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(1) Notices

Become and International Understanding Education Foreign Supporter!

~Introduce your country at schools ! ~



OFIX is currently looking for foreign residents living in Osaka to become OFIX International Understanding Education Foreign Supporters, and visit schools to introduce their country's culture, history, music,

traditions, and games in Japanese.

Prior to joining the programme there will be a training session to give all supporters an idea of what is involved in school visits. So beginners are more than welcome! All those interested please get in touch with OFIX.

■ Seeking Residents at the Sakai International Hall

The Sakai International Hall is a safe and comfortable residence for international students. We are currently seeking new residents to move in from April 2010. Each room is fitted with bath, toilet, air-conditioner, fridge, desk, bed etc. There is a friendly caretaker, and support officer on site. There are also many fun events throughout the year. Applications should be made through the relevant international office at the applicants university.

Make a Donation to the Shanghai Expo Osaka Pavilion

Shanghai Expo Osaka Exhibition Details

<http://expo2010-osaka.jp/>

Requirements:

- Applicants must be foreign residents living in or around the Osaka area, be interested in visiting schools to introduce their home country, and be able to communicate well in Japanese.

Further details

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/jigyuu/index.html>

List of current Supporters (Japanese only)

http://www.ofix.or.jp/jigyuu/index2_2.html

[Enquiries] OFIX Planning and Promotions Group
06-6966-2400 E-mail: info@ofix.or.jp

Monthly Rent: 26,000 Yen (includes communal fees, no deposit required)

Further details

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>



Donation information (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#syanghai>

(2) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

■ Filing Year End Tax Returns

In Japan income tax returns are filed from the 16th Feb to 15th March. Benjamin Franklin said that “In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes”, and as such foreign residents living in Japan that fall under the following are also required to file their tax returns, and make their tax payments. (The majority of salary earners have their income tax calculated by their “year-end tax adjustment”, and as such do not need to file a separate tax return.)

○Residents (those that have a fixed address in Japan, or those that have been resident in Japan for more than one year)

- 1) Those that receive a single salary, and whose income aside from salary/retirement income exceeds 200,000 Yen
- 2) Those that receive more than a single income, and whose income outside of the “year-end tax adjustment” exceeds 200,000 Yen.

3) Foreign diplomats stationed in Japan, and those employed as domestic servants, who do not have income tax deducted from their pay slip. Etc.

○Non-residents: In most cases tax is deducted using the standard pay as you earn system (withholding tax), so there is no need to file a separate tax return. However, in cases where the person owns a permanent establishment, they will be liable for taxation on aggregate income and therefore will be required to file a tax return.

● Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents
Mon-Fri (closed 29th Dec ~ 3rd Jan and on national holidays)

Direct Tel: 06-6941-2297 (Hours 9:00 ~ 17:45)

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai, Japanese

(3) Osaka International Club News

OFIX Scholarship Students Graduation Reports

Feng Lin, China

I came to Japan in October 2002, and the 7 years since then have truly flown by. For me personally it has been an extremely important 7 years, and Osaka now feels like a second home to me. I think my favourite memory is of cherry blossom viewing at the Osaka Mint. To think that from this year I will be unable to visit makes me sad.

Thanks to OFIX, I have been able to complete my masters degree, and for that I am so grateful. I was also able to take part in a number of events, experiences I will treasure. I particularly enjoyed taking part in the Tenjin Matsuri Festival, one of the three largest festivals held in Japan. I was able to learn so much about Japanese traditions and culture.

Wei Liu, China

When I was first accepted to become an OFIX Scholarship student I was excited at the prospect of contributing towards Sino-Japanese friendship relations. The past 3 years have flown by, and this year I will graduate. As I look back I have slight doubts that I was able to fulfill the role I set for myself, but I am so grateful for the experiences I have gained as a result of being a scholarship recipient.

First of all the school visits I was able to take part in will forever be a precious memory for me. I was lucky enough to visit a large number of schools, but the most

In the future I intend to return to China, and work as a Japanese teacher. I hope to introduce the culture of Osaka, and let my students know what a great place it is. I would like to become an ambassador for exchange between Japan and China, and in this way return some of the kindness shown to me over the years by the people of Osaka.



memorable was the visit to a school for children with learning difficulties. I prepared a lot of materials for the visit, but was worried exactly how much of my presentation would be understood by the children. However, seeing the children's smiling faces I was put at ease and had a wonderful time.

I also had such a great time visiting traditional festivals such as the Tenjin Festival, and Danjiri Festival. I will of course also remember the great kindness shown to me by the staff of OFIX.

In the future I hope to become a Japanese teacher in China, and introduce the culture and society of Japan, and particular of Osaka, my second home.

(4) OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

Sports Fans!

Hi everyone, Richard here again.

I hope you are all keeping warm this winter wherever you are! As I'm sure you are all aware, the Winter Olympics has just been held in Vancouver, so I thought it would be apt to write this month about sport in general. Sport is an integral part of life in Japan and the UK, however the sports we watch, and the ways we support our favourite teams differ a fair bit.



For starters the most popular sport in Japan is baseball. A sport which nobody plays in the UK, and which I have yet to work out the rules to! In the UK we have cricket, which is similar to baseball, but has only two bases (called wickets), and an entirely different scoring and bowling system. Actually, rather embarrassingly I have just about as much of a clue about cricket rules as I do of baseball! The national sport of Japan is Sumo Wrestling, but other sports that are extremely popular include volleyball, football, martial arts, kendo, and tennis.

