

Members' Exchange Party Part 1

2025 Members' Exchange Party

On the afternoon of Saturday, June 21st, following the General Meeting, a party was held on the 3rd floor of Plaza Nanohana, also serving as a farewell gathering for departing ALTs.

In his opening remarks, Executive Director Kazuhiko Yoshida reported that this year, marking the 21st anniversary of the association's founding, plans include welcoming a Goodwill Delegation from Wisconsin to deepen exchanges.

Following this, Director Shuichi Aizawa led the toast, and a lively meal commenced at each table. Midway through, videos from last year's Welcome Party for New ALTs and the Food Culture Exchange Event were projected onto a screen, which participants watched with evident enjoyment.

After the meal concluded, a report was given on last year's Goodwill Delegation to Wisconsin. First, delegation leader Kenji Saso, Head of the Delegation Planning Group, introduced the members and itinerary. A video showcasing the delegation was then shown, which participants watched with keen interest.

Next, Kimiko Miyazaki from Wisconsin-Chiba, Inc. introduced the reception phase, sharing how she was deeply moved witnessing the high school students' communication skills and English proficiency improve daily.

Next, Yasuko Aoki, a Steering Committee member who accompanied the delegation, read a message from Satoshi Katano, the shinobue flute player who served as the performance leader. He conveyed his feelings, stating, "Performing with the six high school students who overcame various difficulties became my greatest memory." Video messages from each high school student were also shown, where they candidly shared the lessons learned and emotions felt through this valuable experience.

Following this, presentations were given by the ALTs from Wisconsin who were leaving their posts in July. For the two absent teachers among the four departing ALTs, messages were introduced by Maximilian Gumble, ALT Program Coordinator from the Prefectural Board of Education (details on the next page).

Finally, Steering Committee Chairperson Shigeo Moriyama expressed gratitude for the successful conclusion of the exchange meeting, and a commemorative photo was taken with all participants. First-time attendees commented on how welcoming and comfortable the atmosphere was.

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

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Commemorative photo with all participants



Executive Director Kazuhiko Yoshida



Director Shuichi Aizawa



Video showcasing the Wisconsin visit



Eating together

Members' Exchange Party Part 2

During the Exchange Party on June 21st, two of the departing ALTs shared memories using slides. The other departing ALTs' messages were shared by Maximilian Gumble, a member of the Steering Committee.

Alexis Lipkie (Chiba Prefectural Awa High School)

I worked for the past four years at Chiba Prefectural Awa High School in Tateyama. My hometown is Winchester, Wisconsin, a small town of only a few hundred people. I have good memories of going ice fishing on the nearby lake with my father in the winter. Though people often remark that living in a rural city like Tateyama must be difficult, I always tell them that compared to my hometown, Tateyama hardly feels rural at all. Though it is different from home in many ways, I really love Tateyama's natural beauty, especially Hojo Beach.

When I first came to Chiba in 2021, I experienced a number of difficulties both in work and in private life due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Immediately after arriving, I was required to quarantine in my new apartment for two weeks before even being allowed to come to work.

However, despite these challenges and hardships, I have a lot of great memories as well, including climbing Mt. Fuji and carrying an omikoshi, or portable shrine, in a nearby local festival. Though I'm glad to have had the opportunity to carry the omikoshi, I often joke that it's something I only need to experience once.

I am planning to return to Wisconsin for the time being and spend time with my family.

Sarah Kautz (Chiba Prefectural Matsuo High School)

I worked for two years at Chiba Prefectural Matsuo High School in Sanmu City.

Since I had previously studied abroad in Japan in 2019, I initially decided that when I returned as an ALT, I would make the most of my experience by "just saying yes" to as many new experiences as possible.

Some of these new experiences were new activities through clubs at my school, such as kyudo (Japanese archery) and flower arrangement, and enjoying my students' antics during the school festival. I also received gifts such as a massive napa cabbage from colleagues, and I came to realize that opportunities to get fresh produce are one of the biggest advantages of working at a rural school.

