

## **Reflection Journal- 27 MILE Programme**

Being part of the 27th MILE Programme is one opportunity that I will always be grateful for. The 10 days spent in Kanazawa, Japan was a short yet meaningful trip.

It has always been a dream of mine to participate in an overseas student exchange trip. Experiencing a culture, living as they do and getting to know the locals; these are things that I cannot experience if I was a tourist. Furthermore, Kanazawa is a place where I would love to visit one day after making many friends from Kanazawa Technical College (KTC). From Overseas Social Innovation Projects (OSIP) to the KTC Inbound Trip to Singapore, it was a great opportunity for me to meet and catch up with them.

One of the highlights of the trip was the homestay programme, where we get to live with our local host. Among my peers, I stayed the furthest from school. A 1 hour 30 minutes commute is needed to get to school and despite the long travelling distance in the early morning hours, my local host always ensures that she is at least 40 minutes early for school. Everyday, we would have to leave the home at 5 45 am sharp to catch the train. Often, it is perceived that the trains in Japan would be better than the ones in Singapore. It is true to a certain extent. Given that Kanazawa is in the countryside, its train system is not as advanced as the ones we see in Tokyo. It made me appreciate the train system we have in Singapore as the trains in Kanazawa do not arrive as frequently, it only comes at the intervals of 15 to 45 minutes. As punctuality is a form of respect and a value that the Japanese uphold, I have learnt to become more time aware.

My local host family is very environmentally friendly. The efforts they put in to sort the recyclable materials at home amazed me. They taught me what could be recycled and how to sort it. It made me more aware of the amount of waste one throws away everyday. Moreover, what intrigues me in Japan is the strong initiative to encourage locals to recycle. For example, for every plastic bottle washed and brought to the respective recycling collection area, a certain amount of points can be accumulated which can be used to offset the grocery shopping bill. I hope to be able to inculcate this into my daily life back in Singapore and possibly have more of such initiatives in Singapore.

More importantly, the love and care by my host family is beyond my expectations. Knowing that it was my first time visiting Japan and I have never seen snow, they went the extra miles to ensure that my time spent in Japan was a fulfilling one. During the weekends, we drove out of Kanazawa to Kyoto and when it snowed, despite the cold, they would still bring me out and encouraged me to play. My host mother treated me as if I was her own daughter and my

host buddy was like a little sister that I never have. It was very heartwarming and I am glad that they were my host family. They taught me that kindness has no boundaries.

Overall, I am thankful to be part of the 27th MILE Programme as it was one eye-opening trip.



*A picture of my host family and I*

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