education. Carroll Bronson of Cardinal Stritch University, Ann Van Eerden of Alverno College and Kimiko Miyazaki, a WCI Board Member, travelled as the “Education Group” of the delegation to numerous locations during our week in Chiba. We presented relevant information about our institutions at most of the places we visited. Ann’s experience as a member of the delegation was guided by the goal of the Sister State Partnership to create exchanges and ongoing relationships, education through partnership and exchange programs among schools, universities, students and teachers. Carroll’s experience as a member of the delegation was guided by the goal of developing new international relationships and potential partnerships that are grounded in the Franciscan values of creating a caring community, peacemaking, showing compassion and reverencing creation.

The Chiba Nursing Association was our first visit. We were warmly greeted by Ms. Emiko Hoshino, Ms. Itsuko Sawada, Ms. Hiroko Hukudome, Mr. Keiko Teraguchi and their assistants. We learned about the types of nursing licenses and the main projects of the Chiba Nursing Association. We shared information about ourselves and the colleges that we represented.

As a member of the Wisconsin Nurses Association, Ann was pleased to share the goals of the WNA with our Sister State Nursing Association. We noted throughout the visit that we shared many common goals; our discussions included the topics of safety in the workplace, the on-going need for nursing research, the role of the advanced practice nurse, and our national health goals. We had the opportunity to tour the facilities and see firsthand the Chiba Nursing Association’s commitment to providing educational and training resources for the improvement of nursing skills for current nurses and those returning to the workforce. This is remarkable as it serves as a means of increasing the number of safe practitioners in nursing practice which is the ultimately improved patient outcomes.

Our visit to the Chiba Psychiatric Medical Center began with meeting Dr. Toyoaki Hirata, Ms. Yoshie Watanabe and their associates. Dr. Hirata presented a PowerPoint titled, “Current State of Psychiatric Care in Japan and the Mission of the Chiba Psychiatric Medical Center” revealing a significant shift from inpatient psychiatric care to outpatient psychiatric care. The outpatient services offered were extensive. Another point of interest is the range of health professionals involved in the patient’s care.

The Chiba Prefectural General Education Center welcomed us; Director Hisahiko Ando and Deputy Director Kazuyuki Komiya explained the Center’s focus as training teachers “practical leadership”, a concept that is comprised of management, indirect abilities/factors, basic qualities/abilities and direct guidance abilities. To enhance the teacher’s relationship with the community, even more experience, teachers may take a leave of absence to work in the community, return to school, or work in a different industry; returning they bring positively shaped attitudes, increased communication skills, improved decision making and streamlined cooperation and resources. We had the opportunity to visit a classroom filled with first year teachers in a training classroom with training technology tools. It was very impressive! The concept that the Center does more than teach teachers to teach represents the Prefecture’s understanding that the role of a teacher is multifaceted and that all experiences shape and influence the person teaching in the classroom.

Our visit to Chiba City Miyazaki Elementary School began with a meeting with both the principal and the school nurse. The school houses over 800 students from first through sixth grade; class sizes were 30-40 students with the exception of the special education classroom that had 4 students from first through sixth grades. All classrooms were self-contained, including lunch. We also visited the Health Room

where we discussed the background of school nurses, yogo teachers, and their role in the school. We observed classroom activities. We observed the children to be very engaged and polite, working together to prepare for lunch, serving food, waiting until everyone was seated before eating. We enjoyed having our school lunch.

Makuhari Sohgo High School staff greeted us with warm green tea and a Wisconsin newspaper article about their Nursing Course students' visit to Cedar Community, an organization which provides a continuum of living options for older adults in West Bend. We learned about the uniqueness of this five-year high school program, the only one in Chiba. Students were mature, serious in the practice of their skill and worked cooperatively. As the demand for nurses is great in both Japan and the U.S. this method of educating and preparing nurses in a high school setting is worth further exploration.

Our visit to Chiba Prefectural University School of Health Sciences began with introductions to Dr. Mashiro Tanabe, Minami Kanda and their associates. They and Ann and Carroll shared the mission, principles and goals and the departments in the school as well as an overview of the undergraduate nursing courses and the schedule for exams and degrees. This visit opened a discussion of the possibility of student exchange programs. Carroll and Ann have forwarded Chiba's interest and questions to the International and Intercultural Centers at Alverno and Cardinal Stritch.

Chiba University School of Nursing was our final professional appointment. We met Dr. Misako Miyazaki, Dr. Akiko Nosaki and Ms. Keiko Iida. We learned of their history, challenges and future goals; they provided an overview of their undergraduate and graduate programs and the development of competencies. One issue facing both Japan and the U.S. is the number of competitive programs and multiple paths to degrees. We visited simulation labs and students working in community settings, in particular with individuals with mental illness.

We had the opportunity to visit the Chiba Prefectural Office and enjoyed viewing the collection of artifacts from the State of Wisconsin. It was an honor to meet Governor Kensaku Morita. The pageantry of the event, the Governor's energy and enthusiasm in his greeting and the media coverage represented the significance of and commitment to the Sister State Partnership on behalf of the Prefecture of Chiba. Our visit was on the local news that evening and in the newspaper the next morning.

Friendship Square, located in Messe Mall, an urban park in the Makuhari business center, was designed to provide people from all over the world with a space together, exchange ideas and relax. The friendship between Prefecture of Chiba and the State of Wisconsin is featured in the park. Natural stone from Wisconsin has been arranged into the shape of the State and the Prefecture with a stone bridge over a pond separating the two a symbol of a close time between the two states. A plaque commemorates this relationship.

This Goodwill exchange and homestays have been life changing experiences; we learned of our common goals and challenges; we continue to share that which we have experienced, seen, discussed and learned. We feel deeply honored and proud to be a part of this relationship and to have been entrusted with this opportunity to represent and to enhance this friendship.