Outside of work, I recently participated in Tomisato City's Suika Road Race with a friend, where we wore custom t-shirts that we had designed for the event. I've also climbed a number of mountains with friends, including Mt. Takao, Mt. Fuji, and Mt. Tsukuba, where we met an eccentric vlogger who has climbed the mountain barefoot over 100 times. Since I love Japanese history, I also made a visit to the museum in Hino

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dedicated to Hijikata Toshizo, a famous member of the Shinsengumi group during the Bakumatsu Period.

I am planning to return home and continue my former career in crime prevention and offender rehabilitation with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

JulieMae Engelmann (Chiba Prefectural Nagareyama Otaka no Mori High School)

JulieMae worked for four years at Chiba Prefectural Nagareyama Otaka no Mori High School. Though she was unable to attend the event, she provided a message for the participants which was presented along with a short introduction by Steering Committee member and ALT Program Coordinator Maximilian Gumble.

In her message, JulieMae explained that as she prepared to leave the sister state ALT Program, she had begun to reflect on her many serendipitous connections to Chiba, including participating in an exchange as part of a dance group in 2009 and finding that she had former coworkers from Wisconsin who now live in nearby cities. The close relationship between Chiba and Wisconsin had made her feel as if it truly is “a small world,” despite being so far from home, and she expressed her gratitude to the CWA for their role in maintaining a strong sister state relationship.

JulieMae intends to stay in Japan and is currently in the process of job hunting.

James Aguilo Ramos (Chiba Prefectural Kimitsu High School)

James has worked for the past four years at Chiba Prefectural Kimitsu High School. Due to the date of the event coinciding with his school festival, he was unable to attend in-person. However, he nevertheless managed to provide a burst of cheerful energy through a video greeting, where he emphasized how much he had enjoyed his time as in Chiba.

Originally from Spain, James completed his Master's of Arts in TESOL at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, making him eligible to become a Wisconsin ALT. Though he has had a long and varied career before becoming an ALT, including working as a voice actor for the Spanish adaptations of several anime series, he deeply enjoys teaching.

James currently plans to return to Spain for a brief time before eventually returning to Japan to join his wife in Okinawa, where she is currently enrolled in graduate school.

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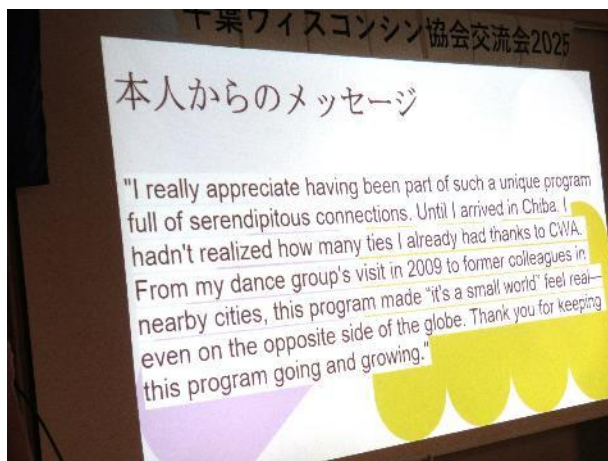
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Alexis Lipkie



Sarah Kautz



JulieMae Engelmann



James Aguilo Ramos

Fiscal Year 2025 Board of Directors Meeting

On Monday, June 2, the Fiscal Year 2025 Board of Directors Meeting was held at Hotel Port Plaza Chiba (Chuo Ward, Chiba City). Attendees included the Special Advisor, one Advisor (proxy), nine Directors (including one proxy and nine Directors submitting proxies), and two Auditors.

At the outset, Chairman Yuzaburo Mogi stated, “I deeply respect the dedicated efforts of all involved that allowed the friendship between Chiba Prefecture and Wisconsin to endure through the Covid-19 pandemic and enabled the resumption of exchanges last year. Furthermore, I am delighted that last year, our association was honored by the Governor of Chiba Prefecture on Culture Day as an international exchange organization, recognizing the value of our past exchanges.”

Following this, Special Advisor Governor Toshihito Kumagai delivered remarks before departing due to prior commitments.

The meeting deliberated on six agenda items: the FY2024 Activity Report and Income/Expenditure Settlement, the FY2025 Activity Plan (Draft) and Income/Expenditure Budget (Draft), among others. All items were approved for submission to the General Assembly. Subsequently, the Secretariat reported on the status of exchanges with Wisconsin.

