



KCC Newsletter

December, 2025

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Announcement

Call for Speakers: 15th English Speech Contest

D Saturday, February 14, 2026, 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. **P** Amuser Kashiwa, Crystal Hall
Eligibility: Junior high school students and above, residing, working, or studying in Kashiwa City, whose native language is not English.

Speech Requirements: 5 minutes or less; theme/title is free.

N 10 (Speech manuscripts will be reviewed)

F Free

Awards: ① Kashiwa Mayor's Award, ② KIRA President's Award, ③ Special Award, ④ Audience Award

A Send name, address, age, and contact information by Wednesday, December 10 by email to <gaikokugo@kira-kira.jp>.

Announcement of Selection Results: Thursday, December 25

Others: All are welcome to view and cheer on the day of the event. Vote for the Audience Award, too!



Foreign Residents, Let's Talk Together!

Share with us things you find difficult, confusing, or surprising about living in Japan! Advisors will be available to answer your questions.

D Thursday, December 4, 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

P Palette Kashiwa, MTR F

A Directly at the KCC Office or via email to <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp>.



Online International Exchange Salon

Do You Know About LGBTQ?

~Let's Learn About Diversity and Envision a Society Where We Live Together~

D Thursday, December 18, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

L Rie Nakamitsu

Participation Method: Online (Zoom)

F Free

N First 30 people

A Directly at the KCC Office or via email to <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp> by Wednesday, December 17.

Participants will receive the event URL on the day.



Online International Exchange Salon



Laughter Yoga — Refresh Your Mind and Body with Laughter

Laughter Yoga, developed by an Indian doctor in 1995, has now spread to over 100 countries worldwide, with 700 clubs in Japan alone. Practicing with instructor Adarsh Sharma, I realized anyone can do this easily anywhere. Even if it is a facial expression without emotion, laughing improves blood flow and boosts immunity. So, I'm practicing daily for a few minutes to start my day with a positive mindset. Although it was a Zoom workshop, doing it face-to-face would likely be many times more effective. Also, it is said that if everyone laughs together at the start of a meeting, it helps the meeting proceed smoothly. Why don't we all try it? Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!!

😊 "When you laugh, you change. When you change, the whole world changes." (Dr. Madan Kataria)

<Upcoming Events> (January 2026 onwards)

New Year's Party (1/24)

Japanese Language Class Speech Presentation (1/31)

15th English Speech Contest (2/14)

10th Japanese Speech Contest in Kashiwa (2/15)

Cross-cultural Teatime "Burkina Faso" (2/28)

<Request> When applying via email, please be sure to include the event name, your name, and phone number.

D Date & Time **P** Place **F** Fee **N** Number of applicants **L** Lecturer **C** Contents **A** Application **R** Reservation.

Kashiwa/Kashiwanoha Japanese Language Class Field Trip (10/12)

A field trip to the National Museum of Nature and Science (Ueno) was held to deepen understanding of Japanese culture and history, and to promote interaction among learners and staff through experiences unavailable in the classroom. Thirty-three people participated, including 26 foreign nationals.

Participant's Comments: Phan Thi Dueu Anh (Vietnam)

In the Japanese class, we learn not only the language but also Japanese culture. As an extracurricular activity, we visited the National Science Museum. There, we observed plants, animals, and scientific research of the past. At the entrance stood a large dinosaur's skeleton on display.

What I remember most vividly are the over 100 varieties of butterflies in rich colors. They were absolutely stunning. I was deeply impressed by the people who conducted those studies. I also saw plant cells, bacterial cells, viruses, and DNAs, magnified thousands of times their normal size. I was astonished to see over 1,000 species of shrimp, fish, birds, and insects. I also saw extinct animals, endangered animals, and the diverse creatures of the world. It made me acutely aware that we must protect the Earth. Upon reaching the third floor, various scientific studies and technological achievements were displayed before my eyes.

The Annex had a 3D film showing how the BIG BANG created the Earth. Standing on the bridge with light moving all around me was amazing. It was a first-time experience for me. The exhibit explaining the globalization of educational manga was easy to understand. The evolution of humankind and the family life of ancient Japanese people were also recreated.

