



May 2, 2017

JET Micro-grant Initiative

Funded by the U.S. Embassy Tokyo

Administered by the United States Japan Exchange & Teaching Programme Alumni Association

Project Period: 9/13/2016 – 4/30/17

Narrative Report:

USJETAA is grateful to the U.S. Embassy Tokyo for its support of the JET Micro-grant Initiative for American JETs. The Initiative was publicized on the USJETAA website and shared via our online and social media outlets. In addition, current JETs learned of the opportunity through the Embassy's presentation in Tokyo.

The application was posted on, and could be submitted through, the USJETAA website. The deadline for submission was September 9, 2016. USJETAA received 25 completed applications. USJETAA Executive Director, Laurel Lukaszewski, and USJETAA Board Chair, Paige Cottingham-Streater, reviewed all applications. Though virtually all submissions were well-written and thoughtful, USJETAA focused on projects that engaged students in direct experiences or exchange, as opposed to more passive activities. In addition, we decided not to support scholarships that would benefit only a single student.

The following Micro-grants were awarded:

- Heidi Lynn Adams, Oita-ken, "Time to Shine: Celebrating Women" \$600
- Angela Arunarsirakul, Nagasaki, "PostXchange" \$310
- Charles Brandt, Shizuoka, "Fuji City Makers Club" \$600
- Spencer Bunting, Yamanashi-ken, "Thanksgiving Dinner Party and US Cultural Lessons" \$500
- Imani Crystal Cruz, Ehime, "America: Explore, Learn, Discover Fair" \$500
- Kate Featherstone, Shiga, "English Power Up Initiative by Local JETs and English Teachers" \$605
- Erin Fukushima, Hokkaido, "Bring America & the World to Kaisei" \$200
- Hayley Hirshland, Shizuoka, "Westward Ho!: A PenPal Exchange between two Wests Nishi HS & West HS" \$400
- Alina Marhefka, Tokyo, "Let's Makey Makey a Presentation!" \$500
- Christopher Olivares, Fukui-ken, "Introducing Tertiary Education Goals at the Middle School Level" \$600
- Caitlin Orwoll, Tokyo, "Japanese-English Pen Pal Letter and Video Exchange" \$500
- Hannah Pettorini, Nagano-ken, "American Holidays – Food & Culture" \$600
- Sarah Pollnow, Gifu-ken, "Let US Read – Building an English Library" \$400
- Michelle Tanner, Shizuoka, "American Cooking Classes" \$500



- Amanda Wong, Osaka, “Yoshikawa JHS & Laredo MS Japanese-English Pen Pal Program”
\$500

Recipients received funds through wire transfers. Initially there were issues with funds being transferred to Japan Post accounts, but after a number of bank visits, eventually all funds were received by grantees.

Grantees submitted an interim report regarding the status of their projects in December, and a final report this spring. Laurel Lukaszewski corresponded with most grantees throughout the process, answering questions and following up on money transfers and reporting guidelines. In all, the projects were successfully implemented and appreciated by both the JET teacher-grantees and their students. All final reports were sent under separate cover via email to the Embassy.

We were particularly pleased with the creativity and enthusiasm of the JET teachers. They all created engaging, memorable projects for their students, and took the opportunity seriously. The projects that seemed most successful were those that involved exchanges between students in the U.S. and Japan or introduced an aspect of American culture through food. In fact, we were particularly impressed by the “cookbooks” that a few of the JETs created for their cultural cooking classes. Such activities provided not only an English learning opportunity, but also a firsthand cultural lesson. In one case, we extended the grant into April so that Michelle Turner could hold an Easter-themed activity with egg decorating, an Easter egg hunt, and making egg salad sandwiches. Most of her students did not know about the American tradition of hunting for eggs and thoroughly enjoyed the activity.

There were just a few instances where grantees had difficulty getting the support of their boards of education or schools for their activity. In one case, an official letter from the Embassy helped provide the necessary encouragement. In another, there seemed to be a disconnect between the goals of the school/community and the JET, although he worked very hard on his end and produced compelling materials to encourage study abroad. It is probably best to encourage future applicants in the beginning to coordinate with at least one teacher or colleague who supports their activity and can act as their cheerleader so that they do not face roadblocks as they implement their project.

In summary, USJETAA was pleased to be part of the JET Micro-grant Initiative for American JETs and see it through its successful implementation and conclusion. It enabled us to engage with current American JETs in a way that we have not been able to before, and will hopefully lead to their involvement in JETAA when they end their term on the JET Program. We hope to continue working with the U.S. Embassy Tokyo to provide this opportunity to current American JETs in the future.

