



KCC Newsletter

February, 2026

Kashiwa Cross-cultural Center, Palette Kashiwa
1-7-1-301 Kashiwa,
Kashiwa, Chiba, Japan 277-0005
■TEL: 04-7157-0281 ■FAX: 04-7165-7321
■E-MAIL: kcc@kira-kira.jp
■URL: <https://www.kcc.kira-kira.jp>



Vol.
118

Announcement

Call for Audiences: The 15th English Speech Contest

D Saturday, February 14, 2:00 p.m. **P** Amuser Kashiwa Crystal Hall
C Ten contestants residing, working, or studying in Kashiwa (junior high school age and above) will give speeches on themes of their choice. Admission is free. Awards include the Kashiwa Mayor's Award, Audience Award, and other awards. We hope you will attend. For details, please visit our website.

Call for Audiences: The 10th Japanese Speech Contest by Foreign Residents in Kashiwa

Foreign residents will speak in Japanese about their experiences living in Japan and their home countries.

D Sunday, February 15, noon - 4:00 p.m. **P** Palette Kashiwa Open Space
Viewing Registration: Directly at the KCC Office or email to <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp>.
N ① Venue: 70 people ② Live Stream: 100 people
For details, please visit our website.



Hina Dolls Festival Meetup

Join us in making Japanese-style flower arrangements and celebrating the traditional event, Hinamatsuri!

D Saturday, February 21, 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
P Palette Kashiwa, Multipurpose Space A **F** ¥1,800 (includes flower materials)
N First 15 people, residents of Kashiwa city or surrounding areas. Elementary school children must be accompanied by a guardian.
A Directly at the KCC office or by email to <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp> from Sunday, February 1.



Peach blossom flower arrangement

Early Spring Walking Tour: Tour of the Hina Doll Displays at Yoshida Residence and Daitoin Temple

Let's walk from TX Kashiwanoha Campus Station to tour the Yoshida Residence, a National Important Cultural Property, and view the Hina Doll displays. (Approx. 5km)

D Sunday, February 22, 12:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Meeting/Dismissal: TX Kashiwanoha Campus Station, East Exit
N First 15 people
F ¥500 (includes sweet Azuki bean soup)
A Directly at the KCC Office or by email to <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp>.
*Wear comfortable walking clothes and shoes. Bring drinks, a towel, etc.
*You may leave early at the Yoshida Residence or Daitoin Temple.



Hina doll display at Yoshida Residence

Cross-cultural Teatime

"Burkina Faso: Land of Noble People - Those Fighting Desertification in the Sahel Region"

We will hear about community-based international cooperation initiatives in the Sahel region of West Africa, including efforts to confront ongoing desertification by working hand-in-hand with local people and utilizing traditional agricultural techniques.

D Saturday, February 28, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
P Palette Kashiwa Meeting Rooms B & C
L Noriko Tamura (Former staff of NGO Green Sahel) **N** 50 **F** ¥400
A Directly at KCC Office or by email to <boshu-1@kira-kira.jp>.



Ms. Noriko Tamura

<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.

Online International Exchange Salon Easy Japanese: Enjoy Communication with Questioning Skills (11/20/2025)

With Japanese language instructor Chie Uchida, we learned how to ask questions in easy-to-understand language for foreign beginners learning Japanese.

Here's an example we worked on. A foreigner was asked to buy a Japanese souvenir but does not know its name. "I only know simple Japanese. Please tell me the name." To avoid misunderstandings, we asked questions that were easy to answer. Questions like, "Is it big?/Is it small?" "Can you eat it?" "Is it sweet?" — questions that can be answered with "YES" or "NO." Also, having it drawn as a picture or expressing it physically through gestures was helpful. Furthermore, we learned that words ending in "-rareru" which Japanese people use casually, such as 'taberareru' (can be eaten), are hard to understand for foreigners. The instructor explained that asking, "Tabemasu ka?" (Do you eat it?) is better. This made us realize how difficult it is to use Japanese that truly gets across. But when it does get across, communication becomes enjoyable for both parties.

Online International Exchange Salon Do You Know About LGBTQ? (12/18/2025)

Ms. Rie Nakamitsu, who has attended an international conference at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, is the principal of Fujigokoro Elementary School in Kashiwa City, and regularly gives lectures to children, students, and citizens' groups. In the lecture, she provided specific and easy-to-understand explanations based on the situations that she had actually come across.

We gained valuable insights: There was a time when LGBTQ was considered a kind of disease, but the current view is that it is not a disease and does not require treatment. To assume that you yourself are being "normal" is one form of unconscious bias. "Being different" is not "being wrong."

Learning that sexual minorities make up about one in ten people while left-handed individuals account for 11% of the population was surprising. It also made us realize LGBTQ individuals are closer to us than we think, and that awareness campaigns need to be conducted in various forms. We plan to hold another session next year. "Everyone is different, and everyone is good."

