

2024 Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation Dispatched

The 2024 Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation, dispatched by the Chiba-Wisconsin Association, visited Wisconsin from Saturday, October 26 to Sunday, November 3. The 10-member Culture and Arts group consisted of a shinobue (bamboo flute) player, members of the traditional performing arts club of Chiba Prefectural Sawara High School, and the secretariat.

On Wednesday, October 2, the delegation paid a courtesy visit to Governor Toshihito Kumagai, a special advisor to the Association.

After the introduction of the delegation members by Executive Director of the Association Kazuhiko Yoshida, the delegation leader, Kenji Saso, expressed his determination on behalf of the delegation, stating, "This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Chiba-Wisconsin Association, a significant milestone. We aim to further deepen the face-to-face relationship between Chiba Prefecture and the State of Wisconsin." Following this, the delegation members showcased Sawara Bayashi, the traditional music that they would be performing in Wisconsin.

Governor Kumagai stated, "It is significant that this delegation is made up of primarily high school club members, who will be serving as facilitators of exchange for the next generation," and expressed his expectations for their activities on site.

The courtesy visit was attended by representatives from Katori City Hall, the Katori City International Exchange Association, and Sawara High School, among others.

The delegation departed on October 26th and safely returned after a nine-day itinerary. The details of the exchange will be reported in the next issue.



Commemorative photo with Governor Kumagai (front row) ,
delegation leader Saso (fifth from left) , and Executive Director Yoshida (far left) .

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Performing Sawara Bayashi in front of Governor Kumagai



Departing from Narita International Airport, Saturday, October 26

2024 New ALT Welcome Party

On Saturday, September 28, a welcome and exchange event for new ALTs was held at the Makuhari Seaside Park BBQ Garden, with 28 participants including two new ALTs. Despite heavy rain the day before and forecasts predicting rain on the day of the event, the organizers were determined to proceed. This strong resolve was due to the presence of a vegetarian participant, for whom special ingredients had been prepared in advance, ensuring everything was ready for the event. Although there were concerns about the weather, it turned out to be partly sunny, and the event was able to take place without any issues, much to everyone's relief.

The event officially started at 11 a.m., with Exchange Program Planning Group Head Abe serving as the master of ceremonies. After an opening speech by Steering Committee Chairperson Moriyama, participants were divided into five groups and began cooking. The ingredients, including sausages, beef, pork, chicken, vegetables, and yakisoba, were all vacuum-packed and provided by the venue.

Each group managed the cooking process differently; some groups quickly grilled the food and sat down to eat together, while others took more time as some members cooked while others ate, leading to a longer wait for everyone to be seated and eating.

Among the participants were some who were meeting for the first time, and the new ALTs were particularly nervous at first. However, thanks to the wine provided by Kikkoman, everyone gradually relaxed and enjoyed the meal together. After everyone had eaten their fill, five ALTs introduced themselves, sharing their hobbies and favorite foods in a mix of English and Japanese, which intrigued the audience.

Additionally, the quality and quantity of the ingredients were upgraded from the previous year's event, with ample amounts of beef, pork, and chicken. Some groups struggled to finish the leftover meat, while others, consisting of hearty eaters, managed to eat almost everything.

The event was further enhanced by the presence of participants who brought their families, including small children, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere, which is well reflected in the group photo of the participants. After the commemorative photo, everyone expressed their gratitude for the good weather and helped clean up before heading their separate ways.

※A video of the event is available on the CWA's website. (<https://chiba-wisconsin.net/>)

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Cooking



Chatting



Eating

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ALT self-introductions



Group photo at the end of the event

Wisconsin Today

—Report from Steering Committee Member Maximilan Gumble—

This past October 26 through November 2, I had the opportunity to travel to Wisconsin with a colleague on business. It had already been more than two years since the last time I visited, so although the trip was less than a full week long, it was a welcome taste of home. Much of the trip was spent in Madison, where my colleague and I visited the University of Wisconsin campus and met with key faculty members regarding future sister state relations as well as promotion of the Chiba-Wisconsin ALT Program. The fall weather was crisp and cool, but not too cold, and the timing of our visit meant that the campus was alive with fall colors, stunning red and yellow leaves contrasted against the backdrop of Lake Mendota. We also visited the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation headquarters, along with the Department of Public Instruction, including a chance to meet with the State Superintendent. The DPI plays a key role in the hiring of ALTs, so it was wonderful to connect with our compatriots there and discuss the state of foreign language education in both Wisconsin and Chiba.

After departing from Madison, I was able to briefly visit my hometown of Williams Bay following a tour of the Walworth Kikkoman plant. My colleague and I sat at our computers around the dining room table in my childhood home, while the warm chaos of the kitchen played out in the next room as my family worked together to prepared homemade pizza for us to enjoy before our whirlwind tour carried us to Chicago and our final destination—the Japanese Consulate.

With our visit taking place less than a week before a highly contentious presidential election, the tension in the air was palpable, and voter mobilization was in full swing, particularly on the University campus. Despite this backdrop of uncertainty and anxiety, however, Wisconsin was as warm and welcoming as ever.