Summaries of Microgrant Reports

Name	Sarah Pollnow
School	Gifu Commercial and Business High School (Kengisho)
Project Name/ Description	<p>She created a project called “Let US Read” Building an English Library to promote understanding U.S. culture.</p> <p>Through this project, Gifu Commercial and Business High School received new English books. These micro-grant books have provided a wonderful means of making English Education more central and visible in the School.</p> <p>Sarah Pollnow, the ALT, said she has loved the opportunity to highlight aspects of American culture while designing new curriculum. Through engagement with library and Brass Band students, she has also been able to reach a wider range of students.</p>

Name	Angela Arunarsirakul
School	Seiryō
Project Description	<p>She created a project called PostXchange</p> <p>In this project students send a postcard or short letter to briefly describe their hometown or Nagasaki. The recipients of these posts reciprocate the gesture and send a postcard from their state in return. All the postcards will be collected to create an art display.</p> <p>She hopes that students can practice their English comprehension skills as well as become exposed to and learn more about the different states.</p>

Name	Harley Hirshland
School	Nishiizu Junior High School/ Kamo Junior High School
Project Description	<p>She created a project called “Westward Ho!: A Pen Pal Exchange between Two Wests” (Pen Pal Project between Nishiizu, Shizuoka and Madison, WI)</p>

	<p>Two groups of students (Nishiizu Junior High School/Kamo Junior High School and Madison West High School), will participate in a pen pal monthly letter exchange program that is intended to improve understanding and communication skills in the students' respective target languages (English and Japanese), to allow for intercultural exchange, and to create lasting friendships between students in Japan and the United States.</p> <p>She hopes this project will promote English/Japanese language understanding, international exchange, and to improve students' communication skills by means of monthly letter exchanges.</p>
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Name	Spencer Bunting
School	Yamato Junior High School
Project Description	<p>Thanksgiving dinner and cultural lessons</p> <p>Spencer and other ALT, (Lauren Porter) plan to hold Thanksgiving dinner for the teachers and students at Yamato Junior High School on January 31st.</p> <p>The first portion of Thanksgiving cultural lessons was already completed on Tuesday November 29th. The lesson focused on the history of thanksgiving as a tradition featuring the first thanksgiving dinner, the circumstances of the pilgrim colony during 1620-1621 and the purpose of the pilgrimage.</p> <p>Through the dinner and the cultural lessons, they hope students would become more familiar with the Thanksgiving tradition.</p>

Name	Hannah Pettorini
School	Marukokita elementary and Shiogawa elementary

Project Description	<p>American holidays – Food and Culture</p> <p>Hannah gave lessons about American holidays. Students were given the opportunity to experience American holidays and culture, such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.</p> <p>For Halloween, students had a chance to wear costumes and using English to ask for craft utensils, the students colored either a scarecrow, a pumpkin, a cat, or a witch. There was also a trick-or-treat trade. Students would say “trick-or-treat” as well as Grammar related to the previous English lesson.</p> <p>She plans to provide a lesson for Valentine’s day as well.</p>
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Name	Joshua Roth, Rhea Evans, Erin Fukushima
School	Kaisei Senior High School/ Kaisei Secondary School
Project Description	<p>School wide Scavenger hunt</p> <p>The ALTs plan to hold a scavenger hunt starting from mid-January or early February.</p> <p>This event will be a month long event in which students will be presented with a daily task that they must complete by the end of each day. The contents of this “scavenger hunt” will deal with various topics related to the United States.</p> <p>Through this project, students can learn about American history, current events and culture, which will allow them to further broaden their interests in learning English and American culture.</p>

Name	Alina Marhefka
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School	N/A
Project Description	<p>The goal of this project is to get students to create a poster that introduces Japan from a US perspective using Makey Makeys microcomputers.</p> <p>What problems would American tourists face upon travel in Japan? What customs could be different and hard to get used to?</p>

Name	Kate Featherstone
School	Tamazono JHS and Higashiomi City Schools
Project Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Power Up Initiative by Local JETs and English Teachers JETs will work together with their English teachers to improve English language learning out of the classroom. This will culminate into a cooking in English camp where students will workshop with teachers and one another to immerse themselves in the language and other cultures. • Cooking in English Camp Students will attend along with about six local JET ALTs and Tamazono JHS's Home EC teacher along with a few English JTEs and the principal. Students learn basic cooking terms and information about the ALTs' various countries of origin through this camp. • Speaking Project 1st-3rd Year JHS A month long challenge for students of each grade level to seek out teachers and speak more English. The aim is to not just encourage correct conversational skills but to foster more interaction in English between each other and teachers at the school. Students will be able to gain greater confidence in their abilities to produce language and have meaningful conversations. • English Broadcast - KICK Time

	<p>Roughly twice a month on Monday during the lunchtime broadcast at Tamazono JHS the ALT and principal broadcast a short talk show program in English accompanied by popular English music. After the broadcast the transcript is hung up on the English board and also given to any curious students who want to learn more. At the end of the broadcast a few questions are asked and if students can answer them correctly they receive stamps toward in class participation.</p>
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Name	Michelle Tanner
School	Iwata Minami High School
Project Description	<p>American cooking classes</p> <p>Together with the English club, Michelle will host American cooking classes.</p> <p>The first event will be Christmas themed and she will work with the English Club to help them research dishes, learn to cook them, make recipe booklets, and present the history of the holiday.</p> <p>She hopes to hold another cooking demo in the spring and she says it is most likely to be about traditional American Foods.</p>

Name	Mandy Wong
School	Yoshikawa Junior High School

<p>Project Description</p>	<p>She created a project called Yoshikawa JHS & Laredo MS Japanese-English Pen Pal Program</p> <p>The goal of this project is to connect the 2nd and 3rd year students of Yoshikawa Junior High School and the 7th and 8th grade students of Laredo Middle School through a pen pal exchange written using both their English and Japanese skills.</p> <p>She thinks this program will not only improve the students' language skills through real world application, but also encourage camaraderie and cultural exchange between these Japanese and U.S. students.</p>
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