L: Lesbian, G: Gay, B: Bisexual, T: Transgender, Q: Questioning (people whose gender identity is unclear, or who cannot or do not wish to identify)

Kashiwa Youth Sumo Tour (11/22/2025)

On a warm sunny autumn day, we held a meetup program at the Kashiwa Youth Sumo Dojo. Fifteen participants, including three foreigners, observed the powerful training sessions up close. After that, the participants tried shiko (stomping) and suriashi (foot sliding). Their unfamiliar movements brought smiles all around. Later in the event, all 34 people there — including the instructor, staff, and young sumo wrestlers — mingled. During interviews with the young wrestlers, their candid words and smiles uplifted everyone there. The instructor's talk on the spirit nurtured through sumo also deeply impressed the participants. Feedback included comments like, "I'll praise my child when I get home," "It was my first time seeing sumo live — truly wonderful," and "I learned a lot," which reaffirmed the event's significance.



At Kashiwa Youth Sumo Dojo

Exchange Programs with Sister & Friendship Cities of Kashiwa

New Year Online Exchange with Students in Torrance City (1/4)

Students of Kashiwa and Torrance enjoyed an online exchange meeting during the New Year holidays. Around 20 participants from both cities joined, some from home and others gathered at Palette Kashiwa. The event began with self-introductions, including memories of visiting Torrance or Chengde, followed by an internet quiz game "KAHOOTS!" featuring questions about Japan and the world. Our next goal is to hold talks in breakout rooms. Students without the experience of visiting sister cities are also welcome. The language: English. We aim to bring together students in Kashiwa and students from Kashiwa's four sister and friendship cities. For inquiries regarding KEYS (Kashiwa Exchange Youth Society), please contact the KCC office.



Full Circle Moments (Back to Kashiwa for the Second Time)

Ms. Yuko Wilson, Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), Kashiwa Municipal Kashiwa High School

Q: When did you start working at Kashiwa Municipal Kashiwa High School?

A: I started on August 21, 2025.

Q: We heard that you first came to Kashiwa as a Torrance exchange student. Which year was that?

A: I came to Kashiwa in 2019 as a member of the 46th delegation, led by Jessica Haugen. At that time, I was a second-year student at Torrance South High School.

My father is Puerto Rican American, and my mother is Japanese, so I have visited Japan many times to see my grandparents. However, the first time I came to Japan alone, apart from my family, was for a sister-city exchange program.

Q: Your Japanese is excellent. How did you study Japanese?

A: At home, I speak Japanese with my mother and English with my father, younger brother, and younger sister. Until the third grade, I studied reading and writing Japanese at a supplementary Japanese school. I like Japanese manga, so I learned a lot of Japanese through manga. I also studied Japanese in high school and university.

Q: Why did you decide to teach at this school?

A: One of the things I wanted to do was to study Japanese culture and language. Another was to support children as a social worker. I felt that working at a Japanese school would allow me to do both.

Q: What were you doing in the United States before coming to Japan?

A: I worked as a social worker, offering support on a suicide hotline, and as a school counselor.

Q: Is there a difference between your visit in 2019 as an exchange student and this time as an ALT?

A: What has not changed is that the people of Kashiwa are warm. What has changed is that, as an exchange student, I participated in many activities prepared for us during our three-week stay. This time, as an ALT, we plan activities ourselves and take the lead in guiding students.

For example, I visited Sawayaka Chiba Kenmin Plaza as an exchange student, but when we held an English Camp at the same venue, I worked with Chris, another ALT, to plan the program and support the students.

Q: How is your life at this school?

A: It is very enjoyable. The students are enthusiastic about their studies, and the teachers provide a lot of support. I also participate in extracurricular club activities.

In the pop music club, Chris plays the guitar and I play the keyboard. In the English conversation club, we create TikTok videos and share them in group chats.

Students at Kashiwa High School greet others politely and have good manners. Since there are always ALTs from Torrance at the school, I think communication between students and foreign teachers works very well.

Q: What would you like your students to learn?

A: For students who are interested in English, I want them to gain confidence and continue improving. For students who are not very interested in English, I hope they will develop skills such as speaking and communicating with people that are useful in any career.

Q: Was there anything inconvenient or surprising after coming to Japan?

A: I was surprised that garbage separation is more detailed than in California. I also felt that students at Kashiwa High School have less homework than students at American high schools.

Q: You are very busy. How do you spend your days off?

A: I go to nearby cafés, and also attend church.

(Interview: Yoko Nakano, Noriko Fujita)



Ms. Yuko Wilson

Announcement

Online International Exchange Salon

Let's Connect with the World of Sign Language

— Try communicating with easy and friendly sign language —

D Thursday, February 19, 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. Instructor: Ms. Masako Ishii (Sign Language Instructor)

How to participate: Online (Zoom)

F Free

N First 30 people

A By Wednesday, February 18, directly at the KCC office or by email to boshu-1@kira-kira.jp

Participants will receive the Zoom URL on the day of the event.



February Events

Japanese Shonan Classes		
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)		
Thu	10:00 a.m. - noon	<i>Minna no Nihongo, Primary I(5 classes) Primary II</i>
Sun	10:00 a.m. - noon	<i>Minna no Nihongo, Primary I(5 classes)</i>
Japanese Kashiwa/Kashiwanoha Classes		
Online Classes		
Tue	7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 44-)</i>
Wed	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 10-)</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 41-)</i>
In-person Classes (Palette Kashiwa)		
Tue	10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 1-/Unit 19 -)</i> <i>Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 29-/Unit 43-)</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 I (Unit 18 -)</i>
Sat	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<i>Minna no Nihongo Primary I (Unit 7-/Unit 23 -);</i> <i>Minna no Nihongo Primary II (Unit 35-)</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, February 25, 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