



# JLGC NEWSLETTER

Japan Local Government Center ( CLAIR, New York )

Issue No. 95 / Feb 2019

*1. CLAIR Fellowship  
Exchange Program 2018  
(Page 1-6)*

*2. The New York Times  
Travel Show 2019 (Page 7)*

*3. JETAA Winter Activities  
(Page 8)*

## What is JLGC?

Japan Local Government Center, New York, works on behalf of prefecture and local governments in Japan to provide them with research and liaison services to support their efforts to adopt best practices in local public administration and to help them achieve their goals in fostering better international relations.

## 1. CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program 2018

The CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program 2018 was held from October 28th to November 6th.

This program affords senior state and local government officials an opportunity to experience

Japanese government administration firsthand. This year the program was held in Tokyo and Okayama Prefecture.



### Theme: Promotion of Okayama Industry

Okayama Prefecture has a long history as a manufacturing center for automobiles, agricultural machinery and shipbuilding. Utilizing the ultra-precise production technologies accumulated in the course of the development of these industries, the prefecture is currently focusing on the cultivation of next-generation industries in fields such as transportation and energy.

Participants held discussions with their counterparts in Japan. Also, they interacted with local people and experienced the beauty of Okayama scenery (Korakuen Garden etc.), and immersed themselves in the traditional Japanese culture (tea ceremony etc.) of the area.



3 Park Avenue, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor

New York, NY 10016-5902

212.246.5542 office • 212.246.5617 fax

[www.jlgc.org](http://www.jlgc.org)

## Comments from the participants.

---



**Ms. Michele Meade**

**State Fiscal Monitor, Division of Local Government Services, State of New Jersey**

**Chair of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) International Committee**

I have had the good fortune to travel with local government officials to many places around the world while participating with the ICMA International Committee. These experiences have been transformational for me. Instead of the world feeling bigger and more distant, the world seems smaller and more intimate. I never fail to be amazed at how people from different countries are much more alike than we are different. We may look different and have different words to describe physical objects and different ways to describe our thoughts, but on the most fundamental level, we are human. We find humor together, we care about our communities the same, we love our children and our mothers and fathers; we worry about their health and welfare the same. And we want to leave this planet of ours in a prosperous and healthy state for future generations.

On this trip, through the CLAIR Fellowship Program, I participated with eight local government colleagues from the United States and Canada in the annual Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar in Japan. Our trip began in Tokyo with a seminar on the structure of Japanese local government, discussions about population loss and a view towards promoting a world-famous city. Tokyo provided a glimpse of the old and the new of Japanese culture which neatly coexist through architecture and art.

The main portion of the seminar was focused on economic development and industry in Okayama Prefecture in the western portion of Japan. Okayama is known as the land of sunshine and it delivered on its promise! We were warmly greeted by Governor Ibaragi and from there began a 5-day visit where we learned about the innovative collaborations between the prefectural government and its small and medium businesses. I was particularly impressed with the Industrial Technology Center of Okayama Prefecture, a governmental function, which shows a partnership with industry that is different from the typical model in North America. The Technology Center supports small and medium businesses with high level testing facilities and collaborative product development to help businesses succeed. This is a model from which we can learn. There were also informative



visits to several Okayama businesses with innovative products from medical and assistive devices to machinery to the new Japanese blue jeans which are currently sold in the United States.

In addition, we explored Okayama's rich culture and history – including a traditional Japanese tea ceremony and famous Japanese garden, a visit to a shrine, the traditional craft of Bizen pottery, the harvest of persimmons, as well as products made with the delicious Okayama peaches and muscat grapes. Our hosts in Okayama were fun and gracious and I thank them for their time, informative site visits and thought-provoking discussions as well as for their generous hospitality.

