

Hello everyone! This is my first time back to the Education Center since the beginning of April, so I would like to introduce myself to everyone who is new to the office. My name is Molly, and I have been coming to the Education Center every Wednesday afternoon since last August, when I came to Japan. During the rest of the week, I am an ALT at Tsu Nishi High school. I came to Japan right after my college graduation because I was interested in living in a new place, learning Japanese and teaching English. I really like my job both at school, at the Board of Education and at the Education Center, so I decided that instead of leaving this August, I will stay for another year. I have had a lot of interesting and exciting experiences living in Japan, so I would like share my reflections on those experiences with everyone through this journal. If you ever have any suggestions about a topic you are interested in, or if you would just like to talk about something I have already written, please don't hesitate to talk to me! I am trying to learn Japanese and happy to talk to anyone, so don't be shy if you don't speak English.

During spring vacation, my parents came to Japan to visit for two weeks. After coming to the Education Center two weeks ago, I spent a few days with my parents in Tsu. They came to Tsu Nishi to meet the teachers and students in our English club, and they also came with me to my tea ceremony class. It was a memorable experience for my parents to come see me in my kimono, meet the other women in my class and the tea teacher who has become so dear to me. Since the beginning, my teacher has always been patient with my remedial Japanese, slow learning and struggle to kneel for so long. Now, I could actually translate some of the things that my tea teacher said to my parents in Japanese and the things they wanted to say to her. I think I showed my teacher and myself that while I might be slow at learning some things (I don't think I'll ever get used to seiza) I can make progress in others!

At the end of my parents' visit, we visited my brother's old host family from when he studied in Japan, and we had some fun adventures. We stayed with them for five days, and managed to go shopping in Nagoya, strawberry picking in Shizuoka, sightseeing in Nara for two days, and even squeeze in a day at the Expo. It was fun to see and do so many new things with my parents and my Japanese "family." All in all, it was a really busy visit, but I think that now, after recovering for a week, I am finally getting back to life as usual. By the end of these two weeks, I found myself thinking how much I just wanted to go home—not back to America, but back to my home and my normal routine here in Tsu. I'm glad to be back!