

Tokimeki International School

“Future Dream of Peace”



Background and Reason for the Project

In 1990, when Odawara City was preparing for the International Exchange Festival, Noriaki Ozaki founded Tokimeki International School Committee and became its chairman, with the objectives of providing opportunities for youth living in the 21st century to develop a global mindset and promote regional internationalisation. When the world was in the midst of chaos, Ozaki visited what was then known as Manly City (presently called Northern Beaches City) to discuss this with the mayor and other related parties at that time. Confirming that their thoughts of the dream of world peace matched, they decided to aim at developing an exchange relationship. For the first time, Ozaki visited the former Manly City, Australia with 37 middle and high school students from Odawara City using funds from the private sector. After the first visit, based on the proposal from the mayor of Odawara City at that time, the project has been operated as a joint project between Tokimeki International School Committee and Odawara City.

Project Aims

(1) Nurture youth to reflect on the culture and history of their own country, to improve their discipline and independence as global citizens who understand cultures of other countries, and to act for world peace with a global mindset and problem awareness.

- (2) Deepen the relationships between people from different countries and improve citizens' international awareness by providing experiences such as living with people from a different culture through the homestay program, in order to promote internationalisation of the regions.
- (3) From the perspective of citizen participation, promote to increase volunteer awareness among citizens and aim to develop an open community by having citizens voluntarily push forward with planning and running the project.

Project Outline

“Tokimeki International School” is a mutual exchange project for middle and high school students from Northern Beaches City, Australia and Odawara City. In fiscal year 2019, this youth exchange project between the two cities marked its 29th year. It provides participating students with opportunities to think and act by themselves through its annual program consisting of prior training, overseas exchange, domestic exchange, and follow-up training. “Tokimeki International School” is run with the cooperation of many staff members who are residents, publicly recruited host families, and local schools, etc.



Start of Tokimeki International School

◆ Annual program of “Tokimeki International School” (fiscal year 2019’s accomplishments)

(1) Prior training (June - July)

Deepen the relationships between students through activities such as practical English conversation lessons, choir practice and study camp, and improve their awareness as goodwill ambassadors by providing them opportunities to learn about the partner country’s circumstances and overseas manners.

(2) Overseas/ Domestic exchange (July - October)

Middle and high school students from Northern Beaches City, Australia and Odawara City visit each other’s cities and deepen exchanges through activities such as doing homestays.

In terms of overseas exchange, Japanese students visit the mayor of Northern Beaches City, attend classes and enjoy nature in Australia, etc., while in the domestic exchange, Australian students get to experience Japanese culture, participate in a city tour, visit the city hall, etc.

Through these interchanges, students deepen their global mindset and awareness of each other’s country, as well as develop friendship and trust for the future. Also, they become conscious of the greatness and importance of the nature native to the other country by experiencing it.

(3) Follow-up training (August - October)

Summarise what students have obtained and learned through the exchanges. This is also presented to citizens in the following year at the “Global Citizens Festa”, an international exchange event held in February, and a research presentation held in March, as well as reported by activities reports.

(4) Participation in international exchange projects

Improve awareness towards citizen participation by having students participate in the “Global Citizens Festa” (February of the following year) and the Hojo Godai Festival (May of the following year)



Farewell party in fiscal year 2019

Features and Innovations

(1) Students who previously attended the program continue to be involved in the project by planning and running the training in the annual program.

(2) The project is held with cooperation from a lot of citizens including host families and

volunteer staff. This interchange project has become sustainable by promoting citizen-driven international exchange and developing a model where citizens can support the project.

- (3) Being inspired by this long-term exchange project, other amicable efforts have been made. For example, *Wollemia nobilis*, one of the world's oldest known plants, was given by the former Manly City to Odawara City as a proof of this friendship; or the personal belonging (a notebook) of a former Japanese soldier during World War II that had been donated to the North Fort Artillery Museum in the former Manly City, was returned to the bereaved family in Nagano.
- (4) The relationship between the two cities has been awarded by the Australian Sister Cities Association three times in the past. (It won National Award in the Cultural Exchange Section in 2006, National Award in the Youth Project Section in 2007, and also won an award in Single Unit Project Section in 2010). In addition, it won an International Exchange Commendation (Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Award) in Japan in 2016. Thus, the project is highly acclaimed by both countries.

Results of the Project

By fiscal year 2019, Odawara City has so far dispatched 816 students and accepted 597 students from Northern Beaches City. Adding the 100 students who participated in only the domestic exchange program and 25 students from countries other than Australia (China, Thailand and the U.S.) to the 1,413 students

who experienced this mutual exchange, a total of 1,538 young people have participated in the project so far. A career survey revealed that the project helped participating students develop a global mindset and enrich their future vision and learning.

In addition, thanks to the long-term relationship developed through this youth exchange project, new collaborations and interchanges have begun. For example, in 2016, Odawara City, Hilton Odawara Resort & Spa, and Australian Rugby Association officially concluded an "Agreement on Training Camps" between the three parties for the Australia national rugby union team to hold Rugby World Cup 2019 and Tokyo 2020 Pre-Game Training Camps.

Issues, Problems and Responses

The number of participants in this project has been declining. The city has constantly put efforts into enriching the exchange project and reviewing the schedule so that more young people can join the program, as well as finding better ways to advertise the project to secure the number of participants.

Future Developments (expected effects and project vision and issues)

Although the participants change every year, a strong trusting relationship has been developed between Northern Beaches City and Odawara City through this long-term project.

By having the project participants share their knowledge and experiences with citizens as an achievement of the exchange through activities such as holding briefing sessions where they introduce overseas culture after returning to Japan, "Tokimeki International School" helps the youth in Odawara City

develop a global mindset, and contributes to the internationalisation of the region and the nurturing of citizens' international awareness. It is also believed that the project helps stabilise international relations because it is operated with cooperation from citizens, which will expand the relationship at both community and grassroots levels.

The city would like to improve the operating procedures, as well as promote collaboration with organisations in the private sector and encourage former project participants to be further actively involved in the project.

Reference URL

http://www.city.odawara.kanagawa.jp/field/lifelong/exchange/i-exchange/tokimeki_school.html

Contact

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Terminologies and Coined Terms Used

International Exchange Festival:

As part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the city establishment, the "Tokimeki Odawara Dream Festival" was held for two years between 1990 and 1991. In 1991, aiming to develop an open international society and to become an overseas gateway, the city held some international exchange events and a youth exchange project.