

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

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Hokkaido News Top 5



May 2020
Compiled by AIC

Buy One Lunch, Get a Free Private Lesson 4/1

The restaurant “Imomochiya” in Nanae Town, Oshima Subprefecture is helping elementary students affected by a lack of classes at school due to the Coronavirus in a creative way. If you buy one of the shop’s ¥410 bento boxes, your elementary school age child will receive a free 20 minute private lesson from a high school graduate through the free messaging application “LINE.” Guardians scan the QR code on the bento box to arrange the date, time, and contents of the lesson.

New Educational Institution Aims to Cultivate Next Generation of Forestry Workers 4/4

The first vocational school for forestry in Hokkaido, “The Hokkaido College of Northern Forestry” is set to open on April 14th in Asahikawa. The goal of the school is to cultivate the next generation of forestry workers for an industry experiencing a decline in the overall workforce. An astounding two thirds of all class content is hands-on training. The school will be implementing an educational program from Finland as well as bring in five forestry simulators for students to train with.

Breeding Grounds for Rare Bat Species Discovered in Sapporo 4/7

A local Sapporo animal photographer discovered a breeding ground for the elusive Black Japanese House Bat in a school building, the first recorded in the nation. The photographer is also the first to snap a photo of the animal. The Black Japanese House Bat is considered medium-sized and has a wingspan of 25 centimeters. There have only been 15 documented reports of encounters with the bat in all of Japan, with 11 of those having been from Hokkaido.

Coconuts Drift Ashore Beaches of Toyotomi Town 4/7

Local residents picking up trash on the shores of Toyotomi Town found a never before seen object—a dark brown coconut the size of an adult’s head. Two washed ashore on April 4th, and one more the next day on April 5th. Palms do not naturally grow anywhere near Hokkaido, so the coconuts are believed to have rode northwards on ocean currents for thousands of kilometers.

Stays at Hotels in Hokkaido for March Decrease by 71% 4/11

The Hokkaido Branch of the Japan Ryokan Association published a prefecture-wide report for March detailing statistics for hotel usage. Due to the impact of the coronavirus, the usage of hotels in March decreased by 71.3% compared to last year—a loss of 141,881 visitors. The region encompassing Daisetsu-Sounkyo, Asahikawa, Biei, and Furano experienced an 85.1% decrease. Hotels declare this to be a total catastrophe, as hotels have received almost no reservations for the next three months.



Inside This Issue...

For further information

or to register for events contact:

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※ **Due to the recent outbreak
of COVID-19, events and
movies will not be listed in
this month’s issue.**

Life in Asahikawa

May

By KITAMURA Tadao

*Lovely are the days of May,
Trees and grasses are sprouting.
On the bank of a stream
I smell the faint scent of violets.
As I gaze upon these pretty flowers
I continue my stroll,
With a light feeling in my heart.*

This is a translation of a very popular song among the people here known as the “Song of May.” The original song is of course in Japanese, and sung to Mozart’s ‘Shensucht nach dem Fruehling’. You may have different lyrics in your own language. We feel that these lyrics capture the essence of our joy in early May when out in the midst of nature.

H.D.Thoreau describes early May on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts: *“The oaks, hickories, maples, and other trees, just putting out amidst the pine woods around the pond, imparted a brightness like sunshine to the land scape, especially in cloudy days, as if the sun were breaking through mists and shining faintly on the hillside here and there.”*

This is almost same as what we see on the hillsides of coniferous forests of Northern Hokkaido, except for the hickory trees. However, there is somewhat of a difference between Concord and Asahikawa. Here in Asahikawa, the hillsides towards the edge of town are mainly covered in forests of broad-leaved trees.

We first notice May’s arrival when we see white spots on the colorless hillsides of Arashiya-ma. These spots increase in size day by day until we are able to recognize that they are in fact magnolia trees filled with fragrant, white flowers. The Magnolia tree, “*Kobushi*,” is favored among the people (especially those involved in agricultural) as a symbol of a rich harvest. She is the herald of the lovely flower season. The cherry, plum, peach, and apple trees follow suit. When you look below the treetops of the brightly colored woods, you’ll find gardens of tiny, pretty flowers called spring ephemerals: Erythronium, Corydalis, Anemone, and Adonis. They are also called “Spring Fairies.” May truly is the month that marks the curtain rising of the flower season.



Notification for Fiscal Year 2020 Cancer Screenings + Q&A

It is said that one out of every two people will get cancer. The older you become, the more likely you will develop it. Regular cancer screenings lead to early detection and successful treatment. In addition to answering your questions, we can give you information on who should get screenings and the contents of those examinations.

For more information, please contact the Health Promotion Division at 0166-25-6315.

