



Nara JETNet 50th Event “International Arts Festival”

On June 14th, 2015, Nara JETNet held its 50th event, the “International Arts Festival” at the Kawanishi Cultural Hall. Nara JETNet is a committee which plans events to promote cultural exchange and understanding between the members of the JET programme and the citizens of Nara Prefecture. The organizers of JETNet events are the 5 Coordinators for International Relations (CIR) working in the Nara Prefectural Government. The members of JETNet are the rest of the JET programme participants located throughout Nara Prefecture. This event was put on by 41 JETs and saw about 300 people come out to participate in the various booths, activities and performances held throughout the day.

The event began at 12:30 with a musical performance by Tenri JHS Koto Club followed by the opening speech given by two of the CIRs, after which spectators were free to move around upstairs. On the second floor were country and region booths displaying the cultures of 14 different regions of the World: Canada, USA (5 booths: general presentation, Kentucky, Washington State, Arizona and California), Mexico, El Salvador, Jamaica, France, Singapore, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand. There were also activity rooms which allowed for people to participate in Arts & Crafts, Chinese Strap, Photobooth Activity, Dance lessons, Yunnori, Tea around the World, Face Painting, Art Expo and a Koto Workshop.

From 3:10pm, performances began inside the Cosmos Hall on the first floor. There was an arrangement of different cultural performances starting with the Kawanishi Taiko group, followed by another performance by Tenri JHS Koto Club, then a Piano Duet, a tribute to Hiroshi Itsuki, traditional Japanese “enka” singer, the Actor’s Art (comedy skit originally performed by Rowan Atkinson), Heart Felt and finally, various J-pop songs sung in English.

The day was a great success and enjoyed by all the Japanese visitors according to the survey. 93% of the 27 people who answered said they really enjoyed this event while 77% told us that the communication with the JET participants was very good. They also told us that it was a really fun event and that they will come to our future events. Visitors enjoyed the exchange with the JETs, as they were very enthusiastic and also due to the fact they do not usually interact with foreign cultures.

This event served as the last for many of our JETs and we would like to thank them for their continued hard work and support in Nara. As always we would also like to extend a huge thanks to the town of Kawanishi and all the visitors for supporting our event.

