

JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

Caroline Pover, Inc.

Evergreen Outdoor Center

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Free trial UK & US university preparation courses



Students participating in Education First's university preparation trial course. EDUCATION FIRST JAPAN

Education First's (EF's) university preparation free trial course started in the United States and the United Kingdom over the holidays.

Applying for universities overseas can be nerve-racking for both students and parents. Application procedures often include essay submission and certified evidence of academic levels; for international students, these documents have to be translated. EF University Preparation Abroad thoroughly prepares students for the challenges of higher education. They learn essential study

skills such as essay writing, critical thinking, and group work, as well as academic English. Studies can be specialized, with coursework in a major such as Business, IT, Law, Media and Communications, Tourism, Sports Science, Art, Science, and Engineering.

This EF program also provides an overview of the local education system. When considering any sort of overseas degree program, it's important to realize that educational systems vary greatly from country to country. At the undergraduate level,

students in the United Kingdom pursue a bachelor's degree for which study usually lasts three years and ends with final examinations, whereas undergraduate students in North America often pursue a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree in four years. International students are required to have an additional year of secondary school education studies, known as a University Foundation Year.

Last month EF started a free trial university preparation course that includes local university tours for those who join any language course that lasts at least two weeks either in Boston or San Francisco in the United States, or in Oxford or Cambridge in the United Kingdom. Local universities included during tours are: Harvard University, MIT, Suffolk University, Boston University, University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, and University of Cambridge, among others. Upcoming trial courses and tours are scheduled during February 24–April 13, and July 21–August 31. The two-week language course fee will be reimbursed to those who decide to take the regular University Preparation Course Abroad.

EF's University Preparation Course Abroad is available for anyone 16 years of age and older. For more information, please email kozue.mitsu@ef.com or call 03-5774-6210.

For general information on EF University Preparation Abroad, see <http://www.efjapan.co.jp/university>. — WAKANA CATCHPOLE

JCIS annual conference

On February 2, New International School of Japan (NewIS) will be hosting the second annual JCIS-sponsored all-Japan conference for Japanese language teachers at international schools.

JCIS (Japan Council of International Schools) supports English-medium schools that serve the international community in Japan. It does this through sharing information, nationally representing member interests, advocacy, working with other relevant organizations, and recording the development of international education in Japan.

The conference theme is "A Content-Based Approach to Japanese Language Education: Concept Development Across the Curriculum." It will be held from 8:30am–5pm, and the registration deadline is January 25. For information and an application form, see <http://newis.ed.jp/jcisconference.html>.

Katoh School debate champions of Shizuoka

In November, Katoh Gakuen Gyoshu's debate teams became both the champions and runners-up in the Shizuoka High School English Debate Competition, earning a place at the national championships for the seventh year in a row.

The final was a fiercely fought battle between two talented Gyoshu teams. The star debaters were Sakura Naito and Haruka Tsumoto, who offered blistering attacks on their opponents' arguments. The closeness of the match was attested to by the length of time it took the judges to deliberate before eventually awarding the championship.

Debate is very popular at Gyoshu, with 15 students in grades 10 and 11 participating. While much time is given to preparing for competitions, it is really the foundations of English and critical thinking that students gain through International Baccalaureate studies that contribute the most to

Gyoshu's debate success.

The school hopes that Gyoshu's national team will be made up of debaters from both teams and that, with a bit of luck, the schools will regain the title of national English debate champions. — CRAIG SUTTON



The championship debate team: Manami, Nadiah, Haruka, Ryouji, Sakura. CRAIG SUTTON

Forest and garden studies at Chateau School

Chateau School diplomats are excited to be taking care of their own tropical forest, with five different kinds of trees.

By gently scratching the surface of a lime, diplomats can smell the fresh citrus on their finger. By cleaning the leaves of the pineapple guava tree, diplomats learn that no one leaf is the same as any other. By looking up at the banana leaves, already more than two metres high, diplomats are amazed to see how big the leaves are. They are looking forward to seeing how the olive tree and blueberry plant will change in the coming seasons.