At lunchtime, we had lunch together on the rooftop and chatted about various things. I participated in a Japanese quiz game and got lots of snacks to take home. I'm really glad I could participate in the extracurricular class. I want to participate again next year.



At the National Museum of Nature and Science

Japan-U.S. Leadership Summit (10/10)

The event was held at the United Nations University in Aoyama, Tokyo. In place of KIRA's President, three members from the Torrance Committee attended, including Kayoko Yamazawa, 2025 student delegation leader to Torrance.

Representatives from various cities across California took turns announcing their unique policy initiatives. Midway through, Torrance City Councilmember John Kaji took the stage. The opening featured a visual presentation of a junior high school baseball team led by the father of Los Angeles Dodgers player Shohei Ohtani, followed by an introduction of Torrance City's friendship city relationships with Oshu City in Iwate Prefecture as well as Bizen City in Okayama Prefecture, home of pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto. Then, the sister city exchange with Kashiwa City was introduced. Noticing us in the audience, Councilmember Kaji introduced us from the stage. Warm applause filled the hall in recognition of the bond between the two cities, spanning over 50 years of exchanges.



Councilmember Jon Kaji giving a presentation

Halloween Party with Foreign Residents (10/25)

The event was held in collaboration with Palette Kashiwa. International staff took the lead in decorating with pumpkins, spiders, skeletons, and more, creating a lively Halloween atmosphere. A total of 85 people participated, including 38 children and 23 foreign nationals. The children said, "Trick or Treat" and received candy in bags handmade by the staff. We read a Halloween picture book in both English and Japanese. Children learned the names of skeleton parts in English through a dance, then arranged skeleton pieces blindfolded. Children dressed as ghosts, Spider-Man, princesses, pumpkins, etc. won prizes in a costume contest. Finally, everyone hit a pumpkin-shaped piñata to get the candy inside, bringing the party to a close.



Many parents and children at the party

Kashiwa International Exchange Festa 2025 (10/19)

Under the theme “A World of Mutual Recognition, Expanding Friendship — Starting Here in Kashiwa,” the event was held in the pedestrian zone of Howdy Mall at the East Exit of Kashiwa Station. Many citizens enjoyed an international exchange through performances of dances and music from Japan and abroad, informational booths introducing various activities, and food stalls offering dishes from different countries.

At a time when wars and conflicts continue around the world and divisions among people are deepening, this year’s theme resonates a meaningful message.

Below are reflections from representatives of four key areas of the event: performances, sister and friendship cities interaction booths, citizen-foreigner exchange booths, and the stamp rally.

Performances

Nine groups gave vibrant and colorful performances. Although the weather was unstable with light rain at times, we were fortunate to complete the entire program as scheduled. As is typical of the International Exchange Festival, the dances from Guam, Peru, and China each showed off their beautiful costumes and gorgeous dances. The rhythmic dancing by foreign members of KIRAKIC was also fun. It was valuable to be able to see traditional Tai Chi, Tate (sword performance), and Ryukyu musical instrument performances, which even Japanese people have few opportunities to see and hear. During the Tsugaru Scoop Shamisen performance, the audience enjoyed trying to play the “scoop” instruments.

First-time performers also visited other booths and food trucks serving ethnic dishes, which helped them learn more about the activities of the Kashiwa International Relations Association. We hope to continue welcoming broad participation from the community to make the Festa even more vibrant in the years to come.

Sister and Friendship Cities Exchange: Camden

With the Camden exchange program resuming in March 2025 after a long suspension, this year’s Camden booth became livelier than ever. The booth was filled with an Australian atmosphere, displaying drawings created by children in Camden and many photos from this year’s exchange activities.

Young participants who joined the Camden delegation engaged visitors by giving quizzes and personally explaining the exchange activities they took part in. Thanks to their involvement, the booth was constantly busy, providing a wonderful opportunity for many people to learn about our friendship city interaction with Camden.

