

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

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Hokkaido News Top 5



June 2020
Compiled by AIC

Rickshaw Pullers Work with Local Restaurants to Deliver Meals 5/1

In the Hakodate bay area, rickshaw pullers will start delivering meals ordered from select restaurants. Many restaurants in this tourist hub are experiencing a sharp fall in customers. These rickshaw pullers want to help businesses that are unable to do delivery on their own due to a lack of staff. They will be delivering food from the hamburger chain "Lucky Pierrot" as well as from six other shops by bike or on foot, and if the order is large enough, by rickshaw.

Volunteers Increase Accessibility to Coronavirus Information for Foreign Residents 5/1

A volunteer group of Hokkaido engineers called "Just Do It" created a website in March that displays multilingual information about the spread of the virus throughout the prefecture. In addition to providing information in six languages, they also have information in "Yasashii Nihongo," Japanese that is written in a way that beginners can easily read and understand it.

Meals on Wheels: City of Asahikawa Subsidizes Taxi Food Delivery Service 5/9

In an effort to support local restaurants and taxi companies impacted by the coronavirus, the city of Asahikawa plans to aid businesses by utilizing taxis to deliver Asahikawa's finest foods to your door. People usually pay a fare when using a taxi, but in this case, the city will subsidize ¥700 per delivery so that people can order food cheaply, increasing the number of customers while allowing people to continue working. The city hopes people will rediscover Asahikawa's delicious local cuisine.

Dyeing Companies Find Unique Way to Support Local Restaurants Facing Grave Situation 5/16

Three well-established dyeing companies in Asahikawa are supporting local restaurants impacted by the coronavirus by providing them with free banners advertising the restaurant's takeout services. The companies started printing banners in early May, producing 120 total. By the 15th, approximately 60 of them had been distributed to local shops. Local restaurant owners say that the banners have helped them attract more customers.

Computers Remain a Barrier for Elderly Business Owners Seeking Cash Handout 5/20

After the government launched a program that provided ongoing cash handouts to struggling businesses, cases of elderly people struggling to fill out the online application for the handout are popping up one after the other. The Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry set up offices around the country where people could come get help on their application, but so far, there is still just one office for all of Hokkaido. An 83 year old bike shop owner in Asahikawa remarks on these difficulties: "I would like to receive the cash handout as soon as possible, but even after looking at the documents, I just don't understand how to do it."



For further information

or to register for events contact:

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Historical Sights of Tokiwa Park

By Daniel Lizarraga

Vibrant tulips bring color to the lush greenery. Among the chirps of birds, the faint sound of the Ishikari River can be heard in the distance. From the friendly ducks in the Chidoriga Pond to the koi fish that inhabit the streams, wildlife flourishes. Tokiwa Park in June is truly one of the most beautiful spots in the city. The refreshing natural scenery is complemented by various artistic sculptures, structures, as well as memorials that are placed throughout the park. In this article, we will introduce two different pieces of history that can be found here.



Making your way up to the top of this small hill will give you a nice view of the pond

Former Asahikawa City Observatory

This observatory, which sits upon an artificial hill overlooking the Chidoriga Pond, is beloved by the citizenry as one of the many sights that characterize Tokiwa Park.

It was constructed as a special installation for the “Hokkaido Grand Fair ” held in 1950. Hosting the fair was an opportunity for postwar Asahikawa to achieve dramatic growth, and Tokiwa Park was designated as “Venue #1.” Many structures such as pavilions and playground equipment were constructed on park grounds, including this very observatory. At the time of its construction, this observatory was the first in Hokkaido, as well as the first municipal observatory in the nation.

It was equipped with an equatorial refractor telescope with an aperture of 150mm, and was engaged in the longest continuous observation of sunspots of any public observatory in the country.

This observatory closed on January 30th of 2005 as the newly constructed Sci-Pal Science Center, equipped with a brand new observatory, opened to the public. Nowadays, the only remaining building of the fair is this sole observatory, nearly unfazed by the passage of time.

