

## Events in December

1	TH	
2	FR	
3	SA	
4	SU	Closed
5	MO	Closed
6	TU	18:30 Sherlock Holmes Book Reading
7	WE	
8	TH	
9	FR	
10	SA	9:30 Hello World Club 16:30 Christmas Movie Night
11	SU	10:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba
12	MO	Closed
13	TU	
14	WE	
15	TH	
16	FR	
17	SA	10:00 FIND English Conversation Club 13:30 Newsletter Preparation
18	SU	Closed
19	MO	Closed
20	TU	
21	WE	
22	TH	
23	FR	
24	SA	10:00-17:00 Satellite JICA Desk 13:30-15:30 New Years Cards in Sinhala!
25	SU	
26	MO	Closed
27	TU	13:00 Year End Cleaning
28	WE	
29	TH	Closed
30	FR	Closed
31	SA	Closed

### A Message from Hitesh Toor

Hitesh has been a staple at many AWIA events in the past year. When the previous CIR, Nola, went back to America this spring, Hitesh helped out part-time, picking up some of the CIR responsibilities. He helped out with events, and was an essential part of preparations for the International Festival this October. We really appreciate his help over the past six months. Thanks so much Hitesh!

**"Hey everyone! I had a great time learning and understanding what goes on behind the scenes to help promote cultural exchange, and I met great people along the way (and got to eat lots of snacks whilst at it!) I appreciated meeting everyone and getting to know more about their lives. Thank you everyone for always participating in our events and activities! You're great!"**



### Open Class - Smart Phone Instruments

Turn your smartphone into a musical instrument! Hosted by the University of Aizu, learn how to make music with your smartphone. No experience needed! Over three sessions, learn about SOUND (Pure-data) programming language, and various Graphical User Interfaces. Finally, try it out yourself! For more details, check out the University website.



**Date:** Dec 7, 14, 21 (Wed) 17:50-19:40

**Place:** University of Aizu Research Quad 2F iLab1

**Open to:** Anyone able to attend all three sessions - FREE

**Prof:** Senior Associate Professor Julian Villegas

**Contact:** Univ. of Aizu - <https://u-aizu.ac.jp/events/post-195.html>

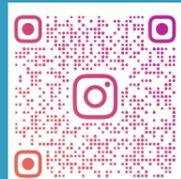
★ Don't forget to pay your yearly Membership Fee!  
We can only do this with your support. ★  
We look forward to many fun events in the future.

### Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

Come hang out with us while we fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! Chat with other AWIA members and enjoy this casual volunteer activity. No need to sign up, just drop by if you can!

**Date:** December 17, Saturday **Time:** 13:30~

**Place:** AizuWakamatsu International Association Office



### We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA.PHOTO

<http://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for the latest updates in multiple languages!

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AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

# SynthesAizu

December 2022  
Volume 2 Issue 12



### Association News

### Members Event

### Christmas Movie Night

We are hosting a Christmas movie night! Join us in watching a cheesy romantic Christmas movie, and playing Hallmark Christmas movie BINGO!



We'll decide what movie we watch together, so bring a blanket and get cozy with a hot drink as we laugh at the cheesy movie hijinks.



Contact AWIA ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)) to join!

<b>Date:</b>	Dec 10th (Sat)
<b>Time:</b>	16:30-18:30
<b>Place:</b>	AWIA Office
<b>Limit:</b>	15 people
<b>Fee:</b>	¥100 (Hot drink included)



### "FIND" English Conversation Club - Holiday Version!

"FIND" is meeting again! Run by AWIA member, Ayaka, FIND celebrated its one year anniversary in October. Because of her hard work, FIND has become one of our most popular events. Ayaka makes each session fun for everyone! It is a great way to meet people interested in speaking English. Play games, do activities, and talk about different things. Join us this month for a special themed FIND: Christmas/Holidays! Wear your ugly Christmas Sweater, or holiday colours to get festive!

Contact the AWIA ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)) to join!

Date/Time	Saturday, Dec 17 10:00~11:30
Place	AizuWakamatsu Learning Center 3F Rm 1
Space	~20 people - Everyone is welcome!
Sign Up	Contact <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by Friday, Dec 16th



### Next Year - Become an Event Organizer

Do you have an idea for an event or activity that you think other AWIA members may be interested in? The International Association wants to find new ways to engage the community, and we need your help. Like 'FIND,' we want to help YOU get your idea off the ground.

Submit a proposal to AWIA at ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp))

#### Information to submit:

- ◆ Activity Summary and Potential Title
- ◆ Target Participants (age, number etc.)
- ◆ Goal/Aim

(Event proposals subject to vetting.)



会津若松市国際交流協会

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

## Aizu Satellite JICA Desk - Matsuyama Satomi

Aizu Satellite JICA Desk has started up again! The previous JICA Desk staff, Mr. Sasao Kazunori, left this summer, and Ms. Matsuyama Satomi joined us last month! We are quite excited to have her with us!

Ms. Matsuyama had her first day at the Aizu Desk on November 19th. She held a short talk about her time in Sri Lanka and Tanzania.

People who went to the talk were really impressed by Ms. Matsuyama's stories about her time abroad.

If you didn't have a chance to talk with her, she will be joining us once a month. She really wants to share her love for Sri Lanka, so she's already planned a fun event for December. Check it out!



## COMING UP! Presented by Ms. Matsuyama

### A MIX OF JAPAN AND SRI LANKA

සුභ අලුත් අවුරුද්දක් වේවා.



With her connections to Sri Lanka, Ms. Matsuyama wants to create a fusion between Japanese culture and the Sri Lankan language - Sinhala. With the help of students from the Univ. of Aizu, write traditional Japanese New Years Cards (nengajo) in this beautiful language!