Fiscal Year 2025 General Meeting

The General Meeting for Fiscal Year 2025 was held on Saturday, June 21, at Hotel Plaza Nanohana (Chuo Ward, Chiba City). Eighteen regular members attended (plus 54 members represented by proxy).

At the outset, Vice President Michio Oishi stated, “We resumed exchanges last October and plan to welcome a goodwill delegation from Wisconsin this fiscal year. Furthermore, last year, our association was honored by the Governor of Chiba Prefecture as an international exchange organization on Culture Day. I believe this recognition reflects the value placed on our past exchanges. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone once again.”

Following this, with member Kenji Saso serving as chairperson, deliberations were held on the FY2024 Activity Report and Income/Expenditure Settlement, the FY2025 Activity Plan (Draft) and Income/Expenditure Budget (Draft), and the Appointment of Directors and Auditors (Draft). All items were approved as originally proposed.



Board of Directors Meeting



Annual General Meeting

We are pleased to present contributions from our Board of Directors.

- Wisconsin's land area is more than ten times that of Chiba Prefecture, yet its population is nearly the same at approximately 6 million. The two regions share striking similarities, particularly in their successful integration of agriculture and industry. This year marks the 21st anniversary of the founding of the Chiba-Wisconsin Association. During this time, active cultural exchanges between the two regions have fostered deepened friendship and mutual understanding among the citizens of both state and prefecture. This is highly commendable, and I wish to express my sincere respect for the efforts of all those involved with the Association.

Michio Oishi, Vice President (Chairman, Kazusa DNA Research Institute)

- It is truly gratifying that exchanges, which had been forced to halt due to Covid-19, resumed in Fiscal Year 2024, allowing us to dispatch a Goodwill Delegation for the first time in five years. Furthermore, we plan to host a delegation from Wisconsin in Fiscal Year 2025. I sincerely hope that the flow of delegations sent and received will continue uninterrupted, leading to even more active exchanges.

Kazuhiko Yoshida, Executive Director (Representative Director, Chiba International Convention Bureau)

- I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing understanding and support of the activities of the Chiba Wisconsin Association (CWA). Last year, CWA marked its significant 20th anniversary milestone, and the mutual exchange programs, which had been suspended due to the pandemic, resumed in October. Chiba Prefecture is further advancing its internationalization, spurred by the “second opening” of Narita Airport. The vibrant exchanges of students from Chiba Prefectural Sawara High School in the U.S. gave us a glimpse of the bright future ahead for both Chiba Prefecture and Wisconsin.

Ichiro Tatsuno, Director (President, Chiba Prefectural University of Health Sciences)

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○It is wonderful that young people have opportunities to interact with Wisconsin residents through hosting and dispatching delegations. I believe it is particularly meaningful that CWA provides opportunities to visit Wisconsin, offering learning and insights unavailable in Japan. This is especially significant given the current situation where the weak yen and rising prices make it harder for Japanese people to travel abroad.

Katsutoshi Fukumizu, Director (Principal, Chiba Prefectural Narita Kokusai High School)

○International exchange is the best “investment.” Encountering unfamiliar streetscapes, landscapes, cultures, and values broadens young people's horizons, cultivates multifaceted thinking and creativity, and enables unexpected future choices. Through them, it should also bring new vitality to local communities. Building upon the unshakable trust between Chiba Prefecture and Wisconsin, sending young people “out into the world” and enriching the future of both youth and the region is undoubtedly our vital mission.

Noboru Tomizawa, Auditor (Chairman, Chiba Prefectural Industrial Promotion Center)

Seeking New Encounters and Exchange —Voices from CWA Steering Committee Members—

☆The Exchange Program Planning Group works with a strong desire to foster interaction among members through events and to spark interest in CWA among as many people as possible. Events feature ALTs from Wisconsin who give speeches in English and Japanese about the state's appeal and their experiences at their assigned schools, helping to enhance communication skills. This June, we held an "Exchange Meeting" that also served as a farewell gathering for departing ALTs. In September, we hosted a barbecue "Welcome Party for New ALTs," and this winter, we will hold a "Japan-US Food Culture Exchange Meeting" where we will prepare and enjoy Thanksgiving dishes and Chiba cuisine together. We are currently planning these events to ensure they are enjoyable for first-time participants as well. We look forward to your participation!

