Global Village Japanese House Received Two Awards

The Global Village Japanese House received two awards: House(s) of the Year in Global Village and the L/L Event of the Year. The Award Ceremony was held at the L/L Fireplace Lounge on May 3rd, 2011.

The Japanese House (2011-2012) had worked on a lot of activities and events with Das Deutsche Haus (the German House), which was located across from the Japanese House suites. They were very good neighbors and did a lot of collaboration on various fundraising events for Japanese earthquake victims and also fun activities such as cooking, origami, etc. Both Houses were nominated for the Global Village House of the Year and shared the award together.

The L/L Event of the Year award was given to an event: Day of 1,000 Cranes, which was assisted by Ms. Kazuko Suzuki Carlson, who is co-director of the Japanese House. Many UVM students and people from the community gathered and made paper cranes for the Japan Earthquake and Tsunami victims.

Arabic Program Opens Up More Opportunities

Mr. Darius Jonathan, Senior Lecturer of Arabic, is proud that his Arabic Language Program helped to make it possible for students of Arabic language to be able to continue to pursue their Arabic language and culture studies. Madeline Murphy-Hall, his former student of Arabic, is currently studying at University of Kuwait. Madeline won a Fulbright fellowship to study Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies there. Lindsey Boudreau won a scholarship to study Arabic at the Monterey Institute of Middlebury College. Anna Shmidt got a study abroad scholarship to study Arabic and Middle Eastern politics at the University of Alexandria in Egypt and at the University of Jordan in Jordan. Mr. Jonathan is excited as much as his students for these opportunities opened up for his students.

This spring, Rebecca Chapman, an Arabic language student, was admitted to an internship program at Naval Academy at Annapolis. Rebecca will put her Arabic skill to use over there. We are happy for her to get that valuable opportunity to help and learn there.

Judith Marshall and Shelby Deaton, who are taking intermediate Arabic at UVM with Mr. Jonathan, have been awarded critical language scholarship to study in Middle East and they are waiting to be assign to a higher educational institute in the Middle East.
My Experience in the JET Program

My experience working for the JET program was an overwhelmingly positive one. As an educator I found some aspects of the program frustrating but I believe this holds true when working in any education system and in no way did those frustrations make me think any less of the program or my personal experiences. I think the most useful piece of advice that I can impart is to have an open mind and to be truly excited about living in Japan no matter where you end up. I always found it so interesting how every person I met who was participating in the JET program had a unique perspective and their own very different story to tell. I believe adaptability is one of the things that they really look for in an applicant and in the interview process on the whole. They can tell if you are genuinely interested in being in Japan, trying new things, and being a part of the culture or just trying to find a “cushy” job that will allow you to go back to Tokyo whenever you have free time. Not that there is anything wrong with going to Tokyo, I love Tokyo, but the experiences being offered via the JET program are more about being a part of a community than anything else.

--Zachary Hydisik

My Japanese Roommate

I had an opportunity to have a Japanese exchange student from Kansai Gaidai University, Astuko Harada, as my roommate for a semester. Not only did I gain knowledge about the language and the customs through her and by living in Japanese house, I also made a wonderful friend and I miss her terribly. We taught each other new words and phrases, prepared meals that were foreign to the both of us, and exchanged souvenirs so that neither of us would forget the incredible experience. Astuko also spent Christmas at my house with my family before going back to Japan, an American experience which I was glad to share with her. She was a little hesitant at first, but she soon fit right in with my family and we all had a wonderful time. I hope to visit her over in Japan someday, where I can learn about Japan being there just as she learned about the States being here. I wouldn’t have traded my experience for the world.

--Charlotte Randall

A Letter from China

Hello everyone,

My name is Paul Harchik and I graduated from UVM in 2009 with a major in business administration and a minor in Chinese. I am currently working in sales and exports from China. I have heard that many of you would like some advice on how to find work here. I am certainly not an expert in the field, but I have made a small list of things that may help.

