



MAEBASHI FOCUS

Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Newsletter



Towards the beginning of the month, 15 high school students and 3 chaperones from sister city Birmingham in Alabama visited Maebashi to participate in a student exchange for the first time in six years. I served as interpreter during a courtesy meeting with the mayor, issued directions while traveling by motorcoach, and stayed with the group over the course of four days. As the visit marked the high schoolers' first stay in Japan, supporting everyone while reminiscing about my own first Japan trip during high school was very gratifying. A university business trip and marathon exchange trip to Maebashi also took place in June and August of this year, respectively. I am extremely happy that in-person exchange between both cities is flourishing again after a long pause due to COVID-19.

A famous Japanese saying roughly translates to “once-in-a-lifetime experience.” I have had the privilege to be involved in various exchange projects, and this phrase crosses my mind whenever visitors come to Maebashi. I am thankful for our time spent together, from the moment of meeting to the moment of parting. I feel even more passionate about international exchange, and I hope to further strengthen and deepen friendly relations between Birmingham and Maebashi. I sincerely hope for the chance to pay a visit to Birmingham one day.

