

## Emma Trail



Emma began her study of Japanese in 2001 at Tauranga Girls' College. In 2002 and 2003 she was placed first in her class in Japanese. She won an essay competition through the Japanese Embassy in 2003 and her essay was published in their magazine. In 2003 (year 12 for Emma) she was awarded a scholarship to study in Japan for 10 months at Kun-ei Girls' High School in Osaka. She experienced many different cultural activities during this, her first time in Japan, e.g. calligraphy classes and travelling throughout the Kansai region. Some of her favourite things were the Japanese food, art and history. She is very good at art and she loved Japanese manga (comic books). That year she passed the Level 2 Japanese proficiency test.

In 2005 Emma was awarded a Sasakawa Undergraduate Scholarship to study Japanese at a University in New Zealand. Beyond the first year, however, she decided not to carry on with her formal study of Japanese as her skill level from her time in Japan was very high. She has a wide range of knowledge about Japan and good communication skills including polite Japanese language like native speakers. When she worked in Japanese restaurant part time in 2006, the Japanese customers were very impressed with her Japanese skills and they always enjoyed conversations in Japanese with Emma.

In 2007 she was offered the opportunity to be the first New Zealander to work as an Intern in the LABO International Exchange Foundation. LABO sends many Japanese students to New Zealand every year and it has very strong relationships with New Zealand now. She spent a year in Japan working with children from ages 1 to 18, visiting after-school groups to teach about New Zealand culture, organising cross-cultural workshops, public speaking, working with home stay programmes in Japan. She was also a camp counsellor for international students who were visiting Japan through the LABO programme. She was very busy day at the time but enjoyed all her experiences in Japan. Emma spent time working in three main districts: Tokyo, Kyushu and Kansai and travelled throughout those districts a lot with her work. Some of the highlights of 2007 were visiting Okinawa, gaining Level 1 Japanese proficiency and spending time with her host family from her 2004 exchange.

Emma always had a very good relationship with her host families. She became a 'member of the family' in all her host families and thinks of them as real family.

Emma is currently finishing her last year of a BA majoring in Psychology and hopes to eventually find work where her Japanese will be useful.

*Profiled by Hiromi Horsley*