

Recently, I haven't done many things that really inspire me to write this journal. I think I am really settling into life as usual in Japan. Last year at this time I was anxiously looking forward to a trip to Okinawa, a trip to Hokkaido and a wedding with my brother's old host family in Nagoya. Some of you also might remember that I was getting involved with AJET, The Association for the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, in Mie. For the past year I have been the chair of this committee, so instead of looking forward to a lot of traveling this year, I will be planning for goodbye parties and welcome events as many ALTs go home this summer and new people come in their place. We also have a Talent Show coming up next week which I'd like to tell you about in today's journal.

AJET has a lot of parties so that ALTs who are living in the countryside can have a chance to get together with their friends on a regular basis. But we don't want to be known only for parties! We try to do a lot of other things like planning workshops to help ALTs improve at work and also coordinating events to help in the community, too. For example, every year we put on a Talent Show for charity in May. Any foreigners or Japanese people are welcome to sign up to perform for a good cause. This year our Talent show is on May 27th in Hakusan. The charity that we are going to support this year is called ひまわりの家, or the Sunflower House Foundation. It's a group that provides a place to work for the deaf and disabled. With the help of Tsu Shogyo's volunteer club, we hope that we will be able to raise a lot of money for this group. We'll have a Western-style barbeque in the morning as well as a flea market, and then the performances will start in the afternoon. I'm performing a dance with some friends in the show, so these past few weeks have been full of practices for us. If anyone is interested in coming, I'll be happy to give you more information about it next week.

Last year around this time, I was a little bit unsure if I actually wanted to be seriously involved with AJET. But this year almost all of the members are going home, so I know that it's up to me to organize a new group of people for next year, too. Even though it's a big job, it's been a good experience getting to know a lot of different people and making interesting events like the Talent show happen in Mie. I hope some of you will be able to come—you'll even get to see my dance performance!