



## Mission Heights Junior College 2012

Our school is a truly multicultural one, with students from varying nationalities and backgrounds. We have compulsory Japanese for Y7 and Y8 and option Japanese for Y9 and 10 – as a Junior College we do not have seniors.

This year for International Languages Week, my goal was to continue to promote Japanese in our school. We had our first Y10 Japanese class this year, and so continuing to raise the profile of Japanese language in the school is vital to our continued success in retaining and expanding the numbers in our Y9 and 10 classes. With this in mind, and the Sasakawa funds to support us, I set out to bring a Japanese favour to Mission Heights Junior College. My students have all learned a little Japanese, but were rewarded throughout the week with spot prizes for being caught using their 日本語. Students were also invited to explore and expand Japanese by asking me for translations of phrases to use, and were keen to learn new things.

We share our campus with a primary school, and so on the Monday of ILW I took a team of 12 10-14 year old origami experts down to teach a Year 3 class about the story of Sadako, and to help them learn to fold cranes. The 8 year old students were incredibly excited, volunteering intelligent comments about Sadako's story and folding a crazy amount of cranes for little fingers to manage. One young man commented on how cool it was that his Serbian classmate was learning Japanese 'stuff' because 'their countries don't even like each other'. This was a very valuable learning experience for both the Y8 students and my Y7-10 experts. Sasakawa funding allowed us to achieve this by funding the origami paper. The theme of Sadako carried through all Japanese classes that week. With the addition of the cranes from the primary class, students were challenged to use Sasakawa funded origami paper to fold 1000 paper cranes, which are now displayed on the classroom wall. Students are all well-versed in Sadako's tale, and were set the homework task of retelling the story to someone at home and someone from another school, which they happily undertook. In the end, we were able to construct well over 2000 cranes, all in the name of Sadako's wish for world peace, with side thoughts to those affected by cancer.

We challenged students to a tasting test, where they needed to sample various foods and guess what they had eaten. On my Japanese menu were wasabi, umeboshi, takuan, pickled ginger and kewpie mayonnaise, with the mayo proving easiest to identify. The quote of the day came from a 12 year old boy, who claimed that the umeboshi tasted like 'what a goat's brain might be if they had them'. While I can neither confirm nor deny this, the students certainly enjoyed the 'Flavours of Japan' challenge!

I organised for our very international staff to come together on the Thursday of ILW, with each staff member providing food from their home country. There was a dazzling array of food – the Japanese contribution was from the Sasakawa funding and included miso soup, vegetarian curry rice, and yakisoba. The idea behind this was to educate staff on Japanese foods and encourage them to positively speak with students about this, creating a whole-school sense of excitement about Japanese culture.

On the final day, we had international mufi, where students and staff alike wore clothes representing their own, or an adopted culture. Teaching a full days classes, including making sushi and doing origami while wearing a yukata was a challenge, but the kids seemed to get a kick out of it and lots of questions about obi, when you would wear a yukata and what the 'boy version' was were asked, generating some great classroom conversations and teachable moments. We also sought to introduce Japanese favours to our school by making and selling sushi, a task which my Year 9 class took on keenly. We took preorders for chicken, seafood and vegetarian sushi, and made the rolls as a class, selling the sushi to enable us to continue to raise the profile of Japanese in the future. Sasakawa's generous donation has allowed us to set up a fund which is reserved for the promotion of Japanese at our school, and our plans for next year are already beginning to come together. We are sure that thanks to the Sasakawa funding we will be able to continue to inspire more learners to take on a Japanese class.

ささかわのみなさん、ありがとうございます！  
ミッションハイツ中学校とTrudi Wigg先生ヨリ

