



## Nara JETNet 52<sup>nd</sup> Event “Winter Festival”

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Nara JETNet held its 52<sup>nd</sup> event, “Winter festival” in the Nara City Nambu Public Hall. Nara JETNet is an organization 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 (CIRs) working at 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 29 JETs and saw 31 people from the prefecture come out to participate in the winter themed event held throughout the day.

The event began at 10:00am with the Opening Speech followed by a ‘snowball fight’, with snowballs made from old newspapers. Then, participants divided into 5-person groups and played a Korean version of “never have I ever” as an ice-breaking activity in order to introduce themselves. After the games, 2 American JETs, one of Laotian heritage and another of Chinese, made presentations about their cultures, focusing on how they spend New Year. All the participants listened carefully, and it was very interesting.

We had our lunch break at noon. At 1:00pm, we listened to a mini-concert of winter songs. Then, at 1:30pm, it was time to begin our afternoon activities!

- Word games: participants had to use their head to solve various English word puzzles.
- Hot cocoa: participants enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate drink to forget this cold winter.
- Snowflake craft: participants cut snow crystals out of pieces of paper
- Fir tree origami: participants made fir trees, a symbol of winter, from origami
- Chinese scented bag: Scented bags are often used by Chinese people during new year to wish themselves a year of good health, happiness and safety. This time, participants made by hand their own scented bag.
- Konginori: participants played this Korean game where they tried to juggle with a maximum of 5 marbles.
- Relay: participants competed as teams, running while holding balls with spoons, testing their abilities to use chopsticks, and so on.

At 3:20pm, we played musical chairs. At 3:40, the games ended and participants responded to a survey. After the closing speech, at around 4:00pm, the event ended. The day was a great success and enjoyed by all the Japanese participants according to the survey we conducted: 64% of the 29 people who answered said they really enjoyed the event, while all participants responded that the interaction with the JET participants was good. They also mentioned that it was very interesting as they heard for the first time about some foreign countries new years’ customs. Some people enjoyed practicing their English. Finally, families with young children said they also enjoyed the event, as all the staff cared about them and that their little children had fun.

We plan to continue to promote international exchange at the grass roots level. Thank you everyone for your input and participation! See you next time.