Teruo Abe, Head of the Exchange Program Planning Group

☆My connection with Wisconsin began in 2001 when I was dispatched as part of a Goodwill Delegation. At that time, the delegation was led by the prefecture, but since then, the CWA was established, and 20 years have passed. During this time, various organizations have visited Wisconsin as Goodwill Delegations. However, it is truly regrettable that so few delegation members have maintained connections with CWA as members after their dispatch. I hope we can all work together to create opportunities, not just for delegations, but especially for young people to participate and develop an interest in CWA. Thank you for your continued support.

Tadao Ando, Secretary General

☆I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported CWA throughout its 21-year history. I am delighted to participate in CWA activities again this year as an advisor. That said, scheduling conflicts often prevent me from joining various activities, and I apologize for any inconvenience caused. This year being a host year, I hope to contribute in my small way to ensuring our guests from Wisconsin experience deep and meaningful exchanges, gain a better understanding of Chiba Prefecture, and return home with fond memories.

Masami Oura, Advisor

☆My journey with CWA: Since 2012, I've served as a Steering Committee member in the Exchange Program Planning Group, and I have been working as an event staff member since 2015. This term, I'm a Steering Committee member in. This year marks the first visit by a Wisconsin delegation in seven years. I hope to be able to propose to Chairperson Saso what kind of support is needed to ensure the delegation can enjoy pleasant and safe exchange activities here during their stay. Wisconsin State seems relatively unknown to the general public. Going forward, I also want to make efforts to help more people learn about Wisconsin State, including its status as a sister city.

Tomiko Kakuta, Steering Committee Member

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☆Meeting friends from Wisconsin led me to my connection with CWA. Everyone at CWA is so talented and experienced; I learn so much from them. The after-meeting get-togethers have become a monthly highlight. While international exchange has its challenges and volunteer work is demanding, every rewarding activity is a new experience, making each day incredibly stimulating. I wish to deepen the connection with Wisconsin established by our esteemed senior and President Yuzaburo Mogi. Thank you for your continued support.

Tomoe Kataoka, Steering Committee Member

☆Regarding the exchange with Wisconsin delegations, which finally resumed last year after the pandemic, we aim to successfully host them again this year for the first time in seven years. This spring, working closely with the newly restructured Wisconsin-Chiba, Inc., we aim to build future-oriented, face-to-face exchanges that connect with the next generation, working together with the relevant municipalities. We also hope to encourage young people to participate in the delegation and to involve new committee members in various ways, further broadening the scope of our exchanges.

Kenji Saso, Head of the Delegation Planning Group

☆This year marks the reception of the Wisconsin State Friendship Delegation. I am very much looking forward to seeing who will come from Wisconsin and what kind of encounters they will have with the people of Chiba Prefecture. The Publicity Working Group aims to share as much hot information as possible from the exchange sites across the prefecture. While we will continue our YouTube video uploads, we also want to convey information that videos alone cannot fully capture. Please look forward to future

CWA NEWS and our homepage.

Tadao Miyazaki, Head of the Publicity Working Group

☆Since 2001, I have been involved in exchanges between Chiba Prefecture and Wisconsin. While there have been interruptions due to infectious diseases and major earthquakes, we have worked diligently to ensure that both dispatch and reception programs are carried out steadily. Last year, marking CWA's 20th anniversary, it was truly rewarding when a member of the cultural/arts group we dispatched in 2005 visited Wisconsin with six high school students to perform "Sawara Bayashi," fostering exchange with the local younger generation. Moving forward, we will strive to encourage young groups not only in the cultural/arts field but also in other areas to participate in exchanges with Wisconsin.

Shigeo Moriyama, Chairperson of the Steering Committee

In Memory of the Late Chairperson Sharon Durtka

Chairperson Sharon Durtka of Wisconsin-Chiba, Inc., who dedicated herself for many years to the sister-state exchange between Chiba Prefecture and Wisconsin, passed away on February 9th of this year.