HONDA Chikayoshi Monument

HONDA Chikayoshi was born in 1847 in Takaoka town, located in the former province of Hyuga no Kuni in the feudal domain of Kagoshima. After serving in the Boshin War, HONDA became an officer in charge of recruiting farmer-soldiers to settle Hokkaido. He then came to Kamikawa as a supervisor for the construction of the Nagayama Farmer-Soldier's Building.

HONDA became the first leader of the three villages of Asahikawa, Nagayama, and Kamui in 1891, and later became the first mayor of the town of Asahikawa in 1902. In addition to his work as mayor, he succeeded in growing rice in an area deemed unsuitable for rice farming, laying the foundation for Kamikawa to become a major rice producing region.

Even after retirement he held several important posts. In 1909, just after the Hokkaido Government building had been destroyed in a fire, HONDA traveled to Tokyo on a campaign to convince the government to build the next Hokkaido Government Building in Asahikawa. Unfortunately, he contracted a serious illness while on this trip, passing away on February 23rd of the same year.

The monument on the right is the "HONDA Chikayoshi Monument." The inscription was written by SHIRANI Takeshi, who at the time was the president of the Imperial Steel Works, Japan, and who had previously worked as the section chief for the Hokkaido Ministry of Home Affairs. This monument is made from natural stone taken from Kamuikotan.

The monument on the left is the "Monument for HONDA's Achievements." SAITO Chikahiro composed and inscribed the epitaph on this monument.

A group of citizens who admired HONDA's many achievements proposed to erect this monument. After raising enough funds, the monument was unveiled on September 20th of 1925.



The "HONDA Chikayoshi Monument" (pictured right) and the "Monument for HONDA's Achievements" (pictured left). These tall monuments can be found in the center of Tokiwa Park in between the beds of flowers and the dirt field



Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Kylie Winger
Home Country: USA
Interviewed: 5/19/2020

If you live in Asahikawa or are just passing through and would like to be interviewed for "Hello Asahikawa," email us at cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp!

AIC: Hello Kylie! Where are you from?
Kylie: I'm from the United States. I grew up in the Midwest and Oregon. I went to college in Middlebury, Vermont, and my family now lives in the Chicago area.

AIC: And what brings you to Japan?
Kylie: I work as an elementary and junior high school ALT through the JET Programme.

AIC: How long have you been living here?
Kylie: Since July 2019.

AIC: How does your life here in Japan compare to your life in the U.S.?
Kylie: I graduated college right before moving to Japan, so the differences in my lifestyle are mostly due to transitioning from student life to work life. Probably the biggest difference is in my social life. In Vermont, my friends and I all lived on campus, so we could walk to each other's dorm rooms in less than fifteen minutes, or ask to get dinner together in the dining hall at short notice on a weeknight. In Hokkaido, my close friends are spread out across the island, most of them about an hour's drive away, sometimes farther. It's really only practical for us to see each other on the weekends when we have time to drive. And then there's the language difference. I speak Japanese about 85% of the time at work and about 90% of the time when I'm socializing with people who aren't JETs. My language ability has gone up a ton — but it still has its interesting moments.

AIC: Are there any big differences between Chippubetsu compared to where you're from?

Kylie: When I found out my JET placement was in Hokkaido, I told friends and family I was basically moving to "the Vermont of Japan." The comparison holds up pretty well. Both are northern, less densely populated regions well-known as ski destinations thanks to their mountains and long, snowy winters. And both are well-known for ice cream and dairy products (if you like Ben & Jerry's, you have Vermont to thank for it.) There are also some differences, of course. Sapporo is about 45-times the size of Burlington, Vermont's biggest "city" (population approx. 40,000). Asahikawa is about eight times as large. So even though my town is very small, because I live in between Sapporo and Asahikawa and have relatively easy access to both, I actually feel much more connected to urban centers than I have in a long, long time.



AIC: What are some of your favorite spots in Chippubetsu and Asahikawa?

