







Language Exchange Lounge Series

Join our lively lounge events to meet friendly native speakers and fellow language learners from around the world!

Hosted at the Asahikawa International Center from 18:00-19:00

Lounge	Dates
Solniska Lounge Russian & Japanese Exchange 	1/14 (Wed)
Pengyou Lounge Chinese & Japanese Exchange 	1/15 (Thu)
Nihongo Lounge Japanese Exchange 	1/29 (Thu)
K x J Lounge Korean & Japanese Exchange 	1/30 (Fri)



Korean Cooking Class

TIME: 10:30-13:00

LOCATION: Tokiwa Civic Hall

DETAILS: Once again there will be a Korean cooking class this January! This time, we will be learning how to make Tteokmanduguk (Korean soup with rice cakes and dumplings) as well as two other items!

PARTICIPATION FEE: ¥1,500

WHAT TO BRING: Apron, bandana, and something to write with.

CALL TO REGISTER: 25-7491 (From 1/19~)

1/31
Saturday



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Fun with Japanese Culture

TIME: 14:00-16:00

LOCATION: Asahikawa International Center

REGISTRATION START: 1/28 (9:00AM)

DETAILS: Enjoy different Japanese cultural experiences with locals from Asahikawa! From Japanese calligraphy to Aikido, there are many workshops for everyone to enjoy Japanese culture!

REGISTRATION ENCOURAGED BUT NOT REQUIRED! FEEL FREE TO JOIN ON THE DAY OF EVENT

2/14
Saturday



Check out our website and social media for information regarding the events above.

For further information or to register for events, contact:

Asahikawa International Committee (AIC)

Address: Asahikawa International Center Feeel 7F, 1-jo-dori 8-chome, Asahikawa 070-0031

Tel: (0166) 25-7491 **Fax:** (0166) 23-4924

Email: asahikawainternationalcenter@gmail.com

Website: <https://asahikawaic.jp/en/>



Scan the QR Code to check out our homepage!

Follow us on social media for latest updates and upcoming events!

X (formerly twitter)



Facebook



Instagram



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



Event Report: AIC HOLIDAY POTLUCK

By John Mabilangan

On December 20th, 2025, AIC hosted its Holiday Potluck, bringing together Asahikawa's international community. The event welcomed attendees from diverse countries, including Egypt, South Korea, the Philippines, the United States, Canada, China, and Cuba. The local participants were just as varied, with some traveling all the way from Kamikawa Town to join in the festivities.

The party kicked off with a holiday relay, where participants raced to pass a ping pong ball using only a tiny fork. Next, everyone enjoyed a lively game of charades, with teams competing to guess as many topics as possible using only gestures. The competition was fierce, with participants eager to score as many points as they could within the strict time limit. This thrilling game got everyone energized and excited for the meal that followed!



After the games, everyone gathered at the Exchange Lounge to share and enjoy each other's dishes. We savored Koshari, a traditional Egyptian dish made with rice, lentils, pasta, and peppers, along with kimbap, Alfredo, and delectable desserts like fudge cookie crinkles and cheesecake. The potluck not only provided a chance to enjoy delicious food but also offered a great opportunity to connect with new people through their cultural cuisines. The event was a wonderful success and a perfect way to celebrate the holiday season.





A Filipino-American New Years

By John Mabilangan

Homecoming for Everyone

As the holiday season comes to a close and the New Year draws near, people from around the world celebrate with a variety of unique traditions. As a resident of Japan, the end-of-year holidays create an irresistible urge to return home, especially when home is an ocean and a continent away. In the U.S., this season brings family members from across the country—and sometimes from abroad—back together to celebrate. It makes me reflect on last year when I visited home for the holidays.

In December 2024, I had the pleasure of visiting my family in the U.S. for the first time since moving to Japan. My schedule was packed with activities, from catching up with close friends to meeting family members in Washington, DC, and New York City. For New Year's, the celebration was set at my cousin's house in Washington, DC, where more than 15 family and friends gathered. Although most of my relatives are Filipino immigrants, the gathering was a true melting pot, with Vietnamese, Mexican, and African American in-laws and friends adding even more diversity to the party. The New Year's celebration was multilingual, with adults speaking Tagalog and the kids and non-Filipino guests speaking English.

Though each household celebrates New Year's differently, one common feature is that the Christmas decorations are still up. Even after Christmas has passed, many people leave their decorations up through New Year's. With multiple gatherings throughout the holiday season, it's often more convenient to keep the decorations up, saving time on cleanup while also extending the festive atmosphere. Whether it's a bit of procrastination or simply a desire to prolong the holiday spirit, the decorations remain part of the celebration until the New Year begins.

The Feast of the Year



The potluck spread from 2024 which features small baked potato balls, Filipino-style spaghetti, Hawaiian rolls, holiday ham, stir-fried green beans, and may more.

A common tradition at American gatherings or parties is the potluck style, where participants cook or bring food and drinks to share. With my family's diverse backgrounds, it's always exciting to see the variety of dishes everyone contributes. Potlucks are a great opportunity to share your culture, show off your cooking skills, and even learn about others' preferences. For example, my uncle-in-law, who has Mexican roots, and my aunt, who lived in California for several years before moving to the East Coast, brought Mexican burritos for everyone to enjoy. On the other hand, my family from Washington, DC, contributed traditional holiday dishes like pineapple holiday ham and mashed potatoes.

Dinner began with a Catholic prayer before the meal, followed by a line to collect each dish. After filling their plates, everyone scattered, with relatives sitting and eating with others of the same age or interests. The kids gathered together, while the adults would mingle amongst themselves. The room would be filled with laughter, gossip, and cheer as everyone caught up on months or even years of updates. Relatives talked about their lives, jobs, and the latest family news, while casual gossip added to the lively atmosphere. The drinks flowed as freely as the fun, creating an energy that filled the room with warmth and connection.



My plate: baked salmon, baked potatoes, crab cakes, tar tar sauce, green beans, and rice.

Getting Competitive



Charades game with marshmallows



Put the candy cane in the bottle game

The party became even more energetic when the games began! One of the games we played was a variation of charades, where the player had to stuff marshmallows into their mouth. Then, they did their best to convey the theme or secret word using only sounds and gestures. Watching each player struggle to communicate was hilarious, and family members couldn't resist filming the moments. It was a fun sight to see everyone making exaggerated gestures and sounds within the time limit, with plenty of laughter all around.

Another unique game we played involved two players from each team facing off to try and place a candy cane into a bottle using just a string. Although the concept was simple, the time limit made it surprisingly competitive. The cousins, aunts, and uncles were confident, given the simplicity of the game, but the ticking clock added an intense and exciting twist. What made the game even more thrilling were the stakes—prizes like a special dessert were on the line, which kept everyone on their toes!

Though these were just simple party games, for my family, they were a chance to bond and share laughter. With the adults and kids competing against each other, everyone was put in a position to work together, have fun, and cooperate to win. Once a year, we come together, setting aside our differences, to celebrate the arrival of the New Year.

The Arrival of the New Years



New Years Countdown

After a few hours, the New Year's Eve tradition culminates with the annual countdown. As midnight approaches, family members gather in front of the TV to watch the New York City Ball Drop, a beloved tradition in the U.S. that many in the Eastern Time Zone participate in. As the clock nears 11:59, everyone dons their New Year's hats and grabs their whistles, getting ready for the big moment. We all count down from 60 to 0, and when the clock strikes midnight, we cheer and blow our whistles, celebrating the arrival of 2025! The night ends with hugs and cheers as we step into the new year together.