Chairperson Durtka, along with her husband Alexander Durtka, was a member of Wisconsin-Chiba, Inc. who served as Vice Chairperson from 2011 and as Chairperson from 2014, playing a central role as the liaison for exchanges with the CWA.

During this time, exchanges were interrupted by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the spread of Covid-19, but both sides overcame these challenges through mutual cooperation. This was largely due to Chairperson Durtka's positive and proactive mindset.

In 2021, CWA published a commemorative book marking the 30th anniversary of the sister state relationship. In her message for the book, Chairperson Durtka stated, "Let us move forward together, CWA and the Wisconsin Chiba Committee, cooperating, understanding and respecting each other, and nurturing our friendship."

Furthermore, during the Chiba Prefecture Goodwill Delegation's visit to Wisconsin last October, Chairperson Durtka presented the CWA with a commemorative plaque made from 20-year-old wood to celebrate the CWA's 20th anniversary.

The entire CWA Steering Committee offers our heartfelt condolences. We will carry forward Chairperson Durtka's passionate commitment to sister-state exchange and strive to deepen our exchanges across a wide range of fields.



November 2014: Exchange with high school students at Chiba Prefectural Chosei High School



October 2024: Commemorative plaque for the 20th anniversary of CWA's establishment

Inaugural Message from Chiba-Wisconsin, Inc. Chairperson Daniel Schmitt

Dear esteemed members of the Chiba Wisconsin Association,

As the new board president of Wisconsin-Chiba, Inc. I look forward to working with all of you to continue promoting sister state relations between Chiba Prefecture and the State of Wisconsin. It is my honor to carry on the legacy of the leaders that came before me, and I look to a future of even greater exchange and stronger relations.

Many of you may already know me from my time as a member of the Wisconsin-Chiba Sister Schools Program teaching at Narita Kokusai High School. I remember attending the first meeting of the Chiba Wisconsin Association. Since then, as a member of Wisconsin-Chiba, Inc., it has been my pleasure to help host the visiting delegations that have come to Wisconsin.

Now it's my turn to give back and help ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the unique experiences supported by the sister state relationship between Wisconsin and Chiba.

宜しく願います。



Fiscal Year 2025 Plan of Activities

[Activities Policy]

CWA marks its 21st year this year. Through activities such as exchanges among members, public relations efforts, and hosting/dispatching goodwill delegations, we have deepened exchanges with the citizens of Wisconsin. In Fiscal Year 2025, building on the achievements of previous years, we will further enhance our programs in each area to enable even more people to discover the appeal of Wisconsin.

[Activities Contents]

1 Regular Meetings

- Board of Directors Meeting and General Meeting: 1 time each year
- Steering Committee: As a rule, meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month, with each group meeting held before the full Committee Meeting

2 Planning and Management of Exchange Activities with Wisconsin

Reception of Goodwill Delegation

- Date: October, 2025 (tentative)
- Number of Delegation Members : about 10

3 Exchange Activities for Members, Etc.

- Members Exchange Event & Farewell Party (Saturday, June 21st)
- Welcome Party for New ALTs (scheduled for September)
- Food Culture Exchange Event (scheduled for around November)

4 Public Relations Projects Regarding CWA Activities and Wisconsin

- Publication of CWA NEWS: 3 times per year
- Sharing of information through the CWA website
- Participation in various events
- Collection of information on Wisconsin and exchanges with Wisconsin

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FY 2025 Revenue · Expenditure Budget

Revenue

Units: 1,000 yen

Item	FY 2025 (A)	FY 2024 (B)	A-B	Comment
Membership Fees	576	576	0	
Subsidy	1,150	1,150	0	
• Subsidy from Chiba Prefectural Government for administrative expenses	150	150	0	
• Subsidy from Chiba Prefectural Government for business expenses	1,000	1,000	0	
Participation Fees of Exchange Activities, etc.	510	1,190	△680	Exchange Activities
Carryover	2,716	3,975	△1,259	
Total	4,952	6,891	△1,939	

