



TOSHIMAGAOKA TIMES

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Self-discovery: Quiet, Shy, Reserved? Not Us!

What image do you have of Toshimagaoka students? You may think that they are introverted, bookish and not outspoken. That is simply not true! At Toshimagaoka Joshi Gakuen high school, located in the middle of Ikebukuro, one of the centers of business and shopping in Tokyo, students say that they can be anyone they wish to be.

Offered amazing learning opportunities, students give a number of presentations, and they can discover what they are uniquely good at.

Empowerment Program: Be a Self-respecting Woman

This project is held nationwide by ISA during summer vacation, and high 1 and high 2 can participate at Toshimagaoka.

Under the program, groups of five to six students are formed and one foreign university student serves as a leader in each group.

The members discuss and take on various activities in English for five days. However, English proficiency is not required for participation because the goal of this program is not to learn English, but rather to acquire independence. Group leaders and group members are there to help when there are difficulties.

Through conversations with group leaders, members can learn about cultures of other countries



Photo by Arisu Tani

Last day of the Empowerment Program

and diverse views of the world. In addition, group leaders come from various countries around the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Morocco and Egypt, and not only want to learn more about their respective specialties, but also offer solutions to problems occurring in their own country or on the planet. Most people

have a strong will to take on the challenge, and the strength of their will is impressive.

Participants will be able to discover problems on their own and cultivate leadership skills to solve them.

Also, participants make many presentations in front of all classmates; for example, about positive thinking, leadership,

gender issues, one's own skills, and so on.

In this program, students can develop presentation skills and confidence, which will surely prove valuable in the future.

Lastly, participants can stay with and get to know a wonderful international student.

—Continue to Page 4

New Zealand: Beauty and Inspiration in Diversity



Photo by Aiko Kato

Toshimagaoka students who participated in the NZ program

On July 19, five Toshimagaoka girls arrived at Auckland Airport and 72 days in New Zealand had finally begun. It must have been their first time to live with a host family abroad, and it was not easy to get used to a lifestyle completely different from Japan.

New Zealand is such a diverse

country, as many people living there have different religions, languages and backgrounds. Owing to this, one of the students said making new friends was not as hard as she had expected and that all of the days during her stay were very stimulating, because she could learn about different cultures, particularly Māori.

—Continue to Page 4

NEW GADGETS

A Brief History of the Student School Bag

The rucksack has finally become a standard schoolbag. In September 2019, Toshimagaoka released information about the new bag. Students will be able to acquire a new rucksack designed by the school in February. The change is big for the students, as they have hoped for this for a long time.

Toshimagaoka has many traditions. For example, needle handling and school badge design. The schoolbag is also a tradition. Actually some students wondered why they could not use rucksacks for their health.

According to a story we heard

from our principal, who is a graduate of this school, in 1987, students used commercially available schoolbags. (She used to use a purple furoshiki, a traditional Japanese wrapping cloth, with the bag.) Around 1993, students used a leather bag and a carry bag.

On the side of the carry bag is a golden emblem of the same design as today's school badge. In those days, the schoolbag was mainly used, so the carry bag was given a secondary role. Therefore, the carry bag has a small capacity. In 1995, the bag, which was bigger than the one the students use now, was introduced as the

new schoolbag for only one year. At that time, students started using only the carry bag, so it was not used to carry only light things.

As a result they changed the size of it. The bag students brought to school every day was first introduced in 1996. It is said that its design has become better and more versatile than before. There are no good photos of the old bag now. However, for those who want to see them, they can find them in graduation albums at the school library on the 8th floor.

By Yuka Taira, Aki Kiba, Fumika Komiya, Sakura Jikuhara



Photo by Aki Kiba

The new schoolbag

Classi: A New Platform for Sharing School Info

The application software "Classi" was introduced at Toshimagaoka Joshigakuen High School in April 2019. This application is provided by the company "Classi," which was founded by Benesse Inc., and Softbank Inc. The philosophy of the company is to provide a good environment for students and give them chances to live up their unlimited possibility.

The application has various functions such as communication, recording and study tools. More than half of all high schools in Japan have



Photo by Seina Hoshino
Office of Classi Corp. in Tokyo

introduced it as of June 2019.

At Toshimagaoka Joshigakuen High School, it is used

mainly as a communication tool between teachers and students or as a recording tool for student achievement. Students can get information from teachers through "Group in the school," one of functions.

Mr. Tsuzuura, a teacher at Toshimagaoka, said that students use their records for entrance applications for universities. Also, they can reflect their achievements in their school lives and see how they have improved. It can give them confidence in the future.

According to Mr. Abe, who works for "Classi," students can experience the "AAR Cycle," that is, Anticipation, Action and Reflection. He emphasized that students can experience deep and active learning through "Classi."