Football is the most popular sport in the UK by a long way, with most adult males supporting a team, and many playing for fun on the weekends. I used to play at school, was to be honest was always far better at watching the game than playing it! The Premier League is popular all over the world now, including Japan, so it is pretty easy to keep up with what is going on back home. Although the 9 hour time difference makes it difficult to watch live games! Along with football and cricket a great many sports originate from the UK. Sports such as golf, tennis, hockey, rugby, badminton, and even table tennis (a somewhat little known fact!) hail from the UK.

I watch a lot of football on television, and I have noticed a few differences when it comes to international matches on TV in the UK and Japan. Programmes in the UK can be a tad dull, but the level of analysis and commentary is for the most part fairly high. During half time there will be extensive highlights a discussion of

both England and the foreign country. In Japan the focus is mainly on how the Japan team did. Even if the opposing team has made outstanding plays they will be given very little coverage. And rather than analysis there will usually just be a member of a pop group on hand to make a comment like "Fingers crossed for a Japan goal in the 2nd half!!". I often wonder why this is, but I suppose it has something to do with football still being a relatively new sport in Japan with most people in being casual viewers, rather than hardcore like the majority of England fans!

Both England and Japan will be at the World Cup to be held this summer in South Africa, so I look forward to supporting both teams! I just hope they don't end up playing each other. I won't know who to support!

Two other amusing traits amongst sports viewers in the UK are pessimism and love of the underdog. Of course we support our national teams, but never expect them to win anything! I suppose this way of thinking protects us from the shock of defeat and enables us to say "Oh well, no surprise there then!" when defeat arises. Love of the underdog is something more difficult to explain. Winning and the glory shown in doing so is perhaps still seen as rather vulgar in the UK, so we tend to cheer on the underdog. Although if the underdog starts winning we'll switch to the other team straight away!

Sport can be an extremely valuable tool in bringing people of diverse backgrounds and status together. However, I often feel that the displays of nationalism that are sometimes seen at sporting events, go against this ideal. More focus could be placed on celebrating individual feats regardless of nationality, as opposed to the flag waving that so often accompanies sporting achievement.

(5) OFIX Network

Emergency Support Network for Foreign Residents

This network was established in 2007 by the Council



for Local Authorities for International Relations Kinki Regional Block Committee members (Shiga Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture,

Kyoto City, Osaka City, Kobe City), in order to better support foreign residents when natural disasters and other such emergency situations have arisen. An

agreement was signed in December 2007, after which an interpreting and translation volunteer dispatch system was developed to cope with the increased needs for such services at times of emergency.

Every month the network members hold a meeting, and with the Emergency Support Network for Foreign Residents Language Support Centre currently being developed, a great variety of training sessions are also held regularly.

On the 14th-15th November last year a training event was held at the Kyoto City International Exchange Foundation to develop this Language Support Centre.

Materials vital in emergency situations were translated, issues of importance discussed, and the training of emergency interpreters undertaken. Volunteer interpreters from all Kinki Block regions took part, including 6 from OFIX.

On the 22nd January of this year, a training session took place in Nara, where things to be learned from the Niigata earthquake were discussed. There was also a practice simulation for the Language Support Centre.

Preparations will now move forward with the strengthening of ties, the creation of a manual, and further training.

OFIX continues to recruit emergency volunteer interpreters and translators. Those interested please see the following page (Japanese only)

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/boran/index6.html>

(6) OFIX Programme Reports

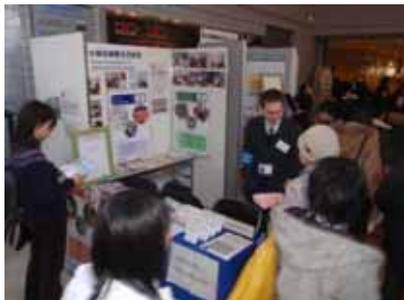
One World Festival and Asian International Students Forum

The One World Festival was held at the Osaka I-House from the 6th-7th February. This was the 17th time it has been held. The aim of the festival is to promote



international exchange and cooperation work to citizens of Osaka Prefecture. Over 100 groups ranging from NGOs and NPOs to international organisations and businesses took part and introduced their activities through booths, symposiums,

and workshops.



Participants were able to get a taste for issues relating to international cooperation through the many booths, ethnic music and dance shows, film showings, and programmes. The

ethnic food stalls where visitors could try lots of tasty

dishes such as Sri Lankan curry, Turkish kebabs, and Vietnamese Coffee were particularly popular.

OFIX had a booth at the Festival where we promoted our activities, and were able to chat to people of all ages, from kids to adults. On the 6th February we held an Asian International Students Forum at which a total of 8 students introduced their home countries/regions, all in the context of the theme of the upcoming Shanghai Expo, "Better City, Better Life". Speakers hailed from Vietnam, China, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, and Japan. After the speeches a question and answer session was held, and everyone enjoyed the students fun responses.

There was also an introduction to the Osaka Pavilion which will be at the Shanghai Expo. It was a highly successful event, at which much was learnt.

A total of 14,500 people visited the One World Festival over its two days, and it was a great opportunity to exchange information, learn about the activities of different groups, and network.



- Donations for Osaka exhibition at 2010 Shanghai Expo: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#syanghai>
- Information for foreign residents in Osaka <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/life/index.html>
- Seeking residents for the Orion International Hall <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/shien/index.html>
- Become a supporting member of OFIX <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/index3.1.html>
- Japan Times (English language newspaper) now available to read at OFIX Plaza!

Comments and suggestions for OFIX News: info@ofix.or.jp

Osaka International Club Reports: clubnews@ofix.or.jp

Register to OFIX News: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/index.html>

OFIX News Back Numbers: <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber.html>

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