

## Japan Homestay Program Essay

My experience in Japan through the MNCC Homestay Program is something I will never forget.

The people I met, the foods I got to try, the memories I made are just a small portion of what I won't forget from this experience. I made so many friends who I hope to keep as friends for the rest of my life. From my homestay family to people I met in the hallway at the schools I got the joy of attending, each and every person had been the kindest souls I have ever met.

When I first got on the plane to go to Japan, I began to regret going. I was leaving my family and going the furthest from home I had ever been completely by myself. I had to put a large amount of trust into the host families I stayed with, whom I had never met beforehand. It was a scary feeling realizing this when we took off, but I realized I had to be able to in order to enjoy this experience to the absolute fullest.

When I had met my first host family, they welcomed me with a crafted sign and open arms. The fear I had on the flight over instantly faded away. We drove back and I got to have my first experience at a convenience store, which sticks out to me a surprising amount. It was my first experience in Japan, and I got to spend with my host brother. I remember walking around and looking at all the different foods and items, and the realization that I was actually in Japan finally clicked for me. A wave of joy had washed over me at that point, and I was ready to go out and experience as much as I could.

The amount of things I got to partake in, enjoy, and experience over the two weeks would make this essay at least five times longer if I shared it all. It is hard to bring justice to all of the experiences I had while in Japan by summing it up in a couple of words. The specific

memories I made with each and every person I met, the vast amount of differing cultural standards and experiences I got to try, and the places I got to visit within Kagoshima are all something I can't fully convey my joy towards.

For all three of my host families, I thank you all so much for everything you let me experience, whether that be cooking with you, spending time with you and your animals, or just taking me around Kagoshima, I can not thank you all enough for everything you did for me. You were all so caring and I hope that I can meet each and every one of you again. Whether that be another two weeks or just one day, I am determined to see you all again and catch up in the future.

For all the friends I met in the schools I visited, you all played a large part in making this trip memorable for me. Each of you had been happy to come say hello to me and try to speak English even though you did not have to. My classes especially, all of you had been so nice to me and made every minute of the school day interesting and fun. The afterschool clubs I visited are going to stick with me especially. The clubs you all have in Japan are so cool and I wish we had them in America. These clubs let me meet even more students that I wouldn't have gotten the chance to meet otherwise due to differing grade levels and classrooms. Even if I only got hang out with some of you for a couple minutes, your presence still mattered so much to me, and I won't forget it at all!

Finally, thank you to the program who gave this opportunity to me in the first place. Without this program, I wouldn't have ever met all of the friendly faces I did. Every single member worked to give this opportunity to me and the other students who also came from America,

and I appreciate you all for this. Even when we were in Japan, you still worked unbelievably hard to make sure we all had a great experience, even letting me stay in one of your homes when one of my host families had sadly fallen ill. You all went above and beyond to facilitate this experience for me, and I will forever thank you for it!

I hope to meet all of you again someday when I come back to Japan! Please do well while I am gone and be well! I can't wait to see you all again!