Fall at the Wisconsin State Capitol



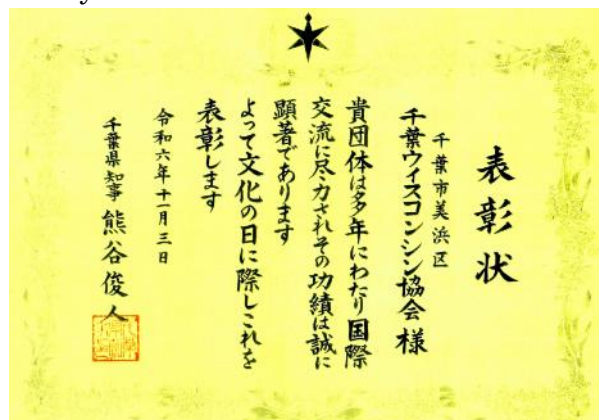
Making homemade pizza

Chiba-Wisconsin Association Honored for Distinguished Service to Chiba Prefecture on Culture Day 2024

The Chiba-Wisconsin Association was honored in the "Regional Tourism Promotion" category at the Chiba Prefecture Distinguished Service Awards on Culture Day 2024. This recognition was given in acknowledgment of the Association's continuous and sustained international exchange activities with the State of Wisconsin over the past 20 years. These efforts have significantly deepened friendship and goodwill between the two regions and greatly contributed to promoting international understanding and fostering a global perspective among the citizens of Chiba Prefecture.

Particularly noteworthy is the ongoing Goodwill Delegation program, which has continued since 2004. Over 180 members have participated in mutual visits, promoting international exchange through homestays. Additionally, the Association has organized exchange meetings with Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) dispatched from Wisconsin, further enhancing mutual understanding.

The award ceremony took place on Sunday, November 3, in the "Lapis" suite on the second floor of Hotel New Otani Makuhari (Mihama Ward, Chiba City). Governor Toshihito Kumagai presented the certificates of commendation to contributors from various fields. From the Association, Vice President Katsunosuke Osawa and Steering Committee Chairperson Shigeo Moriyama attended the ceremony.



Distinguished Service Award



At the gathering (From the front left: Executive Director Tomizawa of the Prefectural Policy and Planning Department, Association Vice President Osawa, Steering Committee Chairperson Moriyama)

Introducing the Wisconsin ALTs!

There are many ALTs from Wisconsin teaching at schools in Chiba Prefecture.

ALT, short for “Assistant Language Teacher,” is a foreign language teacher who assists with foreign language education in Japan. Currently, there are ALTs working in elementary, junior, and senior high schools in Chiba for the improvement of English and international understanding. Among them are the following ALTs from Wisconsin:



Inserted Photos (from the Left):

Carson Holm	Prefectural Matsudo Kokusai High School
Aaron Van Den Elzen	Prefectural Matsudo Kokusai High School
John Skendzel	Isumi Municipal Ohara Elementary School, Ohara Junior High School, Choja Elementary School
Elise Fischer	Prefectural Sosa High School

Front Row (from the Left):

Liz Xiong	Prefectural Toke High School, Prefectural Chishirodai High School
Jessi Childress	Prefectural Kashiwai High School
Kyle Krueger	Prefectural Matsudo Kokusai High School
Julie Mae Engelmam	Prefectural Nagareyama Otakanomori High School
Libby Sattler	Prefectural Narita Kokusai High School
Sarah Kautz	Prefectural Matsuo High School
Daryan Schultz	Prefectural Togane High School
Hanna Nam	Prefectural Narita Kokusai High School

Back Row (from the Left):

Maximilian Gumble	Prefectural Board of Education, ALT Program Coordinator
Maxwell Kortebein	Prefectural Chosei High School, Prefectural Otaki High School
Michael Hang	Prefectural Sakura High School
Alexis Lipkie	Prefectural Awa High School
Oli Wright	Prefectural Chiba Higashi High School

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Marieigh Van Dellen	Prefectural Chiba Minami High School
Adam Finnessy	Prefectural Matsudo Kokusai High School
Joseph Simurdiak	Prefectural Nagareyama Otakanomori High School
James Aguilo Ramos	Prefectural Kimitu High School

Panel Introducing CWA Activities Displayed at International Festa CHIBA

On Friday, October 11, the International Festa CHIBA was held at the Atrium of Makuhari Techno Garden (Mihama Ward, Chiba City), attracting many visitors. The Chiba Wisconsin Association created and displayed a panel introducing our activities (exhibition period: October 4-11).

International Festa CHIBA was previously held on a large scale at venues such as Kanda University of International Studies but had been on hiatus for several years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This time, it resumed operations on a smaller scale. The event featured a stamp rally, Ukrainian songs and dances, Indonesian dances, and a traditional clothing fashion show. Additionally, a special panel exhibition introducing the activities of international exchange and cooperation organizations within the prefecture was held simultaneously.

The CWA panel provided basic information such as the location of Wisconsin and highlighted the sister state exchange with Chiba Prefecture that began in May 1990. It also introduced the dispatch of a Goodwill Delegation centered around students from Chiba Prefectural Sawara High School this fall.



At International Festa CHIBA



The CWA panel

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[Editor's Note]

This year, we were able to dispatch a goodwill delegation for the first time in five years. While we will provide detailed information in the next issue, we hope that you look forward to our reporting on the activities and impressions of the young delegation members in Wisconsin. This year, we also held a welcome party for new ALTs with the participation of our members, and we had a very enjoyable time. The CWA will continue to endeavor to expand our circle of exchange.

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