

# YEF Newsletter

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The Yokkaichi English Fellows (YEF) Program gives recent college graduates and interested professionals from the Long Beach area the opportunity to teach English in Japan for a period ranging from two to five years. The program is made up of eleven native English speakers, seven of whom are from Long Beach and four of whom come from the JET Programme. Going beyond English instruction, YEFs share their culture and personal experiences with students and teachers while building bridges between Japan and the USA.

The program will mark its 30th year of sending teachers to Yokkaichi this summer, while the Long Beach-Yokkaichi Sister City Association recently celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2014. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for those who live and work in the Long Beach area to learn about international culture, develop communication and professional skills, and experience life in another country. If you ask anyone who has participated in this program, they will likely state that teaching English in Yokkaichi has changed their life for the better.

This is the first issue of what we hope will be many newsletters to come. Our goal is to help spread information about living and working in Yokkaichi. On behalf of myself and the current YEFs, we thank you for reading and we hope that you enjoy it!

-David Hayter  
2nd Year YEF



In January, eight YEFs experience making Yokkaichi's famous Banko pottery for the first time.

**From left to right:** Victor Nguyen, David Hayter, Monika Tayag, Christine Leung, Courtney Roe, Lara Petersen, Ana Lee, and Allyce Best.

## In this issue...

### YEF Spotlight

In our first issue we shine a spotlight on two hardworking YEFs who will be leaving us this summer.



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### YEF Supervisor Profiles

In April, we said goodbye to our previous YEF Supervisor and welcomed a new member to the team. This section details their background and experiences in Yokkaichi.



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### YEF Newsletter

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YEF  
Program

# Allyce Best



Allyce smiles for the camera in a Kimono before her "koto" performance.

**A**llyce Best served as a YEF from the JET Programme for three years, from 2013 until 2016. Through her constant efforts and unyielding diligence, she has been able to implement several new additions within the YEF Program.

Allyce is unique within the current team of YEFs as she is not a California native. She was raised in Woodbridge, VA, which is located close to Washington, D.C. She taught herself Japanese in high school and later participated in a student exchange program for seven months in Yokkaichi's neighboring Aichi Prefecture.

After graduating from high school, Allyce attended the University of Chicago, where she earned a BA in East Asian Studies. She was a co-founder and president of the school's Japanese Student Association. It

was during this time that she studied deeply about East Asian culture and society with the intention of one day returning to Japan.

Upon being placed in Yokkaichi through the JET Programme, Allyce has contributed tremendously to the future of the YEF Program. During the last year, she worked with other YEFs in a leadership position. She took on many projects, including the creation of this newsletter.



Say cheese! It's picture time in a Japanese photo booth.

Left to right: Ana Lee, Monika Tayag, Courtney Roe, and Allyce Best

Her other responsibilities included leading the elementary school and kindergarten curriculum committees, producing tourism videos and promotion materials for Yokkaichi, and acting as a coordinator within the Shunjukai employee group at Shidouka (the teaching guidance division) at the Yokkaichi Board of Education.

Allyce kept herself busy outside of the classroom as well. While teaching in Yokkaichi, she studied Korean and took lessons in koto, which is the national instrument of Japan. She was also a member of the dance team "Fordiesta", which is made up of people who live and work in Yokkaichi. The team dances at the Grand Yokkaichi Festival every August. She was a part of the team when they won the first place prize in 2014. Aside from traveling to various places within Japan, Allyce also visited Korea and Taiwan during her time as a YEF.

After leaving the YEF Program, Allyce plans to live in Korea to further enhance her Korean language ability. Although she is still considering her career options, the experience and knowledge she has acquired during her time spent as a YEF will allow her to pursue a career in education, international relations, or international business. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.



Allyce and her friend, Yui Migita, enjoy lunch at a cafe.



# Courtney Roe

Courtney Roe served as a YEF for three years, from 2013 until 2016. Throughout her career as a YEF, she has demonstrated a consistent passion for teaching and educational development.

Before coming to work in Yokkaichi, Courtney had many experiences with Japan's culture and language. She participated in a one week long sister city cultural exchange program between her native Torrance, CA and Kashiwa, Chiba, Japan in May 2005 and 2006. While completing her BA in Japanese at California State University, Long Beach she spent a year abroad studying at Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University, where she furthered her knowledge in Japanese language and culture.

