

By Michelle Quinn

Christchurch - Kurashiki 2006

We left on the 29th September very early in the morning. Everyone was a bit nervous as for most of us it was the first time overseas without family.

After a very long plane trip we finally arrived in Japan. We then got on the shinkansen to Kurashiki. When we arrived we stayed in a hotel the first night and the next day we met our host families.

We were all a bit nervous about meeting our host families and wondered what they would be like. My host family were really kind and we did a lot of fun things together like shopping, an amusement park, Tivoli Park and lots of other things as well. My host sister Yuka was really into music and I often went to watch her brass band practice after school which was cool.

Going to a Japanese school was a huge experience for and one I will never forget. It was really different to New Zealand schools especially the school lunches which were really good. All the kids at school were very friendly and made me feel welcome there.

We went to a lot of places in and around Kurashiki as a group including: making Daruma dolls, Washuzan Amusement Park, Aeon shopping mall, Miyajima Island and Hiroshima.

Hiroshima was one of the highlights of the trips for me. Especially when we put the cranes on the Peace Memorial Shrine. The museum was interesting but sad too. It was a great day and one I will never forget.

I had a great time in Japan and the two best experiences were definitely my host family and Hiroshima. It was sad to leave Japan, especially my host family, but I hope to return one day and see them all again.