Q: Why is it necessary to be screened for cancer regularly?

A: Early stages of cancer don't often show visible symptoms, so it is important to have regular screenings to find cancer in its early stages of development.

Q: What are the benefits of finding cancer in its early stages?

A: If cancer is found in its early stages and treatment is started immediately, the chance that it can be successfully treated is higher. Cancer becomes more difficult to treat as it progresses into its later stages.

Q: When and where can you get a cancer screening?

A: The following locations offer cancer screenings throughout the year. When you call to make an appointment, please say "I would like to receive a cancer screening."

Japanese: 市のがん検診を受診したい。 Romaji: Shi no gan kenshin o jyushin shitai.

- Medical Facilities:

To find a list of medical facilities where you can get screened, please check fliers posted at city offices and civic centers, or visit the official city website at <https://www.city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp>.

※ At the Asahikawa Cancer Screening Center (Suehiro Higashi 2-no-6), you can receive all types of cancer screenings (stomach, lung, colon, cervix, breast). By appointment only (To make an appointment, call 0120-972-489).

- Traveling Medical Screenings:

A medical screening van travels to civic halls, etc. in the region.

Types of screenings offered: stomach, lungs, colon.

※ Results for colon cancer screenings will be mailed at a later date.

Days and Locations: Listed every month in the Asahibashi Newsletter (Page 20 for the April edition).

Reservation: Not required.

Q: How much does it cost to get screened?

A: Please refer to the costs listed for each type of screening on the next page. The city will provide over 80% of the costs to get screened, so you can get one at a reasonable cost.

Q: What should I do if I am told a "thorough examination" is required after I complete my screening?

A: It is critical that you get yourself examined. If you do not, easily detectable abnormalities may remain undetected.

Please bring your Health Insurance Card when you come in for a screening.

Types of Screenings

Stomach Cancer Screening

Contents: Abdominal X-ray (Barium)

Out of pocket expenses: ¥500 (National Health Insurance (NHI) members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥300)

Who & How Often: Those 40 years old and up, once per year.

Lung Cancer Screening

Contents:

(1). Chest X-ray

(2). (1) and a sputum culture (if necessary).

Out of pocket expenses:

(1). ¥200

(2). ¥500 (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥400)

Who & How Often: Those 40 years old and up, once per year.

Colon Cancer Screening

Contents: Fecal occult blood test

Out of pocket expenses: ¥600 (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥300)

Who & How Often: Those 40 years old and up, once per year.

Breast Cancer Screening

For those who: Are 40 years old and up as of April 1st, 2020, and whose age is an even number.

Contents: Mammography

Out of pocket expenses:

- 40-49 years old: ¥900 (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥300)

- 50 years and up: ¥700 (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥300)

How Often: Once every two years.

Self check you can do at home:

- Visual: Face a mirror, and lift and lower both arms. Check to see if there are indentations in your breasts or if they twitch.

- Touch: Lay down face up with a pillow under your back. Put 3-4 fingers together and touch around your breasts in a circular motion using the pads of your fingers. Check for lumps.

Cervical Cancer Screening

For those who: Are 20 years old as of April 1st, 2020, and whose age is an even number.

Contents:

(1). Pap smear

(2). After consulting with a doctor about the results of (1), a more detailed follow up test can be taken if the patient consents.

(3). Those in their 20s through their 40s may get an HPV (Human Papillomavirus) test at request.

※ (3) must taken with either test (1) or test (2).

If the HPV test is conducted at the same time as another test, the total accuracy of the screening will improve.

Out of pocket expenses:

(1) ¥700 (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥300)

(2) ¥1,200 (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa pay ¥300)

(3) Add ¥500 to either (1) or (2). (NHI members who are residents of Asahikawa only pay an additional ¥300)

How Often: Once every two years.

Helicobacter Pylori Bacteria Test:

For those who:

- Are 20 years old as of April 1st, 2020.

- Are NHI members and are 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, or 70 years old (for those turning any of the aforementioned ages this fiscal year)

※ This test can only be taken by those also taking one of the above screenings.

Contents: Blood test:

Out of pocket expenses: ¥500

Locations: Any medical facility, the Asahikawa Cancer Screening Center.

※ If Helicobacter Pylori is found to be present, the bacteria will be eliminated in order to help prevent stomach cancer from developing in the future.

If you were unable to receive a cervical cancer screening or breast cancer screening in the Reiwa Year 1 fiscal year and would like to receive a screening this fiscal year, please contact the Health Promotion Division at 0166-25-6315.



Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Nicole Lozynsky
Home Country: Canada
Interviewed: 4/24/2020

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: **So Nicole, where are you from?**
Nicole: I'm from Canada. Specifically, the province of Alberta, which is located on the west side of Canada. From there you can find my hometown Calgary, where the 1988 Winter Olympics were held. Calgary is also known for its rodeo that is held every year in July!