Diplomats are responsible for their own garden where they planted vegetable and herb seeds, including those for strawberries, carrots, tomatoes, basil, lettuce, and radish. Each diplomat's name can be seen in the garden, indicating which plant is theirs, as they have taken on the responsibility of starting each day watering their plants.

For more information about activities at Chateau School, see <http://www.chateau-school.com>. — SHIORI ANDO



(left to right) Apple, Sara, Masaichi, Mariana, and Aoi tending to their new plants. CHATEAU SCHOOL

First Japanese sports day at Horizon Yokohama



Horizon Yokohama students during last year's sports day. SELCUK BASAK

It's been a busy school year so far at Horizon Yokohama, which held its first-ever Japanese-style sports day, and received a lot of positive feedback from members of the Horizon community.

Students recently completed their AS level ex-

ams and are now eagerly awaiting their results. A grade 5 student received first prize in a national drawing contest, and last year's Saturday school program was enjoyed by both parents and students alike, with record participation.

Science week was organized by the secondary school students, providing the opportunity for all to "touch and watch" science through various experiments and hands-on activities. And in charitable activities, Horizon students raised ¥130,000 for children in Africa through Water Aid. And the year ended with a winter performance featuring a winter games theme, with parents preparing props and decorations for the school's performance hall.

Interested parties are advised to keep an eye on the Japanese Ministry of Education website next year, for recognition of Horizon students' ability to take Japanese university exams. — SELCUK BASAK

February open house at new Sendai school



Part of the playground at the recently opened Horizon Japan International School in Sendai. BARIS ARUK

Horizon Japan International School Sendai Campus welcomes international and Japanese families relocating to Sendai City. Opened in April 2012 with two preschool and kindergarten classes, Horizon Sendai will start new classes from April 2013 to accommodate increasing enrolment. Children aged 3–5 years old are currently admitted.

Located in the rich natural surroundings of elegant Sendai-Izumi Park Town, Horizon Sendai offers its students a stimulating learning environment with its spacious classrooms, big playground, and international teaching staff.

An open house session will be held on February 9, from 10am until midday. Visitors are also welcome by individual appointment at any time. — BARIS ARUK

Suisha festival of games

Jingumae International Exchange School (JIES) is located behind Omotesando Hills and shares facilities with a Japanese public school. As a result of this, JIES has the unique opportunity for multi-cultural exchanges on a regular basis. Every morning the schools share recess and on Friday mornings the students run together. They also have class-to-class exchange activities where classes of the same age groups get together.

The schools also have "suisha" activities throughout the year. The suisha (water wheel) is a symbol of the two schools. Each suisha group is comprised of students from kindergarten through sixth grade from both schools.

In December the suisha groups got together to plan a festival. Each group gathered and planned a variety of activities for the big day. The children organized a game for their classroom, made posters to advertise the game throughout the school, and decorated their classrooms. On the day of the festival the students enjoyed taking turns running the game they had set up and also experiencing a variety of games throughout the building, as well as spending time mingling. Staff enjoyed seeing children from both schools stepping outside their comfort zones and trying to speak one another's language. — KENAN ULU



Exchange activities at JIES's recent suisha festival. JINGUMAE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE SCHOOL

Aoba's Christmas concert

In early December, the Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) community witnessed a wonderful Christmas performance by the kindergarteners from Shoto and Hikarigaoka. This was followed by performances by the lower elementary classes from Hikarigaoka. Both groups dazzled the audience with their singing and dancing. Mr. Koike did a wonderful job coordinating — so much energy and effort went on behind the scenes.

