

Alice Holmes

Alice started studying Japanese during her first year at Burnside High School in 1993. She moved to Cashmere High School and continued her studies through to Bursary (Year 13).

She was selected in 1997 by the Rotary Foundation to go to Japan as a Rotary Exchange Student (1997-98). She was placed in Kyoto for one year where she attended school and stayed with four host-families who were also Rotary members. Most of the trip was funded by Rotary. Alice says, "My Rotary year was really the year my Japanese took off. I found out that I learn better through practical application, listening and mimicking."



Following her return to Christchurch she enrolled in a Bachelor of Japanese Language at Christchurch Polytechnic (CPIT) where she graduated in 2001.

Through her experiences in Japan and studying at CPIT, her Japanese had progressed to such a level that she was selected to go on the JET Programme as a Coordinator for International Relations in Kawaguchi City, Saitama (2001-04). She was responsible for translating documents and publications for City Hall departments, interpreting for City Hall Departments and during courtesy visits to the Mayor's Office. Alice produced PR material for festivals and events, and general multi-lingual reference material for the international community. She delivered speeches and presentations in Japanese and English at schools, community groups, training seminars and events.

Among many other roles she hosted visits from school exchange groups and acted as a support person for students and families. She was also in charge of implementing activities and events to promote international exchange and understanding amongst residents- including a New Zealand Cultural Booth and International Earth Day Events. (See photo above right)

Alice returned to New Zealand in late-2004 and is now employed as a Senior Fashion Sales Assistant at Snowy Peak, Untouched World in Christchurch. As well as being a member of the retail team she also assists with Japanese marketing strategies and translation of PR material into Japanese to cater for the large Japanese market.

profiled by Adam Burden, 2005