1. Listen to your Laoshi. You are extremely fortunate to have Yin and Sun as your teachers and advisors. I took Chinese courses for 3 years at UVM, lived in the “Chinese House” for two years, and studied abroad in Kunming. By doing these things I became quite close with them. They are great teachers who genuinely care about their students. Talk to them!

2. Take the HSK. Nearly every foreigner in China will write on their resume “proficient in Mandarin.” As you know, proficiency can vary. Separate yourself from those who haven’t “really” studied Chinese by putting an HSK score on your resume.

3. Learn a skill other than Chinese. If you want to work in China, speaking Mandarin is a big plus, but it is not enough. There are a lot of very qualified young people in China who are fluent in English. Trying to convince an employer that you are more valuable than they are is tough if your only skill is that you can speak Chinese. Additionally, they are willing to work for a salary that you will most likely find unsatisfactory (especially if you need to pay off your college loans). Degrees and work experience from America carry a lot of weight here. Try to get internships in fields that will make you valuable here.

4. Get your foot in the door. Applying for jobs in China from America can be tough for a few reasons. The main reason is that many job postings here require an in-person interview. Another reason is that employers will find it risky to hire someone who may not be able to handle living in China. Many foreigners only live in China for a few months before getting “China’d out” and return home. Prove to employers that you can handle it by living here for a while before applying. I got my foot in the door by teaching English. I taught English here for 6 months before finding a suitable job.

In summary, there is a lot of opportunity in China but the competition is fierce. Figure out what you want to do here and be strategic about your approach. Good luck and keep practicing your rhymes!

--Paul Harchik
Faculty Members’ Activities

Mutsumi Corson has been working on new Japanese reading materials for beginner and intermediate level students to emphasize learning kanji characters. She gave a presentation, “How to use the class hour effectively,” with Ms. Natsumi Ueno, at a study session of The Vermont Association of Teachers of Japanese-VATJ, held at St. Michael’s College on November 5th, 2011. She rebuilt the Japanese Program website in summer, 2011, giving a new look. Please visit: http://www.uvm.edu/~japanese/

Kazuko Carlson is on sabbatical leave working on her project in Japan. She is examining the recent literature on Japanese language education that is related to enhancing students’ communicative competence in real-life situations. She is also interviewing learners of Japanese about their experiences speaking the language to find out what kind of Japanese is actually used in which common situations. She is developing teaching materials, which she plans to make into a textbook, to help her students learn practical Japanese and actually use their knowledge of the language in everyday communication.

Kyle Ikeda organized and chaired a panel titled “Loss, war memory, violence, and ‘the base’ in contemporary fiction from Okinawan” for the Association of Teachers of Japanese 2011 conference in Honolulu, HI. As part of the panel he presented his paper “Grasping at fragments: Second-generation war memory and the unarticulated in Medoruma Shun’s ‘The Crying Wind’”. His translation of “Mabuigumi” (Spirit Stuffing) by Medoruma Shun was published in the literary journal MANOA for their special issue on Okinawan literature titled Living Spirit: Literature and Resurgence in Okinawa during the summer of 2011. He also attended the Vermont Association Teachers of Japanese in November held at Saint Michael’s College. He is continuing with his research and revising his book manuscript on Trans-generational War Memory in Okinawa. In March 2012, he presented a paper at the “International Symposium ‘Remembering 40 Years Since Reversion’: Okinawan Studies Until Now, Okinawan Studies From Now On” at Waseda University in Japan.

Diana Sun accompanied the UVM student group at Yunnan University in the summer of 2011 and helped to train local teachers in language pedagogy. She was listed as one of the Master Teachers by UVM Center for Teaching and Learning since she is a recipient of the 2006 Kroepsch-Maurice Excellence in Teaching Award. Her paper on “Adapting Third Year ‘Textbook to Further Enhance Students’ Conversational Skills” has been accepted by the 10th International Conference on Chinese Pedagogy, which will be held at Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China in June of 2012.

