

Jamie Cave

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### Christchurch Kurashiki Sister City Committee: 2006 Student Exchange Tour

My name is Jamie Cave and I was one of 14 members of Christchurch's 2006 Japanese student exchange group led by David and Junko Bolam-Smith.

Going to Japan was the best experience of my life. For a period of 16 days I did things I never thought I would do, met people I am so happy to have met and been to places not many get the chance to go to. So when we were all asked to report back on the trip I thought WOW, how am I ever going to fit what I want to tell people on to a few pages?!

During the trip we were each allocated a host family with whom we spent a lot of time with. We went to school with our host brothers and sisters for 3 days. I happily attended Kurashiki Daiichi Junior High School where I participated in various activities and classes, some of which included flower arrangement, tea ceremony, Japanese calligraphy and their normal music, art, science, English, Japanese and P.E. periods. School was very interesting and nothing like I expected it to be!

On one day we even visited an elementary school. The children were so small and cute!!! A gathering was held where we performed various items including our group song 'The National Anthem', performed with poi. The students all sang 'Take me out to the Ball Game' for us. After that we got to spend lots of time with the kids playing games, and making udon noodles!

One of the more educational places we visited was Hiroshima City and the Peace Memorial Museum. On the Sadako Sasaki Remembrance Shrine we placed 1000 origami cranes that we made to represent New Zealand's support for nuclear world peace. Being in Hiroshima was a moving experience that I will never forget, to be standing somewhere so many people died, to be within meters of one of the only remaining buildings after the bomb, to learn how it really went down and what people had to endure. It's not something you can get from books or television to say the least.

On that same day our group took a boat to Miyajima Island on which sits one of the most famous shrines in Japan. The shrine is actually located in the sea and is renowned for its endurance to the weather and earthquakes. The island was very beautiful.

Another day we were taken to Okayama Castle, it was spectacular! Right next to it was one of what was considered to be the four prettiest gardens in Japan, Kourakuen Gardens. I enjoyed it there.

The very best day I have concluded, though it was hard to choose, was our trip to Washuzan Highland Amusement Park. The park sits high on the Washuzan Hills and there were excellent views of Kurashiki and the famous Seto Inland Sea. I went on some really cool rides with my friends such as the turbo drop, two roller coasters and a scary ride that turns you upside down and spins you, although it did turn out to be the most fun!

We went to shrines, joined in at the moon festival and made traditional daruma dolls. We had Japanese style baths, ate Japanese style food and spoke lots of Japanese!

I will never forget Japan. The friends I made, the things I learned. I was so happy to come back to New Zealand and share my experiences with everyone I know. My knowledge and confidence in communicating it has really improved.

I cannot wait to go back!

Jamie Cave



My friends Michelle, Hannah and I



Simon, Hannah and I with the 1000 cranes



Me with a wild deer at Miyajima Is.



Me and my host family



At the Elementary School