Kylie: I really love the area around Chippubetsu's Rose Garden. You can see out over the town, and especially now that everything is greening up, it's lush and gorgeous. I like to go for runs up around there. The Rose Garden itself is also a lovely place, and was built in honor of Chippubetsu's first ALT, Diane Romas, who came from England in 1989.

Chippubetsu's bell tower — which is the tallest structure in town, you really can't miss it — also offers stunning views. You can climb stairs to the top, and also ring a smaller bell that's kept up there. I recommend it. In Asahikawa, I have fond memories of eating and walking along the Kai-
mono-kouen with friends.



AIC: Do you like Japanese food? What are some of your favorites?

Kylie: I love Japanese food! I especially love shoyu ramen, karaage, and anything with anko. Also milk. Is it just me, or does Japanese milk taste better than American milk?

AIC: I agree. The milk here is amazing. What do you like to do in your free time?

Kylie: I read a fair amount, and I spend some time writing fiction. I've also started picking up some elementary German. After five years of studying Japanese, it feels stimulating and refreshing to study a language more closely related to English. And I think being a beginner again gives me empathy for my students. I like to run, especially now that spring is in full gear. And I just started picking up guitar again. I played a lot in high school, but it's been over five years now — so I'm in the painful process of getting calluses again.

AIC: Do you speak any Japanese?

Kylie: Oops! Already answered this in the previous questions. Yeah, I started studying Japanese during my freshman year of college, when I was eighteen. So it's been about five years now. When asked about my ability, I tend to say that "I can communicate" in Japanese, because I can deal with logistical concerns and exchange information pretty accurately, but I still feel very stifled when I try to express my thoughts, ideas, opinions, or experiences. I can communicate, but usually not with a great sense of ease. It often feels like Japanese and I are in a long-term relationship that's mostly healthy and fulfilling, but sometimes frustrating and boring. Beginning to study German felt like starting a hot new fling. Something novel and exciting to do on the side. Don't tell Japanese.



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AIC: How long do you plan to be in Japan?

Kylie: The current plan is to remain in my ALT position through July 2021, then move back to the States for grad school. But nothing is set in stone. Especially right now.

AIC: Do you miss anything about life back in the States?

Kylie: I miss big American ovens, and I miss the familiarity of American grocery stores. I still do a lot of cooking in Japan, but sometimes I feel tired of trying to find substitutes for things that aren't commonly available in Japan.



AIC: Last but not least, do you like Karaoke?

Kylie: Yes! Sometimes I do it alone in my apartment, via YouTube. Good stress relief. I like singing "Take Me Out" by Franz Ferdinand and "Can't Stop" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

AIC: That's all I have. Thank you for participating!

FUN FRIDAYS

Interesting activities, such as quizzes, discussions, songs, games, handcrafts and many more, all in English! Come meet new people, relax, and relate on Fun Fridays!

Dates: Cancelled until further notice

Times: 1:00pm-2:00pm ~Afternoon~ 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
6:30pm-8:30pm ~Night~ 2nd Friday of the month

Location: Asahikawa International Center, Common Meeting Room (1)
(Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome)

Charge: ¥1,500 for 3 months (Free for volunteer leaders)

The AIC offers many services to make your life in Asahikawa more enjoyable. Here are just a few:

Volunteer Guide: Volunteers are registered to help translate and interpret.

Event Volunteer: The AIC plans many exciting events throughout the year, such as Friendship Parties. Why not become a volunteer and help plan these events?

Homestay: Families are registered to welcome you into their homes for an overnight stay or just for an afternoon visit.

For further information or to register, please contact AIC.



The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free wifi available for public use free of charge. Registration for a user card is needed, if you are residing in Asahikawa. Please feel free to come by anytime, as well as check out some of the other services and activities available at the Asahikawa International Center .

Spread the Word...

Contribute to the AIC newsletter and share any interesting information you may have with other readers. You may write on any topic including, items to buy or sell, offers for culture/language exchanges, or write an essay about your life in Asahikawa or your hometown. The article should not be profit related! Please send your submissions to us at the AIC.



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****The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Asahikawa International Committee or the City of Asahikawa.****