Toshimagaoka students have more opportunities to realize their potential through "Classi."

By Seina Hoshino, Nozomi Kosaka, Rio Hashimoto, Sara Hatakeyama

Culture

Toshima Vocaloid Hit

Do you know about Vocalo? You can make your own virtual idol!

There was a Vocalo amateur group in our school last year. I heard they worked hard to perform at our school festival, called "Torisai." This was not well known even among students, so I want to introduce this amateur group, which was one of our school's own.

I interviewed one member who helped create the idol and

asked her what the motivation was. She said she and a close friend wanted to express something on their own, and they took on the challenge as a hobby—to make Vocalo music.

They gathered friends and gave their best at the performance. It was a success and they received many messages of support from people on a message board.

By Erina Fukushima



Classroom decoration for the school festival

Photo by Mai Kondo

SCHOOL EVENTS

Three Destinations, Lessons for a Lifetime

From this year, Toshimagaoka students are able to choose their school excursion destination from among Nagasaki, Hiroshima and Kagoshima. Why were these three destinations chosen? We interviewed Ms. Tokizane, a teacher of Toshimagaoka who planned the school trip and she offered two reasons.

First, all of these courses had peace learning programs. We only “know about” the war, we don’t have experience with it. Listening about real experiences and learning from real materials give us a better understanding about the wartime period. However, peace learning contains sad, heavy topics, and some students are reluctant to learn on sightseeing trips. Therefore, she planned the trip to give us a chance to think about the war. That is why these courses have peace learning aspects.

Second, she wanted students to visit places that they don’t usually visit on private excursions, such as Ikeshima in Nagasaki, Tanegashima, and an oil base. This is because she thought that most students might not have chances to visit these places again. Many Toshimagaoka students have never been abroad, but she wants them to come to know important points about Japan through visiting them.

The following gives the details about each course.

Hiroshima

We want to touch on some spots we visited during the trip in Hiroshima.

First, we visited the Atomic Bomb Dome and the surrounding area. We were divided into groups and each group took a tour of the dome and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, listening to a guide. Also, we looked around the related museum and saw photos and items from the time, such as a watch or a lunch box. One student said that it was a very valuable experience for her because she was able to learn what really had happened through a lecture by the guide and other means.



Photo by a teacher at Toshimagaoka

Shoreline at Ikeshima, a former coal mining island in Nagasaki

Second, we went to Itsukushima shrine, which is registered as a World Heritage Site. We saw the main shrine structure, or torii, a gateway at the entrance to a shrine, standing in the sea. Also, unexpectedly, we were able to walk around the shrine and torii gate, as the tide was going out at that time.

Finally, we visited Shimono-seki in Yamaguchi and Moji in Fukuoka, where there are historic buildings. We got a sense of how people lived in the period. Ms. Tokizane said in our interview that she had chosen these places so that we could see port towns that were active in the Meiji period, especially how people lived near the sea.

She said, “These places are not very famous as tourist sites. But that is especially why I wanted students to visit.”

Nagasaki

The first day, the students learned about the Second World War, especially about the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, by hearing the story of a woman who experienced the bombing there. Some students could not listen to her story without being moved to tears. One student said that she was moved hearing about the moment that a loved one of the woman was injured by shards of shattered glass.

After hearing the talk, they

visited Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and Nagasaki Peace Memorial Park. They saw the real remains that illustrated the extent of the damage caused by the atomic bomb, and the Peace Statue. The statue is called Heiwa-kinenzou in Japanese. “Kinen” does not mean commemoration, but rather prayer. This indicates that the statue expresses the determination of the victims of the atomic bomb. Students must be able to learn the fear of the devastating weapon.

From the second day, they were separated into two groups and visited Gunkanjima, its Digital Museum, Ikeshima, Kujukushima, and other sites. I interviewed a student who chose to visit Kujukushima this time. She went to Aquarium Kirara, Kujukushima and Arita Porcelain Park. The most impressive thing for her was cruising Kujukushima. Despite its name, Kujukushima does not actually have 99 islands,

but there are many small islets. The students were able to see beautiful islands they cannot see in Tokyo. Also, she said that the plate she painted in Arita Porcelain Park would become a special memory of this trip.

On the second day, her group went to a cafeteria during free time. They ate a 120-cm-tall parfait for four people. She said it was delicious.

Students who chose this course also ate Sasebo burgers made in Nagasaki. They were delicious and filling.

On the last day, the students went to Kyushu National Museum and Dazaifu-tenmangu. There were many historical materials which some students learned about in Japanese history classes. Students could sometimes be seen explaining the displays to others who do not study Japanese history. At Dazaifu-tenmangu, they spent some free time.