Citizen-Foreigner Exchange: International Understanding

Three times a year, we host “Cross-cultural Teatime,” a lecture series introducing countries around the world with speakers who include foreign-born residents. At this year’s Festa, we held quizzes about the three countries recently featured in the program— Mexico, Chad, and Croatia. Despite some challenging questions, visitors eagerly participated while deepening their knowledge. We also sold imported foods and goods, mainly from Europe. By offering unique items such as Croatian seasonings, authentic Italian pasta sauce, Austrian jam, and handmade Indonesian batik coasters, we enjoyed lively conversations with visitors about foreign cultures and cuisine.

Stamp Rally

Visitors — especially children — had a great time collecting stamps by visiting ten different booths and participating in quizzes or games. Those who collected all ten stamps received a small prize.

(Videos of the Festa, including coverage broadcast on JCOM, are available via the QR code.)



The festival was crowded with many citizens.



Tsugaru Scoop Shamisen performance



Peruvian traditional dances



Camden Booth



Torrance Booth



What is the correct answer?



Japanese culture experience



December Events

Japanese Shonan Classes(Winter Vacation 12/22-1/7)		
Online Classes		
Sun	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo, Primary II; Chukyu kara Manabu Nihongo</i>
Sun	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo, Primary II</i>
In-person Classes (Shonan Kinrin Center(former Shonan Hoken Center))		
Thu	10:00 a.m. - noon	<i>Minna no Nihongo, Primary I(3 classes) Primary II</i>
Sun	10:00 a.m. - noon	<i>Minna no Nihongo, Primary I(3 classes)</i>
Japanese Kashiwa/Kashiwanoha Classes(Winter Vacation 12/21-1/12)		
Online Classes		
Tue	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 38-)</i>
Wed	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary 1 (Unit 7-)</i>
Thu	1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Conversation Elementary
Fri	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 36-)</i>
In-person Classes (Palette Kashiwa)		
Tue	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary 1 (Unit 1-/Unit 14 - /Unit 24-), Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 36 -)</i>
Wed	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Elementary & Intermediate
Fri	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary 1 (Unit 11 -)</i>
Sat	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<i>Hiragana, Katakana; Minna no Nihongo Primary 1(Unit 4 -/Unit 16 -); Minna no Nihongo Primary 2(Unit 28-)</i>
In-person Classes (Thu: Kashiwanoha Service Corner, Sat: Kenmin Plaza)		
Thu	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Elementary (first half/second half)
Thu	1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Hiragana, Katakana
Sat	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Conversation Intermediate

Free Legal Advice and Administrative Procedure Support for Foreign Residents

To foreign residents. Are you in need of help? Lawyers and administrative procedure specialists are available for consultation. You can ask for specialists' advice on issues such as family or partner violence, divorce, visa procedures, and problems at work. Reservation necessary

D Wednesday, December 24, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **P** Palette Kashiwa MTR A **R** the KCC Office

<Announcements from Other Organizations>



●Members Wanted! Kashiwa International Relations Association (KIRA)

Would you like to join us and take part in international exchange activities? Let's plan and organize various events while interacting with people from different countries! For more details, please visit our website.

Information for Foreign Residents from Kashiwa City

Consultation for Foreign Residents

Available in English (Thu), Chinese (Wed and Fri), Spanish (Mon), and Korean (2nd and 4th Tue) from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Consultation Counter for Foreign Residents (City Hall Main Office Building, 3rd floor).

Tel: 04 - 7168 - 1033

No reservation required.

Email distribution service from Kashiwa City

Sign up to receive email announcement from the city, such as information on natural disasters, crimes, and fires of your area in the language of your choice. Scan the QR code and register!



Multilingual "Koho Kashiwa," monthly official city bulletin

Scan the QR code and select your language under "Foreign Language" to read the official city bulletin, "Koho Kashiwa," selected and translated for foreign residents.



NHK World-JAPAN's website has been renewed. Available in multiple languages.

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/multilingual_links/



Questions?

Please contact the office of
Kashiwa Cross-cultural Center (KCC)

Tel: 04-7157-0281 Fax: 04-7165-7321
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.
Closed on Sundays and national holidays