

Community Service in an Outdoor Classroom

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Preparation and Training

Before and during camp, students spend hours becoming acquainted and preparing for various enterprises. In addition to preparing food and materials, students are trained to lead games and activities for the children of a rural community. Such readiness and rehearsal pay off as working with kids is a major challenge!



Developing Community Through Service and Mentoring

Students serve the community of Ikuno through conducting activities including cleaning historical heritage buildings, translating signs for tourist attractions, and conducting English game activities for children. Through working together to achieve common goals, students expand their motivation through experiencing failures, successes, and developing meaningful relationships. Accordingly, they return to the classroom with renewed energy and purpose to invest not only in their own learning process, but also with a higher desire to contribute to their local communities. Consequently, a ripple effect occurs as such contributions positively affect their peers back at school.



Appreciating Japanese Culture

To build bridges between cultures, it is imperative to know and appreciate one's own culture and heritage. That is one reason students are given the opportunity to visit historical sites in the Asago area of Hyogo Prefecture. Pictured below are the Takeda Castle ruins, the Ikuno Silver mines, the birthplace of actor Shimura Takashi, and homes dating from the Edo and Meiji Periods. These homes are exclusively made available to accommodate our students for two or three nights.



Follow-up and Maintaining Relationships

Two months after the camp, our students reunite with the children from the Ikuno community by hosting them for the university's annual school festival. Students prepare activities for the kids, including English games, cookie decorating, crafts, dancing, face painting, wearing costumes, and more. Maintaining ties provides more opportunities for our students to teach, mentor, and deepen relationships.

