

# MAEBASHI FOCUS

## Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Newsletter

Howdy y'all!

Following up on last time's newsletter, I, along with my fellow JOMO JET members, finally held the movie event I had been working on for many months. Things got pretty hectic as we approached the deadline, but on the day of the event, we somehow managed to put together a fun and engaging experience for everyone!

For those who did not read the previous newsletter, here's a brief explanation: since December of last year, I have been planning a movie event called JOMOVie Day (a pun on the name of my organization, JOMO JET, and "movie day"). After many trials and tribulations, I was finally able to hold it. Surprisingly, all 30 spots filled up, which was far more than I had expected.



Event Introduction

As for the details of the event, I gave an introduction and a brief explanation, then transitioned into the screenings themselves. For this event, I secured screening rights to short films that have received numerous prestigious awards. For example, for our English-language film, we were able to screen "World of Tomorrow" by the famous animator Don Hertzfeldt. The film itself has won awards such as the Grand Jury Prize for Short Film at the Sundance Film Festival and Best Animated Short at SXSW, and it was even nominated for an Oscar at the 88th Academy Awards. Needless to say, I was very excited to share these films with everyone in attendance.



Discussion

In order to stay true to JOMO JET's mission—to foster cultural exchange in Gunma—I decided to include a discussion section after the screenings. Participants were divided into groups and given discussion topics related to the films. For example, one question asked whether the humor in each film translated well to the audience despite cultural and language barriers. In my group, at least, much of the dark humor of the American film went over the Japanese audience's heads,



Projectionist's POV

and I'm sure that in other groups, those who were less familiar with Japanese culture did not fully understand some of the jokes in the Japanese films.

That being said, I think the overall themes and messages were generally understood by everyone. Admittedly, the films I chose could be described as "strange," to put it politely, so even seasoned film buffs would probably struggle to fully understand them on a first viewing. During the discussion in my group, there were many moments when I heard interpretations I had never even considered before, and simply listening to how other people thought about the films helped me gain a much deeper appreciation and understanding of them myself.

As for actually running the event, even though I thought I had thoroughly planned everything, we still ran into some basic problems that I can't believe I overlooked. For example, I scheduled the sign-up window from 2:30 p.m. to 2:50 p.m., with the screening beginning immediately afterward. Looking back, this was far too short of a window.

On the day of the event, I had naively assumed everyone would arrive on time, but five people showed up late. Because of this, we decided to begin the screening without them and had the theater staff quietly let them in during the film.

There were also other issues, such as the lack of a vending machine on the premises and some attendees getting lost. However, problems aside, being allowed to plan and run my own event provided me with invaluable experience. I feel that the next time I organize an event, I will be able to plan much more thoroughly and respond to problems much more quickly on the day itself.

Overall, the event was a huge success thanks to the help I received from my friends in JOMO JET and from everyone who came and participated. I'm already looking forward to hosting JOMOVie Day again next year!