

## Greeley Students' Visit to Moriya 2017

Dear Greeley students, welcome to Moriya!

On June 7 Moriya became a little bit more international following the arrival of 13 guests from Greeley. 9 Students and 4 Chaperones stayed in Moriya for 6 days, and these are their experiences.



It was already evening when the group arrived in Moriya after an 11 hour long flight. And already during the dinner that followed their arrival, the very first challenge was waiting for them: using chopsticks. Having practiced how to eat with chopsticks before coming to Japan, the students had almost no difficulty

eating their food. Only the thinly sliced meat and Tofu turned out to be strong opponents for the young chopstick warriors. “Shabu Shabu” was well received by everyone who praised its taste and how healthy it was.



On the second day, the school bell rang. Thanks to Moriya High School's cooperation, Greeley students were able to experience school life in Japan for one day. Their first lesson was calligraphy, where they learned how to write the Japanese characters for “Laughter”, “Cherry Blossom”, “Dream” and “Flower”.

Teaching them were Moriya students who explained step by step what each character meant, how to hold the brush, how much ink to use and lastly of course, how to write the characters.



The biggest difficulty for Moriya students turned out to be the translation of the calligraphy-specific vocabulary, but everyone came up with individual ideas and approaches how to work around the linguistic barrier. And after some practice, it was time for the real deal for the Greeley students: this time there was no room for mistakes.

But everybody proved to have a steady hand and quite some calligraphy talent, proudly showing their finished work and taking pictures together with the students who taught them.



Next on the curriculum: English Communication Class. Moriya students asked their fellow Greeley students about their morning habits or hobbies, using previously prepared memo sheets as a help. However, the prepared questions were quickly replaced with individual questions, filling up the classroom with fun and laughter.





After lunch break, class was dismissed for the Greeley students. Next on their program was a Japanese Cultural Event, organized by the MIFA (Moriya International Friendship Association): Learning traditional Japanese crafts like tea ceremony, playing the “Koto” (a stringed instrument made of wood), followed by flower arrangement “Ikebana” and lastly wearing Kimono that had been especially selected for each member of the group. Everyone’s colorful Kimono silhouette was a truly beautiful sight.





And after MIFA's Cultural Day, the moment everyone had been waiting for was finally there: meeting the host families. 7 of them were families of former participants of the international youth exchange program, 6 families were hosting a sister city student for the first time. All of them were

equally eager to finally meet their host student and greeted them with open arms.

On the third day, the group visited Moriya City Hall and shared a long talk with Mayor Matsumaru. He thanked the group for coming all the way from Greeley and welcomed them to Moriya. The topics of the following open talk ranged from funny experiences involving the Japanese multi-functional toilets to serious matters like the declining population in Japan and Moriya's countermeasures.



At the end of the meeting with Moriya's mayor, strong wishes to continue this lively exchange between the two sister cities were exchanged, as were gifts to commemorate this special event. The City of Greeley presented us with miniature oil paintings depicting a mountain scene and a garden, drawn by a local artist. The present of Moriya City was an "Ogre roof tile" which protects the members of the house it is attached to from harm and illness.





After the city hall visit, it was finally time to go to Tokio. Climbing the Sky Tree and taking a sightseeing bus tour gave everyone a good impression of the Japanese capital. Luckily for everyone they were blessed with a rare sunny day in the middle of the rainy season.

The group spent the following weekend together with their host families and their stay at Moriya ended on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> day, when they left for Kyoto.

Dear Greeley students and chaperones, we hope you enjoyed your stay at Moriya and that you made some wonderful experiences while in Japan.

Everyone is waiting for you to return to Moriya some day!

See you again!

