

MAEBASHI FOCUS

Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) Newsletter

Howdy, everyone!

Since my last newsletter, it's been an eventful month! I've had the chance to experience a fireworks festival for the first time, participate in a radio recording session, join a language exchange event twice, and interpret for guests from our sister city, Birmingham. In addition, In preparation for the upcoming Maebashi Masturi, I have also been attending *Danbee Odori* practice!

First, I was fortunate to experience the 69th annual Maebashi Fireworks Festival from the banks of the Tone River. It was my first time seeing such a spectacular display, and the mix of mouthwatering food stall aromas with the breathtaking backdrop of the river and surrounding mountains made it a truly unforgettable night. Not long after that, I was able to take part in JOMO JET's 23rd and 24th Re-Kaiwa events, where English and native Japanese speakers get the chance to converse with another. The atmosphere was lively and welcoming, and we had a great time sharing our favorite movies, music, and travel experiences, while also comparing aspects of our cultures with one another.

I also had the pleasure of interpreting for the runners from Birmingham during their visit to Maebashi for the 44th Akagi-Onuma Shirakaba Marathon. They were incredibly kind to both me and everyone involved, eagerly embracing a culture completely different from their own. As this was my first time interpreting professionally, I learned a great deal alongside them over the few days they were here. At their encouragement, I also ran the 5 km course alongside them. It was my first time participating in a race, but I had so much fun and can't wait to join the marathon again next year!

Around the same time, I had the chance to take part in a recording session at a real radio station! Admittedly, I do get tongue-tied from time to time—so many thanks (and apologies) to the audio engineer who patiently recorded and edited my segments!



Fireworks Festival



Mr. Mark Hales, Mr. Kerry Jenkins, and I



Danbee Dance

Finally, I'll be taking part in the 77th Maebashi Festival on October 12th! I'll be trying my hand at the Danbee Odori alongside other foreign residents of Maebashi. The practice is quite challenging, but it's a lot of fun. I'm not very good at dancing, but since everyone is so kind and supportive, I can join the practice without feeling pressured.

I'm truly looking forward to the Maebashi Festival!