



LETTER

WHY VOLUNTEERING IS IMPORTANT?

by Michael Ringen - International Program Chief

I'm proud of our Sakae Higashi students who volunteered during summer break and enjoyed reading about their experiences! Volunteering matters for university applications. Both Japanese universities and international schools review student portfolios closely, and community service demonstrates initiative and commitment. Beyond admissions, students gain practical skills and build connections outside the classroom. If anyone is interested in volunteering, come speak with our International Program teachers. We would love to help you get started.



ACTIVITIES

VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

The Power of a Smile: My Volunteer Experience - J2 Emma

When I first signed up to volunteer at Sachikawa Care Center, I thought it would just be an easy school assignment. However, I quickly realized the experience would be far more meaningful.

The care center I visited supports elderly people who can no longer live alone. I noticed the thoughtful details everywhere: plastic cups for safety, handrails in every hallway, disinfected tools, warm rooms, and sunlight streaming through wide windows. During my time there, I helped serve tea, comb hair, join activities, and exercise with the residents. I soon realized how challenging, yet rewarding, these small tasks are which bring joy to someone's day. I felt proud.

The most memorable lesson came from a caregiver, Mrs. Haishima, who showed me that a smile can change everything. Her smile shined of kindness and respect, treating every resident with dignity. Inspired, I began smiling more while interacting, and communication became easier and happier for both them and me.

Volunteering isn't just about helping others. It's about connection, respect, and the simple, contagious power of a smile.



Three Things I Gained from Volunteering - J1 Saki

Have you ever tried volunteering? I recently joined a beach cleanup at Kasai Rinkai Park with over 70 other people. In just an hour, we collected 46 plastic bottles, 5 cans, and filled 5 large bags with trash. I gained three valuable things there.



First, I made a new friend while waiting for the work to begin. She was also a first-year junior high student, volunteering for her school report. As we picked up trash together, we talked about school and our shared interest in English. By the end, we promised to visit each other's school festivals and even took a selfie at the beach to remember the day.



Second, the experience itself was memorable because it was my first time volunteering. Normally, I go to the beach to have fun, but this time I went to pick up trash and protect nature. Working as a group with strangers gave me a fresh perspective on teamwork and responsibility.

Finally, I gained confidence in communication. I used to be shy with new people, but this experience helped me speak more openly and energetically. Volunteering didn't just help clean the beach, but also helped me grow as a person.

What I Gained from Volunteering - J2 Yui

Over 800 million people worldwide volunteer, and recently, I joined them by helping at Kopan House Sakura, a daycare in Nishi-Omiya. Since I hope to become a teacher one day, I chose this opportunity to connect with children and gain experience.

At first, I was nervous that they might not accept me, but the moment I stepped inside and saw the bright colorful rooms filled with laughter, my anxiety disappeared. Several children even immediately asked me to play! Throughout the day, I joined in many activities like dancing, exercising, drawing, and even making iron bead art, which helped me communicate with the quieter children. I also helped during snack time, learning the value of patience and kindness.

In just a few hours I learned a lot from this experience. That helping children means guiding, not doing things for them and sometimes simply giving space is better than trying to fix the situation. Also, I gained respect for the teachers who work daily on this challenging work. Although I went there to volunteer, they taught me more than I gave.



BOOK

BOOK OF THE MONTH

by Alex MacDonald

The Godfather is about Michael Corleone, the youngest son of the leader of New York's most powerful crime family. He attends an Ivy League university and has no interest in joining his father's business. However, his family is put in great danger when his father refuses to sell drugs. He tries to help his family but gets pulled into the mafia world, slowly changing from a kind young man into cold powerful mafia boss. Readers will see how some choices will not only change a person's life but will also change the person too.