After returning to CSULB, she earned a BA in Japanese and a teaching credential. During her time at college, she actively participated in Japan Club. She also holds memberships in the National Society for Collegiate Scholars (NSCS) and the Golden Key International Honour Society.

Courtney came to Yokkaichi after she completed the course work for her teaching credential. As a YEF, her responsibilities included administration of speech contests, designing training materials for English activities in elementary schools, assisting in training newly hired YEFs in the summer, evaluating YEF lesson plans and materials, and developing kindergarten and elementary school curricula. When she wasn't teaching in the classroom or planning lessons, she often attended the track and field, volleyball, basketball, and art club meetings after school.



Courtney visits Harry Potter World at Universal Studios Japan.

In her personal time, Courtney has had many great experiences in Japan. Her hobbies include dancing, running, and hiking. She danced in the Nagoya based yosakoi team, "Byakka Musou". This team dances all over Japan including Hamamatsu, Osaka, Kobe, Aichi, Kochi, and Tokyo. During her stay in Japan, she was able to travel to Korea, the Philippines, and New Zealand.

Upon returning to the United States, Courtney plans to pursue a career in secondary education teaching Japanese language classes. Although her time teaching Japanese students has come to an end, she will now have the opportunity to use what she has learned firsthand in Yokkaichi to educate students in California about Japan's language, culture, and customs.



Courtney visits the UNESCO World Heritage Site Todai-ji in Nara with current YEFs Victor Nguyen and Allyce Best and former YEF Cameron Lombardo (Fall 2014).



Courtney dances at the KOBE ALIVE Yosakoi Tournament (Fall 2015).

「一期一会」  
"Once in a lifetime"

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## YEF Supervisor

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# Ayako Yamaji



Although we are sad to see her go, former YEF Supervisor, Ms. Ayako Yamaji, will continue to help students improve their English skills as an English teacher in the junior high schools of Yokkaichi.

As a native of Yokkaichi, Ms. Yamaji has called this city her home for many years. In college, she majored in education before starting her career as an English teacher. Before becoming the YEF Supervisor, she taught English in junior high school. She was the coordinator for the education of foreign students and was also in charge of the international classroom. Like Long Beach, Yokkaichi is also a very diverse city compared to others in Japan. The international classroom serves students from a variety of countries including Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, and the Philippines.

While working as the YEF Supervisor, Ms. Yamaji's primary ambition was to create an immersive English environment. She hoped students could use as much English as possible both in and out of the classroom while at school. Under Ms. Yamaji's direction, the YEFs now have a secured network drive. YEFs can share lessons with other YEFs and easily access their digital materials from different schools throughout the city. She has also successfully led teams to create curricula for the kindergartens and elementary schools of Yokkaichi.

As a parting message, Ms. Yamaji stated that she thinks all of the YEFs she has had the opportunity to work with were both great and hardworking. She really appreciated all of their efforts and dedication to English education for the students and community of Yokkaichi.

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## YEF Supervisor

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# Hiromi Sawai



This April, we welcomed the new YEF Supervisor, Ms. Hiromi Sawai, to the YEF Program. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work with Ms. Sawai and to learn from her years of knowledge and experience. She is not only an excellent addition to the YEF Program but the larger community of Yokkaichi as well.

Although Ms. Sawai was born in Osaka, she has spent the majority of her life in Mie Prefecture, and has worked in both Yokkaichi and Mie's capital city of Tsu.

She attended Osaka Gaikokugo Daigaku (Osaka Foreign Language University) which later merged with Osaka University. During her time there, she studied English and Asian Languages and obtained a certification to teach English in junior and senior high school. After college, she worked as a junior high school English teacher in Yokkaichi for 15 years. Later, she worked at the Mie Prefecture Board of Education with the aim of promoting English education in elementary and junior high schools. Ms. Sawai also worked on a national level at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Tokyo, Japan.

As the new YEF Supervisor, Ms. Sawai is looking forward to getting to know the current YEFs in addition to the new YEFs that will come to Japan this summer. She stated that she hopes to build bridges between the Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and the YEFs in order to promote effective team teaching relationships. As always, the goal of Japanese teachers and YEFs is to support students and enhance their English skills so they can become successful citizens of the future.