

CWA NEWS



Greetings from the Association President



Chiba-Wisconsin Association
President Yuzaburo Mogi

I would like to extend my best wishes to everyone with the publication of the first CWA NEWS of 2025. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for your continued support and understanding with regards to the exchange activities of the CWA.

Following the establishment of sister state relations between Chiba Prefecture and the State of Wisconsin in 1990, this Association was founded in 2004, making this year its 21st of serving as point of contact for our exchange on the Chiba side.

Since then, to build on the friendly relations established by the Prefecture, we have continued to widen and deepen our circle of community-based exchange by expanding into a wide variety of activities in the private sector.

In June of last year, we held an exchange event commemorating the 20th anniversary of our association's founding. Many people participated, making it a meaningful opportunity for the further development of future exchanges.

Furthermore, in October, we resumed our dispatch program to Wisconsin for the first time in five years. A 10-member Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation, consisting of a culture and arts group, visited high schools, companies, and facilities throughout Wisconsin, deepening exchanges with many people.

While most of the members dispatched this time were high school students, we understand that they received generous support from many local people, providing the young members with an irreplaceable and valuable experience.

This year marks the reception of the Wisconsin Goodwill Delegation. Building on our past achievements, we will strive for even more fruitful exchanges. It is my hope that we can continue to further expand our circle of exchange and deepen our mutual friendship in order to make the wonderful qualities of Chiba Prefecture and its citizens known to the people of Wisconsin.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the continued support and cooperation of our Association's board members, regular members, and all others involved in our exchange programs.

Japan-US Food Culture Exchange 2024!! ~Roast Turkey and Boso Futomaki Matsuri Sushi~

On Saturday, November 30th, 2024, under early morning clear skies, a food culture exchange event was held at the Chiba City Lifelong Learning Center, with 25 participants including Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs).

CWA steering committee members in charge of preparations gathered at 9:00 AM. They put the turkey in the oven, divided the sushi rice, and arranged ingredients and seasonings on the tables. By a little after 10:00 AM, participants had arrived, and cooking began at each table. Those who had participated in this event many times before seemed quite adept at handling the cooking utensils, while first-timers gradually got involved by watching those around them.

While turkey was the star of the culinary exchange menu, it was accompanied by two sauces (cranberry and gravy), as well as mashed potatoes. In addition to sweet potato and apple cider for dessert, participants also prepared salads and soups. Furthermore, for the now-traditional Boso Futomaki Matsuri Sushi, everyone skillfully rolled sushi in four designs, including roses, camellia flowers, and pandas. As in previous years, this was thanks to the thorough guidance of Ms. Minegishi from the Chiba Traditional Local Cuisine Research Society and Ms. Mitsuhashi, who is also a member of the steering committee.



All of the participants worked together to prepare the meal!



The delicious food and fun conversation were enjoyed by all!

The planned dishes came out one after another, and all that was left was waiting for the turkey to finish roasting. By 12:30, when everyone was quite hungry, the turkey was finally ready. As the piping hot turkey was carved and placed on the table alongside the dishes we all prepared, the long-awaited cry of "Let's eat!" rang out. Smiles burst forth around the table as participants gathered together.

Once everyone was full, the self-introductions began, including the elementary school students. Hearing everyone's recent updates filled the venue with great excitement. Among the steering committee members, one person, despite not being in perfect health, rushed over after telling her doctor she had an important meeting, reminding us all of the significance of this event.



Afterwards, everyone posed for a commemorative photo and worked together to clean up. Of course, any uneaten food was packed up as take-home gifts.

Though everyone dispersed around 3:00 PM, many participants promised to meet again at next year's Food Culture Exchange, which provided great encouragement for the organizers.

*A video of the event can be found on the CWA's website (<https://chiba-wisconsin.net/>)

Report on the Dispatch of the Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation to Wisconsin

From Saturday, October 26th, 2024, to Sunday, November 3rd, 2024, a nine-day Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation was dispatched to Wisconsin. This dispatch marked the first in five years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation consisted of shinobue flute player Mr. Satoshi Katano and six students from the Local Performing Arts Club of Sawara High School. As it was the first overseas trip for all six students, I myself felt quite nervous as their chaperone.

We held a total of five performances, showcasing the “Sawara Bayashi” traditional music. The performers were full of enthusiasm, delivering passionate performances at each venue that were very well received.

The staff at each facility welcomed us very warmly. Particularly memorable were the interactions at Madison East High School and Stoughton High School, where we not only performed but also shared close exchanges with the students. Performing in the Capitol Rotunda was also a great honor, not only because of the magnificent venue but also because we received greetings from Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Sara Rodriguez.