—Continue to Page 4



Photo by a teacher at Toshimagaoka

Takayoshi Kido’s house in Hagi, where he was born and raised

SCHOOL EVENTS

Three Destinations, Lessons for a Lifetime

—Continued from Page 3

Some enjoyed written fortunes, while others bought souvenirs.

Kagoshima

In the Kagoshima Course, students could learn about many things, such as history, culture, geography and the latest technology.

On the first day, students went to Senganen, a traditional samurai residence. After that

they went to Tanegashima by ship. The next day, they went to Tanegashima Space Center.

On the third day, they participated in a “peace learning” program. They visited Chiran Peace Museum and learned about Tokko, or suicide attacks the Japanese Army conducted during World War II. They heard that many soldiers wrote letters to their families. They also read the letters themselves. Some of them were shocked to learn that soldiers as young as them died in the war,

leaving their family behind.

On the last day, they visited Kiire oil terminal, one of the largest petroleum stations, and Yamakawa geothermal power plant.

Ms. Tokizane said in our interview that on school trips, students tended to visit many historical and cultural sites, and a few science-related ones. She thus planned the course so that students who were interested in science and technology could also enjoy the trip. Also, she

said that the Kagoshima course in particular included many spots that were not very famous but were very attractive.

“It was my hope to make the trip a once-in-a-lifetime experience for every student,” she said. “There were no major incidents, and both students and teachers were able to enjoy the trip. It was great.”

By Kotomi Yamano, Ayane Morikawa, Rikako Masuda, Kazami Takeuchi

Self-discovery: Quiet, Shy, Reserved Girls? Not Us!

—Continued from page 1

This year, one of the reporters joined the event by herself. From waking up to going to bed at night, I usually try to speak in English with family and friends, who tend to use a lot of directives. Receiving an English speaker into a family whose members speak only Japanese will be a valuable experience that cannot be gained abroad.

In addition, I can feel the difficulty of explaining their customs and common sense, and differences in culture, and it will be a good memory for my family during the summer vacation.

Model United Nations: Playing the Superpowers

Have you ever wanted to become a UN ambassador? In this

program, you play the role of a “UN ambassador” of a country in the world with your friends. You then discuss and draft resolutions with other countries’ members.

Also, you can join practice meetings at school before the game. There are two games per year, and the winner can join the world championship in New York!

Usually about 50 Toshimagoka students join this event. Every year, you are assigned a new country. So, you can learn about many countries!

Biblio Battle: Reading is Fighting

Biblio means “book” and battle means “fight.”

There are three to five presenters and 20 to 30 audience members. Presenters called “Biblio Battlers” have five

minutes to share an interesting part of a book that they read. The winner is decided based on the number of audience members who think, “I want to read that.” Also, there are Biblio battles with teachers. You can join it and judge!

Nikkei stock league: Get Smart, Get Rich (in your mind)

This event is a virtual investment exercise which Toshimagoka students have taken part in for the past three years.

In this event, you play the role of an investor. First, you work together in a group, and then decide on an investment theme. After that, you select an interesting company and write a report on the process of deciding which company to invest in. Also,

this event is open to students from junior high school to university.

If you take part in this event, you will be able to gain precious experience that is hard to get in daily school life. For example, one of the participants who got an award in the junior high school category with the theme “Our path to innovation” said, “Through a company visit, my future vision has become clear.”

Also, there are students who have participated for the past two years. One said, “In the second year, I was able to base my ideas on things I learned the previous year. Through this I was able to appreciate the importance of continuity.”

By Arisu Tani, Haruna Sato, Chihiro Suzuki

New Zealand: Beauty, Inspiration in Diversity

—Continued from page 1

Given that New Zealand is surrounded by the sea and beautiful nature, Māori have a strong affinity with the ocean and the land. Two of the students had a chance to perform haka, which they said is a symbol of the spiritual bond Māori feel with the natural world.

The New Zealand All Blacks are renowned for performing a haka before every international match — a ceremonial haka symbolizing the “celebration of life triumphing over death.”

The two girls said, “While we were performing Kapa-Haka, we felt the songs and dance represented the beauty of nature and so we could identify the connection between the land and us, which was an unusual thing for us living in Tokyo.”

That feeling made them think about environmental issues much more than before, and now in Japan, they are working on reducing food waste to protect the planet, taking some actions to have everyone involved in such movements.

They showed strong concern

over the current situation in Japan, where a lot of food that can still be eaten is wasted, saying, “If you have three apples, you will throw one away on average. This is the situation happening in the world today, and in particular, in Japan.”

“We believe that few people are aware of this situation, so we want to make it more noticeable and share the sense of crisis with those who live in Japan.”

They seemed to be trying hard and moving toward realizing their goals for the future.

By Aiko Kato & Seie Shu

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