Expenditures

Units: 1,000 yen

Item	FY 2025 (A)	FY 2024 (B)	A-B	Comment
Operating Expenses	297	297	0	Printing, disposable expenses, etc.
Activities Expenses	2,694	3,684	△990	
• Meetings	110	80	30	Board of Directors, General Meeting
• Dispatch and Acceptance of Goodwill Delegations	1,900	2,920	△1,020	Goodwill Delegation Acceptance from Wisconsin
• Member Exchanges	274	274	0	Exchange Activities
• Public Relations	410	410	0	Publication of CWA NEWS
Reserve Funds	1,961	2,910	△949	
Total	4,952	6,891	△1,939	

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**FY 2025 Board of Directors and Steering Committee Members of the
Chiba-Wisconsin Association (as of August 1st, 2025)
[Board Members]**

Title	Name	Affiliation
Special Advisor	Toshihito Kumagai	Governor, Chiba Prefecture
Advisor	Hisayuki Sasaki	Mayor of Kamogawa City (Sister City of Manitowoc, WI)
	Hiroshi Ota	Mayor, Isumi City (Sister City of Waupun, WI)
President	Yuzaburo Mogi	Honorary CEO and Chairman of the Board, Kikkoman Corporation Honorary Ambassador to Wisconsin
Vice President	Michio Oishi	Chairman, Kazusa DNA Research Institute
	Katsunosuke Osawa	President, Chiba Nippo Co., Ltd.
	Hidetoshi Sakuma	President, Chiba Prefecture Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry
	Ryozo Yanahashi	President, Chiba Prefectural Cultural Promotion Foundation
Executive Director	Kotaro Nakamura	President, Chiba Convention Bureau and International Center
Director	Yozi Aoyagi	President, Chiba Television Broadcasting Corporation
	Kiyoshi Dowaki	Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology, Tokyo University of Science
	Kiyomi Yamazaki	President, Chiba Economic Council
	Toshiyuki Kumagai	President, Chiba Prefectural Employer's Association
	Saeko Hayashi	Professor, University of Tokyo
	Hidetoshi Sakuma	Chief Secretary, Chiba Association of Corporate Executives
	Ichiro Tatsuno	Chancellor, Chiba Prefectural University of Health Sciences
	Yoshimasa Miyazaki	President, Chiba Taiko Foundation
	Hideyuki Takahashi	Chief Director, Chiba Dairy and Agriculture Organization
	Katsutoshi Hukumizu	Principal, Narita Kokusai High School
	Kotaro Yokote	President, Chiba University
	Shuichi Aizawa	Deputy Executive Director for Regional Revitalization, Policy and Planning Department, Chiba Prefectural Government
Auditor	Noboru Tomizawa	President, Chiba Industry Advancement Center
	Takatomo Totsuka	Chief Director, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Chiba

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[Steering Committee]

Delegation Planning Group

Masami Oura (Advisor)
Shigeo Moriyama (Chairperson of Steering Committee)
Tadao Ando (Secretary General)
Yasuko Aoki
Tetsuji Ogawa
Akio Asanuma
Tomiko Kakuta
Tomoe Kataoka

❖ Kenji Saso

Exchange Program Planning Group

❖ Teruo Abe
Takako Ishii
Sanae Mitsuhashi
Shizue Yamazaki

Publicity Working Group

Mihoko Ohara (Vice Chairperson of Steering Committee)
❖ Tadao Miyazaki
Maximilian Gumble

Secretariat

Yoshie Kato
Yuka Sato
Shinzi Aikawa

❖ *(Indicates Group Head)*

Event Staff: Satoko Keigo, Madoka Usui, Tomoko Ogawa

PR Staff: Naomi Sakakida

[Editor's Note]

This issue contains reports on the proceedings of the CWA Board of Directors meeting, General Meeting and Members' Exchange Party. We have also shared passionate messages from our directors emphasizing the importance of exchange, along with enthusiastic messages from the Steering Committee members, including new members, about their upcoming exchange initiatives. The CWA will work together as one to pursue deeper and broader exchange opportunities.

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〒261-0023 14F Makuhari Techno Garden D, 1-3 Nakase, Mihama-ku, Chiba City, Chiba

Chiba Convention Bureau and International Center

TEL: 043-223-2394 (International Affairs Division, Chiba Prefectural Government)