We also visited quintessentially Wisconsin locations such as Blackhawk Church, Madison Country Day School (MCDS), Epic, Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, State Street, Kikkoman Foods, Yerkes Observatory, and Hoard’s Dairyman. The exchange with the students in the Japanese class at MCDS, centered around the new theme of “Japanese language,” was particularly enriching for both sides.

As this dispatch coincided with the 20th anniversary of the CWA’s founding, WCI Chair Sharon Durtka presented us with a commemorative plaque made from 20-year-old wood.

I would also like to add that, as it was just before the U.S. presidential election, candidate Kamala Harris visited Madison and candidate Donald



At the entrance to Kikkoman Foods, Inc.

Sawara High School for their extraordinary cooperation in preparing for the trip.

(Kenji Saso, Chair of the CWA Delegation Planning Division and Delegation Group Leader)

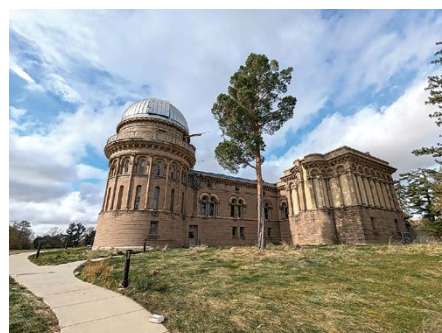
*A video of the delegation is available on the CWA website (<https://chiba-wisconsin.net/>)



With Lieutenant Governor Sara Rodriguez



Exchange with the students of Madison Country Day School



Yerkes Observatory

Trump visited Green Bay on Wednesday during our visit.

I am relieved that the first dispatch in five years has been successfully completed. I hope that this dispatch will remain in the hearts of the impressionable young members.

We received generous support from host families and many volunteers in the local community. I would also like to express my gratitude once again to the Katori City International Association and the teachers at



CWA 20th anniversary commemorative plaque

► Culture and Arts Group Exchange Activities

This goodwill delegation comprised a total of 10 members, including shinobue flute player Mr. Katano, members of the Sawara High School Local Performing Arts Club, and three representatives from the Chiba Wisconsin Association.

On October 27th, the group held a rehearsal at the Wisconsin Youth Symphony and Orchestra, performing together as a full group for the first time since arriving in the United States. They later performed for their host families.

On October 28th, the group performed at Madison East High School for approximately 40 students and teachers. In the afternoon, they visited the Japanese class at Madison Country Day School, deepening friendships with students through games and other activities.

On October 29th, the group performed at Stoughton High School for about 30 students and teachers. They enjoyed an exchange with the Norwegian Dancers who listened to their performance, sharing music and dance. Afterwards, they shared lunch outdoors, where lively conversation flowed among the students. In the afternoon, they toured EPIC, a medical software company headquartered in Wisconsin, learning about the advanced initiatives of a local business.

On October 30th, the group performed at the Wisconsin State Capitol, where their music was heard by many, including Lieutenant Governor Sara Rodriguez and State Representative Christine Sinicki. The solemn sounds of Sawara Bayashi resonated throughout the majestic Capitol building, sharing a profound sense of emotion.

On October 31st, the group visited Kikkoman Foods, learning about the history of soy sauce production in Wisconsin and the manufacturing process. We then visited the Yerkes Observatory, gaining insight into the history of astronomy.

On November 1st, we visited Hoard's Dairyman Farm to learn about dairy cow breeding and milking processes. In the afternoon, we performed at Oakwood Village.

Through these activities, we gained many valuable encounters and insights.

(Kenji Saso, Yasuko Aoki, Yuka Sato)

<Delegation Members>

Satoshi Katano (*shinobue* player)
 Mibu Ogawa, Nao Inada, Miku Ueno,
 Ryunosuke Katori, Anju Sugaya, Takeru Yagi
 (Sawara High School Local Performing Arts Club)
 Kenji Saso, Yasuko Aoki, Yuka Sato
 (Chiba Wisconsin Assoc.)

