

SynthesAizu

March 2024
Volume 4 Issue 3

Association News



AWIA Sports+

Mini Sports Day!

Try out some new games and compete in a low-stakes Sports Day with everyone! All games are good for beginners.

- **Date:** March 9th (Sat) 14:00~16:00
- **Place:** Kakujo Community Centre (1-47 Joto-machi)
- **Cost:** Free!
- **Limit:** 18 people • **Age:** High School and up
- **Sign-up:** Contact AWIA: (mail@awia.jp) or by Google Form
- **Bring:** ****Inside Shoes**** are a **MUST**. No Shoes, No Games!
(Kakujo Comm. Centre also requires masks in shared spaces)

Sign-up Deadline: Mar 7th (Thu)

There are few parking spots at the Community Centre, so park somewhere nearby



**Sports:
Sign-up
here**



Games:

- Boccia (Bocce's cousin)
- Disgetter 9 (knock down 9 panels with a frisbee)
- 'Catching the Stick' a group rhythm challenge game
- Group Jump Rope

Spring Japanese Classes

Give your Japanese skills a boost!

The Spring session of Japanese language courses is here! With the aid of our experienced volunteer teachers, we offer courses from beginner level to advanced. Our classes strike a balance between reading, writing, and conversational skills. Class sizes are small, and some students may even have 1 on 1 lessons! Online lessons are also available on request.

Deadline to sign-up: March 27th (Wed)

Day	Friday Morning (12 classes)	Thursday Evening (12 classes)
Time	10:00-11:30	18:30-20:00
Course Duration	Apr 5 - June 28 (no class May 3)	Apr 4 - June 20
Fee (for all 12 classes)	AWIA members ¥4,000 Non-members ¥6,000	
Place	Aizu City Learning Centre	
Apply	Contact AWIA at mail@awia.jp	

Hanami Potluck Party

Join us at the temple behind the Lion D'or Building that the AWIA Office is in, for a fun time eating and chatting! **Why not share your favourite dish? Bring a dish or some food to share! (about 2-3 servings)**

AWIA will provide some soft-drinks, but feel free to bring your own. Bring your own utensils/plate for the environment!

April 7th (Sun)
12:00 - 14:00

Fee: ¥100 (members)
¥200 (non-members)
(Children 14 and under, free!)

Place: Kotokuji Temple Ground
(Aizuwakamatsu Sakaemachi 2-12)

Sign-up: Deadline April 6th (Sat)
Bring a dish to share!

In case of rain: Event will be held at the AWIA office. Look for the announcement on our HP, FB, or Instagram around 10:30am!



Check the back page for info about FIND and AtsuHana!



会津若松市国際交流協会

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: mail@awia.jp

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Volunteer Opportunity!

Hello World Club *Look Back*

Fall 2023



①



②

③



④



⑤



Join us!

Every year, AWIA holds an event series for Elementary School children to interact with cultures from around the world. In Fall 2023, kids learned about America, England, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka! The topics covered: ①Halloween, ②Guy Fawkes' Night, ③the Mid-Autumn Festival, and ④Sinhala, the Sri Lankan language. The final event was a cooking event where kids made a ⑤'Chocolate Fridge Cake' inspired by recipes from all over the world.

We're currently looking for guests for our next Hello World Club session from May to July. (On the day of event, volunteer time will be from 9-12:30.)

Want to get involved in the Community? Contact us at mail@awia.jp!

This Month in Aizu

Funehiki Matsuri and Miko-Mai

March 20 (Wed) 12:00~16:00

Place: Bandai-jinja shrine (Namisugi-5300 Bandai)

Highlights: See a tug-of-war with three barrels of rice to determine the fate of the rice crop of the year. There is also a traditional performance by miko (shrine maidens) of three dances: Sasaki (sacred tree), bow, and sword. These dances are designated as a Fukushima Pref. Important Intangible Folk Property.

- Ceremony start: 12:00
- Miko Dances: 12:40
- Tug-of-war: 14:00 and more!!



(additional parking at Enichi-ji Temple)

<https://www.tif.ne.jp/jp/event.html?event=6793>

Aizu Higan-Jishi

March 20 (Wed)

Time: from 10:30 (at Tsuruga-jo Castle)

Place: Various locations around the City throughout the day

Highlights: This traditional ceremony and dance welcomes Spring after the long Aizu winter. Three dancers dress up in traditional costumes of guardian lions, and dance while playing a flute or taiko drum. This is a tradition of Aizu, so I recommend seeing it at least once!