Natsumi Ueno presented on the effective use of class time with Mutsumi Corson at the annual meeting of the Japanese Teacher Association of Vermont in November 2011. As part of the department’s continuing efforts to offer Japanese language students first-hand Japanese cultural experience, she has been assisting with Japanese cultural activities, such as Japanese flower arrangement and tea ceremony workshops, and she will soon hold a Japanese calligraphy workshop. She will also offer a summer course for students who would like to retain and enrich their Japanese language skills over the summer.

Darius Jonathan travelled to Egypt to attend seminars on Arabic grammar at Cairo University in the summer of 2011. He talked to his colleagues in the field about their methods of teaching Arabic grammar to L2 learners and learned how they resolve challenges concerning textbooks on the subject.

John Yin gave a keynote speech at a Chinese education forum on Jan. 15, 2012 at Portland State University. He will also present a paper at the Chinese Instruction Conference at Princeton University on April 28, 2012. Since last Nov., he has been serving on the CLTA Steering Committee and is heading the CLTA Nominating Committee. He is also the associate chair for the 10th International Conference on Chinese Language Pedagogy to be held in late June, 2012 at Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China.

Ms. Hui Liu of Yunnan University, Ms. Chunjing Cao of Yuexiu Foreign Language University, and Ms. Fei Lü of Wuhan University are visiting Chinese instructors from China to help UVM with Chinese instruction. In addition to Chinese courses they teach, they also host Chinese Tea Hour every Friday at 4:30-5:30 pm at L/L B-180.

Ms. Natsumi Ueno came to teach Japanese at UVM as a result of a national search to replace Ms. Kazuko Carlson, who is on sabbatical leave. Previously she taught at Princeton University after she graduated with a MA from the University of Oregon.
Japanese Extracurricular Activities

Ikebana, Japanese Flower Arranging, Workshop
On September 27th, the Japanese Program invited Ms. Kimiko Yumoto, a certified instructor of Sogetsu School for an Ikebana Workshop. Kimiko demonstrated some arrangements and explained the differences between Japanese and western style flower arrangements and taught the basic style of Japanese flower arranging. She let students try free style instead of following the basic style. Each student who attended the workshop enjoyed arranging flowers in Japanese style and seemed to be very satisfied with the art works they created.

Life in Japan Discussion
Patrick Tracey, William Liew (Aoyama Gakuin University), Olivia Smaltz (Chukyo University), Joseph Romano (Nihon University, Mishima) who studied abroad in Japan and also Zachary Hydusik, who worked for JET in Japan for a year, were the speakers. The event was scheduled for 7:00-8:30 on Thursday, February 23rd, but these students had so much to share. The event extended till 10:00pm. It turned out to be an extremely exciting event and was also very helpful for those who are planning to study abroad in Japan in the near future.

J-Pop Group
This is the second year since the J-Pop group was formed. Ms. Megumi Esselstrom, who is a certified music instructor, comes to the Living & Learning Center every two weeks and leads the group. The members have worked on many songs such as a theme song of Ponyo, Shimauta, Toire no Kamisama, etc. The members read the lyrics in Japanese characters and practice the songs.

Chinese Extracurricular Activities

Field Trip to Montreal
Students on the field trip are checking out a Chinese gift store.

In the fall of 2011, the Chinese House Program organized a field trip to Montreal to experience Chinese culture there. Students visited stores that carry merchandise from China. Some students had the Chinese buffet for the first time at Chinatown in Montreal. Students also took a tour at the Chinese Garden inside the Botanical Garden to see and appreciate Chinese idea of gardening.

Home-Style Cooking
In the spring semester of 2012, Chinese House of Global Village at Living and Learning has held regular spring semester activities such as Chinese Movie Nights and Cooking Sessions to learn to cook home-style Chinese food such as home-style dumplings. Chinese House also sponsored a Chinese Talent Show.

Culture Night for the Living and Learning Global Village Community’s Wednesday Night Gathering event.

Chinese Talent Show
On March 19 and April 2, 2012, the Chinese Program held its annual Chinese Talent Show. About 120 students of Chinese language at all levels participated.