<Performance Schedule>

10/27	Wisconsin Youth Symphony and Orchestra
10/28	Madison East High School
10/29	Stoughton High School
10/30	Wisconsin State Capitol
11/1	Oakwood Village



Performing at Madison East High School



Performing at Stoughton High School



Lunch with the students at Stoughton High School



Performing at the Wisconsin State Capitol



Performing at Oakwood Village



Culture and Arts Group
Satoshi Katano

This was my second trip to Wisconsin since 2005, my first in 19 years. My previous visit sparked my journey as a flute performer, making this return to Wisconsin a long-cherished wish come true. Initially, I intended this trip to be a journey of giving back through my current playing. However, as I rehearsed repeatedly with the six members of the Sawara High School Local Performing Arts Club accompanying me, my perspective shifted. I came to believe my role this time was to help these young people experience the same profound emotion I had felt 19 years ago. The sincerity and dedication of these six high school students were truly dazzling.

The performance schedule was finalized quite late, so we arrived in the US without fully solidifying the repertoire or structure. Even after landing, the itinerary remained extremely tight, making it difficult to focus solely on the performances. I take my hat off to the six members who overcame all these challenges; I truly believe this trip succeeded precisely because of this group.

It coincided with Halloween, so we experienced the real thing with our host families and even fished for local black bass during brief free moments. But above all, the greatest memory of this trip is having played the sounds of Sawara in America alongside such wonderful, young members.

I hope that someday, one of these members, now grown up, will take my place and lead the next generation of kids to Wisconsin. I hope they'll carry on that dream...



First performance at the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra



After the performance at Stoughton High School



Performance at the Wisconsin State Capitol



At Newark Liberty International Airport on the way home



Final performance at Oakwood Village

Voices of the Delegation Members

Ms. Mibu Ogawa, President, Local Performing Arts Club, Chiba Prefectural Sawara High School



This Wisconsin exchange program was an invaluable experience for us, one that cannot be replaced by anything else. It was the first time overseas for all club members, and when the dispatch was decided, everyone looked very anxious. However, the people accompanying us were incredibly dependable. Through repeated discussions and interactions, I remember how our anxiety gradually turned to excitement as we thought, "We'll be fine because these people are here."

One of the things we discussed many times was the challenge of "How can we make people overseas enjoy Sawara Bayashi?" Rather than simply performing our usual routine, we devised various approaches tailored to our own style for the



In front of the Wisconsin State Capitol

overseas performances. As a result, we were able to delight audiences at every show, which made us truly happy. Discussing how to perform together allowed us to rediscover the charm of Sawara Bayashi and deepen our love for it.

Beyond the performances, we were taken to many different places, making for a very fulfilling nine days. Being in a new place where a different language was spoken, I truly realized the importance of actively striking up conversations, trying new things, and carrying myself confidently without fear, no matter the setting. This overseas trip was an excellent opportunity that allowed me to grow significantly as a person!



Performing at the Wisconsin State Capitol

Thoughts from Kimiko Miyazaki ~

We are deeply grateful to Ms. Kimiko Miyazaki, Director of Wisconsin Chiba Inc., for her tremendous assistance with the delegation.



After 5 years of no cultural exchanges, what a privilege it was to be part of the planning & hosting of last year's delegation. What a joy it was to watch the delegates, especially the high school students' transformation right before my eyes.

From tired & reserved, to outgoing and confident, their English ability improving daily. Watching them use Google translate and getting connected on Instagram with new friends. In their performances, where they introduced and explained their art, their pronunciation becoming better each time and their delivery more natural. Being able to take in more & more each day as they came out of their shells.

It was a wonderful affirmation of why we do cultural exchanges. I watched people widen their horizons and receive new lenses to see the world. With new friends and new experiences, which both humble and excite us, my hope is that it will all be combined to change the trajectory of our lives no matter our age.

Like cherry trees growing deep roots and blooming each season, may these exchanges continue to delight and fulfill our mission.

Notice from the CWA

The schedule for the 2025 Board of Directors Meeting and General Meeting/Members' Exchange Event is as follows.

Members will be notified by mail regarding the details of the General Meeting and other events.

Obituary

Sharon Durtka, Chairperson of the Wisconsin Chiba Inc., who dedicated many years to promoting exchange programs between Chiba Prefecture and the State of Wisconsin, passed away on February 9, 2025. We would like to express our deepest gratitude for her tremendous contributions and offer our sincere condolences.

2025 Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, June 2nd, Hotel Port Plaza Chiba

2025 General Meeting and Social Gathering

Saturday, June 21st, Plaza Nanohana

General Meeting: Starting at 11:00 AM

Exchange Event: Starting at 12:00 PM

[Editor's Note]

This issue's main story is the report from the 2024 Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation. The young members gained invaluable experiences through various exchanges in Wisconsin. We look forward to seeing how they will utilize these experiences to carve out their futures. CWA will continue striving to enable many more Chiba residents to enjoy such wonderful experiences.

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