A homestay capped off the visit to Okayama! I spent my time with the Ozaki family where I tried on a kimono, slept on a traditional Japanese futon (extremely comfortable!), tried many homemade Japanese dishes (delicious!), visited historic Kurashiki and lunched at a Kaiten-zushi, a sushi restaurant where the plates with the sushi wind through the restaurant on a conveyor belt moving past every table, counter and seat (fun and yummy!). To be welcomed into the home of strangers who don't look like you and speak your language only sparingly, share meals with them and to leave as friends is an extraordinary experience. It makes the world small and shows the strength of the human experience surpasses language and cultural differences.



**Ms. Martha Brown**  
**Deputy Commissioner, Milwaukee Dept. of City Development**  
**National League of Cities (NLC)**

While I have enjoyed two previous personal trips to Japan, I am grateful to CLAIR for affording me the opportunity to gain perspectives that relate to my own 40-year career in municipal government. The lectures, site visits, and opinion exchanges opened my eyes to the ways in which Japan has organized planning and service delivery.

I was particularly impressed by strategies through which national policy is interpreted and implemented at the local level with respect to economic development. We learned about

many such approaches, including the meticulous national program to foster traditional crafts production; the wide array of research and development services available to small industrial firms in Okayama Prefecture, and the “All-Japan” diplomatic partnership. These efforts are practical, thoughtfully designed, holistic and effective. They illustrate a deep commitment to cooperation among all levels of government.

Thanks to the careful, thorough planning by the CLAIR team, our days and evenings were filled with a satisfying variety of experiences and encounters. The CLAIR staff who accompanied our group provided outstanding support, valuable context and commentary



**Mrs. Angela Morgan**  
**President, Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and**  
**Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)**

It was a privilege to be part of the 2018 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program with other state/provincial and municipal colleagues from the United States and Canada. The experience deepened my knowledge of Japanese government structures and culture. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about the challenges facing Japan's local governments and the strategies they are putting in place to address these challenges. All the Japanese officials we met with were open and welcoming, providing a great opportunity to share ideas and knowledge.

In Okayama Prefecture, we learned how local governments support industry and some of the innovative businesses that thrive in this area. The homestay was the highlight of the exchange, allowing me to get an inside look at Japanese culture and families. I thank all the representatives from CLAIR and Okayama Prefecture for their hospitality, attention to detail, and organization. It was a wonderful experience that I will continue to share with others for many years.

### **Don't forget to look at here articles!**

- [National League of Cities \(NLC\)](#)
- [The Council of State Governments \(CSG\)](#)



## Fellowship Exchange Program 2018

Date	Schedule	Accommodation
Oct 28	<b><u>Arrive in Japan</u></b> Orientation	Tokyo
Oct 29	<b><u>Tokyo Program</u></b> Lecture : Japanese Local Government System Site Visit : Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) Building Lecture : Bureau of Industrial and Labor Affairs, TMG Welcome Reception hosted by CLAIR	Tokyo
Oct 30	<b><u>Tokyo Program</u></b> Site Visit : EDO-TOKYO MUSEUM Site Visit : Japan Traditional Crafts Aoyama Square Opinion Exchange with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Courtesy Visit to Director-General for Policy Coordination (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)) Opinion Exchange with MIC Staff Welcome Reception hosted by MIC	Tokyo
Oct 31	<b><u>Regional Program (Okayama Prefecture)</u></b> Presentation on Okayama Prefecture Courtesy Visit to Governor of Okayama Prefecture Welcome Reception hosted by Okayama Prefecture	Okayama
Nov 1	<b><u>Regional Program (Okayama Prefecture)</u></b> Site Visit : Industrial Technology Center of Okayama Prefecture Site Visit : Daiya Industrial Co., Ltd. Site Visit : Yuasa System Co., Ltd.	Okayama
Nov 2	<b><u>Regional Program (Okayama Prefecture)</u></b> Site Visit : Kurashiki Bikan Historical Quarter Site Visit : JAPAN BLUE Co., Ltd. Site Visit : Kojima Jeans Street Site Visit : Seto Ohashi Bridge	Okayama
Nov 3	<b><u>Regional Program (Okayama Prefecture)</u></b> Site Visit : Okayama International Center Site Visit : Okayama Korakuen Garden Meet with Host Family	Okayama
Nov 4	<b><u>Homestay</u></b>	Okayama
Nov 5	<b><u>Regional Program (Okayama Prefecture)</u></b> Evaluation discussion of visit to Okayama Farewell Lunch hosted by CLAIR Return to Tokyo	Okayama
Nov 6	<b><u>Departure from Japan</u></b>	—



## CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program 2018



This page in clockwise order from top left:

- (1) Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building ,
- (2) EDO-TOKYO MUSEUM in Tokyo ,
- (3) Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications ,
- (4) Industrial Technology Center of Okayama Prefecture ,
- (5) Tea ceremony (@Okayama International Center) ,
- (6) Meeting with officials of Okayama Prefecture



## *2. The New York Times Travel Show 2019*

From January 25th to 27th, 2019, we attended The New York Times Travel Show, one of the biggest travel shows in North America, to promote tourism to local Japan as an exhibiter at the Nippon Booth. The Nippon Booth was mainly sponsored by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) and co-sponsored by Japan Local Government Center, some Japanese travel agencies, tourism bureaus, and railway companies to showcase the charm found all over Japan.

On the first day, we proudly presented a live calligraphy performance by Ms. Shunkin Takahashi, a local calligrapher, where visitors could ask her to write some words or learn how to write calligraphy from her. It was such a great success that we regrettably had to stop accepting participants in order to finish it within the designated time.

Through the Travel Show, we were introducing must-see areas around Japan, especially where members of our staff are from, as well as temples and shrines, by promoting collecting “Go-shu-in” (red stamps with artistic calligraphy you can get there) with our own leaflet made to look like a Go-shu-in Book. You can see some examples of temples and shrines that we were featuring at this event [here](#).

In addition, at the JTB booth, Gunma, Niigata, Nagano and Gifu Prefectures promoted the attractions in their areas, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government was also exhibiting their own booth while doing a candy workshop.

The number of foreign tourists visiting Japan is increasing every year. We hope more and more people discover the attractions in Japan, especially in local areas where you can experience unique Japanese culture.





### 3. *JETAA Winter Activities*

We still have some more cold winter days, but JETAA chapters' activities are hot! We would like to introduce some JETAA activities held in the winter season.



The JETAA Rocky Mountain chapter and the Japan America Society of Colorado together hosted a *Nengajō* making event on December 1st, 2018. Around 30 participants were able to come and learn about the traditions behind Japanese New Years cards and just be creative, making something fun to send to their friends. JET alumna Tracey Petruff (ALT, Nagasaki Prefecture) led the event, showing how to cut stencils

and even create stamps to make the cards festive. Of course, on hand were motifs for the year of the boar, and people got busy creating the cutest *Inoshishi* or just used common symbols of Japan like Mt. Fuji or bonsai trees. For many of the alumni present, it brought back nostalgic memories of elementary school visits filled with lots of *genki* kids. (Adam H. Lisbon, President, JETAA Rocky Mountain Chapter)



New England JETAA held its 10th annual cross chapter ski trip from January 25th to 27th, 2019. The ski trip is open to JET alumni, as well as friends and family of JETs from chapters across North America. This year, we welcomed 25 participants from the New England and New York chapters for a fun weekend of winter activities and great company.

We have traditionally held the trip in Killington, Vermont - the largest ski resort on the East Coast. Although skiing and snowboarding are the primary attractions, participants are also able to enjoy other outdoor



activities such as snowshoeing, tubing, skating, or just visiting some quaint boutiques and cafes. We also host a group dinner on Saturday night for everyone to connect and get to know other members of the JET family. We have been fortunate to have great turnout over the years, and we hope to keep building connections between fellow JET's in the years to come.

(Josephine Chong, President, JETAA New England Chapter)