Sri Lanka recently decided to start teaching Japanese in public schools. Why not send your card to some students learning Japanese through Ms. Matsuyama?

Date:	Dec 24th (Sat)
Time:	13:30-15:30 (come anytime!)
Place:	AWIA Office
To Bring:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blank New Years postcard</li> <li>pen/pencils etc.</li> </ul>
No registration necessary. Come on by during the event time to try it out!	

☆ Blank New Years postcards can be bought at ☆ convenience stores or stationary shops

## Fukushima COVID-19 Hotline

The number of COVID-19 cases is on the rise again. It can be difficult to find information in other languages.

- What do you do if you have a fever?
- What do you do if you are worried about being a close contact?
- Who do you call if you can't speak Japanese?

Try reaching out to the Fukushima Prefecture COVID19 Hotline. It's FREE, and available in 19 different languages. The operators can give you advice on what to do next.

For more information, and other resources:

<https://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/covid19-portal/covid19-foreign.html>

## COVID-19 Hotline for Fukushima Foreign Residents

新型コロナウイルスの感染が心配なときは、電話してください。お金はかかりません。秘密は守ります。

Please call if you are concerned about Coronavirus. Service is free of charge. Confidentiality is guaranteed.

24hours/7days FREE CALL 0120-992-860

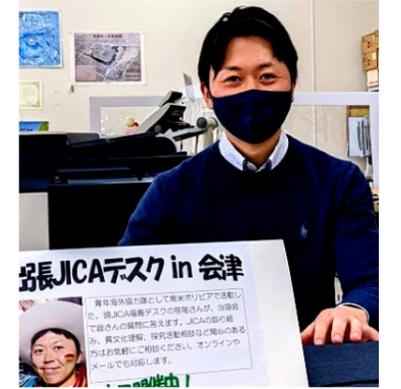
LINE 24hours/7days FREE CALL LINE CALL OK!



You can also reach out to us at AWIA by email or phone. We will help you as best we can.

## Member Spotlight: Sasao Kazunori

Starting in April 2021, Mr. Sasao came once a month and ran the 'Satellite JICA Desk' at the Association. He was an invaluable expert on International Relations for us. This spring, Mr. Sasao led three seminars for High School students to discuss international issues. We are positive that talking with him was an invaluable experience for the students. Hearing the perspective of such a qualified expert about the world will be an asset for the students' futures.



Aizu JICA Desk June 2020 - June 2022

Before he left, we interviewed Mr. Sasao about his job and his time at AWIA! Check it out!

Sasao Kazunori worked as a JICA Overseas Volunteer in Bolivia doing Environmental Education Support.

## To the treasures of this diverse world: know yourself and be yourself!

**Q: Mr. Sasao, you're from Fukuoka. People from Fukuoka have a reputation for being very blunt. Were you surprised by anything when you came to Fukushima?**

There was, yeah. At first, I figured I should watch my words. I worried that people might think I'm rude, haha As they say: 'When in Rome, do as Romans do.' However, doing that I felt like I was losing my identity. It made me realise it's important to be authentic with others.

**Q: The High School Students really liked you! They said you are a good speaker, and a fantastic listener!**

I tried to speak to the students frankly. For better or worse, I often say what I think. There were a few students who have trouble talking with adults, so I was careful and I tried to say things like: 'I see where you're coming from, but—I think OO.' I wanted to listen to them carefully and answer honestly.



Seven students from Aizu, Aoi, Gakuho, and Xaverio High Schools discussed topics such as Gender Inequality, Racism towards Asian People, World Heritage Site Issues, Religious Conflict, etc.

**Q: What do you think now after talking with the students?**

They are like precious stones. Depending on how you polish them, they can really shine. Even students that started out quiet were able to be more talkative by the end. I wish I could have had more time with them. They're really the hope of our future. I was never like that in my time though haha

**Q: Why did you want to become a JICA Volunteer?**

I first heard about JICA on TV. I'd been working at a health insurance company for about eight years, and I hadn't been overseas. I knew wasn't going to be at that company forever, so I went to an info session and met so many wonderful people. I joined and I was sent as a volunteer to Bolivia and even learned Spanish! I never thought my life would head in this direction.

**Q: What did you do in Bolivia?**

I taught people about things like separating trash, the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,) and told them how it's done in Japan. Since Japanese people aren't very common over there, one time, a crowd gathered like I was a celebrity. Overall, I don't know if I made a huge difference, but I discovered that I'm pretty good at languages and can live pretty much anywhere.

**Q: Do you have any personal goals for the future?**

I'm interested in both sides of JICA's Developing Nations Education Program: the glamorous and the rough. If I could, I think I want to help those in need more. Seeing the street children in Bolivia really opened my eyes, though I don't think money will solve the world's problems. In the end, I believe if you dream big, put yourself into new situations, and then end up failing; it's enough to be able to pass your experience on to someone who can.

**Q: Could you give any advice to us at AWIA?**

The great part about AWIA is that it is not stuck inside City Hall, so you can just chat, and build a network with the people you meet there. This is unlike any other place. Though, it has to be more than that. Create connections and follow things through with people, and projects. I think you should review your strategies for engagement as well. It would be great to have more events where young people can gain experience, and confidence, and where high school students can gain valuable experience for their future as independent adults.

Actually, my very first task after moving to Fukushima was to introduce myself to AWIA. During my year and a half here, I met and interacted with many members and students. My work feels a little half-finished, but maybe this will be good for me. If there is an opportunity in the future, I hope I can grow and support AWIA in new ways.

Thank you Mr. Sasao! And good luck!