



Food Security Club

Rena Ozaki
From Edmonton,
Canada



Cityscape of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Since February, I have been studying at a public high school in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The greatest growth during my five-month study abroad has been gaining self-confidence. Canada has a large immigrant population, bringing diverse cultures, languages, and values. Without Japanese people, friends, or family around, and with less-than-fluent English, I had to think and act independently.

Though it sounds nice to say I'm enjoying life with multinational friends from around the world and different cultures, the reality is that there are very few opportunities to befriend local Canadians.

When I consulted a teacher about this, they introduced me to the "Food Security Club," which had no other foreign students. Today, I want to talk about my activities there.

At my school, many students are not financially well-off, and not everyone can afford three meals a day. The Food Security activities aim to address this issue by ensuring that anyone, regardless of their family's income, can have access to food. In addition to breakfast before the first class of the day, snacks, yogurt, cheese, apples, oranges and instant noodles are provided for free during breaks and lunchtime.

To make sure anyone can freely and comfortably receive these services, food items are placed in various corners rather than being handed out directly.

The methods for raising funds to buy food are also unique. Twice a week, school-wide events are held through the student council to raise funds. Recently, these events included tie-dyeing school T-shirts, water gun fights, and teacher vs. student hockey games, with participation fees going towards Food Security.

I really like these activities and hope that one day we can implement similar initiatives in Japan.



Food Security Club



Holding Firmly to My Own Axis

Chie Fujimaru
From Ghana



University of Ghana

Since March 2024, I have been studying at the University of Ghana as an exchange student from Kochi University. In this intercultural environment, confusion and trouble are everyday occurrences, but the most important lesson I've learned is to "hold firmly to my own axis and express myself to protect it." It's easy to lose sight of your axis when your environment changes from Japan. Even if you have an axis, it's meaningless if you get swayed by others.

Every Friday night, other exchange students and dorm friends often invite me to parties. But for me, this is quite troubling. On Saturday mornings, I have Japanese volunteer classes from 9 AM to 1 PM, and Friday nights are precious time for preparing for these classes.

While I politely decline the Friday night invitations, I often wonder, "Isn't it better to participate in this valuable opportunity to meet exchange students from various countries?" and friends' advice, "It's best to interact with as many people as possible during your study abroad," also comes to mind, making me question my choices. I even felt a sense of loneliness, as if I was being separated from the community.

One day, I had the chance to talk with a friend about the importance of having a clear goal, or axis. We shared the thought that "an unwavering goal makes precious time meaningful, but to protect your own axis, you sometimes have to clearly communicate your desires and dislikes." This encounter allowed me to reconsider and reaffirm my own axis.

Living in Ghana is a passage in my life, not the goal. I became clearer in thinking, "I should carry through with what I want to do and what I ought to do, with a view to the life that continues after studying abroad."

Even if I feel lonely because of making different choices from others, I now realize I can be confident in my own decisions.



With local kids in Ada

-EOD-