

Sky Rising in Yusuhara :#5 Bittersweet Farewell

Patrick Lewis



Given this is my final newsletter, I want to start by first expressing my appreciation for everyone who has made my time in Yusuhara so special. Ever since my first day in town, I have always felt welcomed as Yusuhara's ALT, and have experienced nothing but kindness and generosity while living here. To all of my colleagues and to all of the community members who have supported me and invited me to various activities, and to all of the students who hopefully learned at least a little bit of English from me, I want to say thanks for everything that you all have done for me.

When I first came to Japan, I knew zero Japanese beyond a few basic phrases, and I had just recently graduated from university. To say that my life had drastically changed within a matter of months

would be a drastic understatement. Each day here brought with it new and exciting opportunities. As a result, the challenge of having to adapt to a new region, a new language, and a new way of life made me develop into a more resilient and open-minded person. However, I may not fully understand how living in Yusuhara has changed me until long after I have returned to America.

My single year as an ALT has been a phenomenal experience, and upon reflection, participating in cultural exchange has been one of my favorite parts. Students always seemed to enjoy it when I talked about life in America, especially when it greatly differed from life in Japan. The same held true for me as well—learning more about Japanese culture always fascinated me. From my experiences at work, by living in Yusuhara, and from my time traveling throughout Japan, I have found that the act of cultural exchange allows people from different countries to connect with each other. This is how I made friends with Japanese people and other ALTs from different countries. Even with ALTs who are American, but who are from different states, we built connections through our cultural differences. When I return home, I am really going to miss this aspect of my life that I have enjoyed so much here.

As this chapter of my life comes closer to its end, I want to reiterate that the people who live and work in Yusuhara are the reasons why I truly enjoyed my time in this special place. I am grateful for all of the people who I have met and the relationships that I have built—both professionally and interpersonally. Without these relationships, my life in Yusuhara would not have been the same. I genuinely wish that I could have stayed longer, but life brings with it many unexpected twists and turns that are beyond anyone's control. My only departing desire is that the students remember not me, but the English that I helped them learn. Hopefully, they continue to improve their English skills, as it can bring forth fruitful opportunities and grant them the ability to explore the world internationally. Despite my brief time here, this is the impact that I want to leave behind. Thank you and farewell!



My time in Yusuhara felt like a cherry blossom in bloom; it came and went in the blink of an eye.

(Original text : Patrick Lewis)