It was the first concert in the gym at the new Hikarigaoka campus. The whole A-JIS community got involved, with the Family Community providing refreshments for the event. Over 200 parents were in attendance. — ROYCE JACOBS

A Christmas Gingerbread Man movie at J's



Yohji, starring as "The Gingerbread Man" at J's International School. MANA ORTIZ

As a Christmas surprise for parents, J's International School prepared a special DVD featuring all the classes in *The Gingerbread Man* story. Teachers and children worked hard preparing, practising, filming, and editing. Apart from being fun, the three weeks of practising encouraged the children to speak with self-confidence, promoted teamwork, and reinforced the idea of "waiting your turn." The school says a big thank you to all the parents who got creative and did a great job coming up with such fantastic costumes.

On the day of the school Christmas party, children arrived in their pyjamas, and parents and other family members flooded into the classroom for the Christmas movie. Juice and popcorn were served as the lights dimmed, and the children squealed with delight to see the film projected onto the big wall. The movie was topped off with outtakes, which had everyone roaring in laughter.

At J's there are always action-packed winter and summer programs to keep the children busy and still learning during the holiday periods. One-day enrolment is accepted. For more information, see <http://www.jis-international-school.com> or call at 03-3452-2078. — MANA ORTIZ

Seasonal celebrations at Saint Alban's Nursery

Saint Alban's Nursery had a wonderful Christmas Concert, with the children performing beautifully, and a fun after-party, with big thanks to Santa!

The school now wishes everyone a very "Happy New Year of the Snake!" as they start 2013 with a fun snake-themed week, where children make lots of related crafts and enjoy related activities.

This month, they will also learn about the solar system and get to experience 3D space travel at the Star Cruise Planetarium at Roppongi Hills. The children are looking forward to "walking" through the atmosphere of space!

For more information about activities at Saint Alban's Nursery, see <http://www.saintalbans.jp>. — GILMA YAMAMOTO-COPELAND



Santa's recent visit to Saint Alban's. SAINT ALBAN'S

ICAN's Christmas show



ICAN's first graders sing "Joy to the World." CHERI DOOD

The International Christian Academy of Nagoya (ICAN) held its annual Christmas Program on December 13, at Nagakute Cultural Center.

200 people attended a show that featured songs in English and Japanese by each grade and the choir, and Spanish by the Spanish Club. Sixth grade students used sign language as the choir sang "All in All."

The Theater Club performed *A Gift for the King*, and the secondary students performed an original skit based on *The Grinch*. DVDs of the program are in production, with all proceeds going to the ICAN building fund.

ICAN is a dually accredited international Christian school, serving students prekindergarten–12th grade. Current enrolment is at 122. Teachers are certified from the United States or Canada and all instruction is in English. See <http://www.ican-japan.org>. — CHERI DOOD

Saint Maur Science Immersion Camp

by GM, grade 11

The Science Immersion Camp, hosted by Science Frontier High School (SFHS), was a great event that offered students from Saint Maur first-hand experience in the "Japanese way" of education.

I have been attending an international school all my life. Every day I see Japanese school students with identical uniforms, socks, hats, bags, and even umbrellas! I have often wondered what it would be like to study in a Japanese school. This immersion camp was a great opportunity to experience a Japanese school for a few days.

I met a lot of students and faculty members, and made many new friends. Communication was not a problem — we were often able to communicate simply by using eye contact.

Because my job was to provide an English-friendly environment in the school, I spoke only in English to the Japanese students. At first I was worried because I thought the Japanese students wouldn't understand me, but I was surprised when I realized their knowledge of English was far greater than what most people would expect. The only problem was that they felt overwhelmingly shy when they had to speak in English.

It only took me a few hours to feel comfortable and like I belonged at SFHS. I am a shy person by nature, and I usually don't initiate conversations, but the Japanese students made me feel like I was truly accepted in their school community.

When we focused on science experiments, I was impressed by how well the students understood what the teachers were saying. Although the topics were fairly basic, the pace was a bit fast; however, it didn't appear to be a problem for most of the Japanese students. The teachers from Todai (Tokyo University) managed to create an exciting learning experience for all of us.

