



Katy

from Milton

to

Japan

On August 19th I said goodbye to my friends and family in Toronto and boarded a 13 hour flight to Tokyo then after a short layover and delay I was on my way to Toyama. After landing in Toyama I was greeted by my first host dad and another Rotary member. My host dad then took me out to dinner where we met up with my host mom, their son, daughter in law and granddaughter. After a long day of travelling we headed back home and I got a few things unpacked and headed to bed. I was lucky enough to meet my Rotary club the next morning at a city cleanup, it was a great way to see part of the city.

Over the next couple of weeks I was able to settle in and explore the city as well as meet the other exchange students in my district. Since arriving I was able to see Toyama castle, Toyama art museum, I got to go up Mt. Tateyama with my host dad; we also have a very beautiful park in the city that I have been able to explore a couple of times. I have also been able to go to a couple of festivals, the first one being the Owara Kaze No Bon festival, a festival held the first weekend in September. The festival is to ward off high winds as they can ruin the crops, it is also to pray for a plentiful harvest. The second one I was able to attend with the other exchange students it was a Hikiyama festival in Imizu city, the festival is where they push around huge floats through the streets. In the day they are decorated with flowers and then at night they are covered in lanterns. The 13 floats were pushed around and as the group of exchange students we got the opportunity to push one of them. It was such a unique experience.

At the beginning of September I started school I am at Toyama Dai-ichi High School. High school in Japan has only three years and I am in second year. The days are also different then that of Canadian high schools, I go to school from eight thirty in the morning to three thirty in the afternoon on Mondays and Fridays and from eight thirty in the morning till four thirty in the afternoon from Tuesday to Thursday.

Since starting school I have had a lot fun. I was able to attend both my school and culture festivals. The culture festival was held at the end of September, the first and second grade classes decorated classrooms and the third year ran food tables. There were performances by school clubs and teams as well as some students and even a teachers band. It was a really cool way to get to know more about my school and classmates. The sports festival was held at the beginning of October; all the students were split into six teams. The teams competed in a bunch of different activities from ball throwing, tire races, relays and obstacle courses, it was a fun day with some of my classmates. I was also able to go to Gokayama on a school trip with students that were here from Leongatha Secondary School in Australia for two weeks.



Gokayama is a world heritage site that shows the old gassho style houses some houses reaching over three hundred years old. I was able to go in and explore a few of the houses and learn about the history that goes with them. We also got the opportunity to go and make traditional washi paper. The washi paper has been made for hundreds of years. It was a really unique experience.

Recently I got the opportunity to talk about Canada to my classmates and about my life in Canada. It was a lot of fun to show them my life as they have showed me so much about theirs. I was then asked to do my presentation in front of a couple of the other classes.

Since arriving I have gotten the opportunity to try some amazing food. At the first festival I went to I got to try takoyaki which is fried octopus, I got to try soba which is a type of noodle, as well as udon which is a noodle soup. I have been able to go for sushi a couple of times including a conveyor belt sushi restaurant. I have also had the opportunity to go to a Korean barbecue place where I tried cow tongue for the first time. There has also been many other first time tries for food.

In the next week I will be moving host Families and by the time I write the next beaver tale I will have moved again. I can't wait to write soon!

さようなら

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