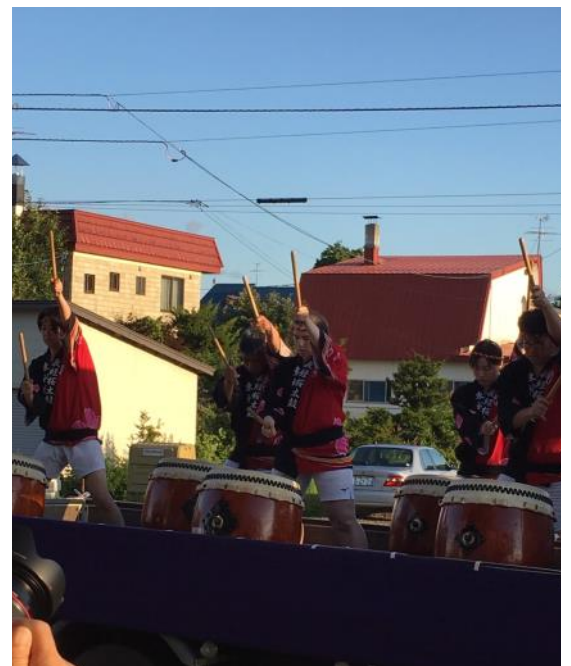


AIC: **What brings you to Japan?**
Nicole: The reason I came to Japan is because I wanted to try living abroad in a foreign country. Japan has such a rich history, culture, food and language. I felt like there was so much I could learn from living in a culture so different from my own.

AIC: **How long have you been living in Japan now?**
Nicole: I've been living in Japan for just over a year and a half. Time has gone by so fast it hardly feels like I've been here that long at all.

AIC: **That's quite a while! How does your life in Japan compare to your life in Canada?**
Nicole: I'm having a great time here in Japan. I miss home, but I also really enjoy my life here. I like getting to explore new places and I often get to meet people from all over the world thanks to being on the JET Programme. Every day I learn something new. In short, I enjoy living here just as much as I do living in Canada.

AIC: **Glad to hear! Are there any big differences between Higashikagura and Calgary?**
Nicole: Well, both Higashikagura and Calgary have long cold winters, are close to the mountains, and have plenty of ski hills to enjoy. I suppose the food, the language, and the scenery are different. But surprisingly they seem to have more in common than you would expect!



AIC: What are your hobbies?

Nicole: Well, I really love playing sports, so a lot of my hobbies are sports related. I often play ice hockey and go snowboarding in the winter. I even play on an ice hockey team in Asahikawa! The Asahikawa Angels. In the summer I enjoy playing golf and since coming to Japan have joined a Taiko group in Higashikagura.



AIC: It's great to hear you're so active and involved in your community! What have been some of your favorite spots in Higashikagura and Asahikawa?

Nicole: Asahikawa is known for its ramen, so some of my favorite places, not surprisingly, are ramen shops! As for Higashikagura, I think Altimall is great, especially the buffet style restaurant Omp that is located inside.

AIC: I can't get enough of the ramen here. It's amazing. So, what do you like about Japan in general?

Nicole: I really enjoy the history of Japan! There are so many cool buildings with rich histories, and traditions that you won't find anywhere else in the world. Also, I love the food! It's delicious, and there is always something new to try because each region is known for something different.

AIC: That leads into my next topic! You said you like Japanese food?

Nicole: Yes, I do! I love trying new foods and Japan has so many delicious foods to try. I really like the Asahikawa style ramen and soup curry you can get here in Hokkaido. Both of which I had never tried before coming to Japan.

AIC: Do you speak any Japanese?

Nicole: Yes, I can speak Japanese. I started studying Japanese in high school and have continued since then. I really enjoy learning new languages, and Japanese is so different from English I thought it would be fun to try learning it.



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

Nicole: That's a good question, I'm not quite sure yet. I really enjoy living in Higashikagura, everyone is super friendly, and I love waking up to see Asahidake every morning, it's so beautiful! But, for the time being I think I will be in Higashikagura for at least another year.

AIC: Do you miss anything about life back in Canada?

Nicole: Yes! I miss my family and friends most of all, but I also miss certain foods you can't get here in Japan. Particularly the coffee and donuts from the Tim Hortons chain coffee store!

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

Nicole: Yes, I do! I love singing with friends or colleagues, it's always a fun time. Actually, the first time I ever did karaoke was on my first trip to Japan. I was really nervous singing in front of everybody, but I'm glad I did! It was so much fun.

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

Nicole: You're welcome!



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!

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.

FREE WiFi

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.****