Overall, the Science Immersion Camp provided me with a deeper understanding of Japanese schools. I realize now that to an "outsider," Japanese schools may seem sterile and conservative, but once you get to know the school as an "insider," you will experience and enjoy the amazing friendly energy that thrives within the school.

The immersion camp was a great success, and I hope it will continue for years to come!



The Saint Maur team at SFHS. SAINT MAUR

Ski Japan this winter with Evergreen Outdoor Center

Ski & snowboard lessons



Kids ski & snowboard lessons

With programs for children aged 3–12 years old, Evergreen is the premier English ski school for children's ski and snowboard lessons in Hakuba. For little ones there are even lessons on the "Magic Carpet" runway. Maximum class size of four for the younger ones, eight for older students. Children are grouped according to ability.



Adult ski lessons

Group and private lessons using Canadian and New Zealand methods. For adults and children aged 13 years and over. Beginner, novice, intermediate, and advanced levels offered. Group lesson program offers a smooth transition from total beginner through to advanced skier. Groups are separated into four levels with each class working on skills specific to that level.



Adult snowboard lessons

Group and private lessons for those aged 13 and above. Happo-one has a wide range of terrain with slopes perfect for any level — easy slopes to learn the basics, steeper slopes to practise carving, long thigh-burning Olympic race runs, moguls, deep powder fields after a fresh dump, and a well-maintained snow-park.

Backcountry & snowshoe winter tours



On-mountain guiding

We can guide you to some of Hakuba's best ski resorts and show you how to better understand the Hakuba mountains: where to find continuous north-facing slopes and nicely spaced trees with powder stashes, terrain parks, and restaurants and bars with tasty food and drinks — our staff are always good about giving advice for the time you spend in Japan.



Evening snowshoe and fondue

We at Evergreen are happy to guide you under the bright stars of Hakuba. The walk is not strenuous, but just enough to work up an appetite for dessert fondue under the stars or falling snow. It is not unusual to see wild badgers, rabbits, fox, mink, and kamoshika (Japanese mountain goat) while hiking on our tours. Available Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.



Cross-country ski tours

Explore the silence of the winter forest and discover the fun of cross-country skiing. Our guides can take you on track-set trails and give you tips on Nordic technique that will allow you to have fun and feel confident with your ability. Enjoy the views from Hakuba Minekata or challenge the Olympic Courses at Hakuba's Snow Harp.

Avalanche skills training



The two day AST course developed by the Canadian Avalanche Centre will teach you the basics of safe travel in the backcountry, allow you to recognize avalanche terrain and make more informed slope stability evaluations. You will learn proper self-rescue and group management techniques for the backcountry. Dave Enright is a professional member of the Canadian Avalanche Association.

Children's daycare service



For young children who may not be ready for the slopes just yet or those kids who just want to have a fun day playing indoors and outdoors. Kids feel right at home making arts and crafts, playing games, or exploring the snowy world around the facility. While you take your time on the hill, you can trust that your children are having a great time outside and warming up around the heaters inside when it gets a bit chilly.



Another winter season is well underway and what a Great Winter so far. Our staff of Professional Ski & Snowboard Instructors are excited to meet you and your family in Hakuba this season for great snow and big smiles.

- ❄️ Ski & Snowboard Instruction
- ❄️ Youth Race & Freestyle Club
- ❄️ Snowshoe & X-Country
- ❄️ Family & Daycare Services



Evergreen Outdoor Center
www.evergreen-hakuba.com




The Youth Race and Freestyle Club runs every weekend from January to the end of March and members are able to choose which dates to attend. Evergreen Coaches make learning fun as they teach the fundamentals of good skiing techniques. As participants progress in their training and skills development coaches will introduce higher level alpine ski and racing techniques while still emphasizing that skiing is fun! Please inquire for details. 0261-72-5150