More Details:

<https://www.aizukanko.com/kk/festival/higanjishi>

Aizu COVID-19 Vaccine/Booster Updates

While the situation has calmed down, it is still important to protect yourself against infection.

Free vaccines/boosters will be available for everyone until: **March 31st 2024**

(Vaccines will remain free for people aged 65+, and high-risk people aged 60-64)

Boosters for Omicron XBB variant are available from Pfizer and Daiichi Sankyo. Reservations can be made by telephone at local clinics. Please check the City homepage for availability and more information.



Aizu-Wakamatsu City Homepage:

<https://www.city.aizuwakamatsu.fukushima.jp/>

(Online + Call Centre Reservation Services are no longer available.)



(Vaccines are not mandatory.)

City Newsletter: Get even more information!

Once a month, the City puts out a newsletter with important announcements, off-hours clinic information, and more! Key parts of the City Newsletter are translated into English and compiled together.

Check out this month's edition and past editions online here! →



Get a paper copy mailed to you, for FREE!

Contact AWIA at (mail@awia.jp) with your name and address to receive it every month.



Catalog Pocket (Machine Translated)

To see the WHOLE Newsletter in Japanese or 9 other languages, including English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, and more, use the Catalog Pocket app. See it anywhere, anytime!

Member Spotlight



Harshani COORAY



Harshani has helped out at numerous Association events like the Children's Storybook Room, and Hello World, and been a part of a variety of events around Aizu to teach people more about her wonderful country of Sri Lanka. She's a very kind and generous person! She's written about her time in Aizu for us. If you'd like to hear more from Harshani, listen to our radio segment on FM Aizu (76.2) Wednesdays from around 17:40-45. Her part will air from the end of February.

★ Embracing Aizuwakamatsu ★

As the cherry blossoms welcomed the spring of 2022 in Aizuwakamatsu, so did the beginning of my adventure as an international student at the University of Aizu. This marked my inaugural venture into studying abroad, an exciting yet challenging chapter that unfolded in one of my dream destinations.



Nestled in the embrace of Aizuwakamatsu's enchanting nature, I have found not only a place of learning but a community of warm-hearted and supportive people who have been unwavering pillars of support and transformed

my challenging experience into a treasure trove of beautiful memories. The serene landscapes and the warmth of the locals have made my study abroad journey truly unforgettable. As a newcomer, adapting to life in Japan has brought about personal growth. Aizuwakamatsu has provided the perfect backdrop for self-improvement and life skills development. Balancing my academic pursuits with the rhythms of daily life has become a rewarding self-improvement journey.

The University of Aizu, with its unwavering support and opportunities, has played a pivotal role in shaping my journey as an international student. I am grateful for the chance to engage with Japanese culture and build connections with people from various corners of the globe. Beyond the university walls, I became a member of the Aizuwakamatsu International Association opened doors to a world of cultural exploration. The association became a bridge allowing me, to not only learn about the city, Japan and culture but foster connections with individuals from diverse cultures. Participating in cultural exchange programs and volunteer



events has become a cornerstone of my experience.

Through cultural exchanges and volunteer events, I have had the privilege of working with children of different ages such as elementary school students, junior high school students and high school students. One of the most fulfilling

aspects of my journey was working with children during cultural exchange programs. Engaging with small kids, sharing the wonders of my home country, Sri Lanka, and witnessing their curiosity was truly heartwarming. From Sinhala storytelling events to Hello World Club gatherings, the enthusiasm and curiosity of these young minds as they explored different languages and cultures left an indelible mark on my heart.

One particularly rewarding experience was presenting about Sri Lanka to a group of grandparents last December. Witnessing their enthusiasm mirrored the same zest I encountered in the younger generation, it reaffirmed the universal appeal of

cultural exchange and learning. Participating in events like the International Festival in 2022 was a jubilant experience. Collaborating with fellow members, we displayed the richness of



Sri Lankan culture through food and presentations, fostering a spirit of teamwork that transcended borders.

The International Association's unwavering support and guidance, coupled with the vibrant community spirit, has left me deeply impressed. AWIA members not only provided valuable insights, guidance and continued support but also created opportunities to explore the beauty of Aizuwakamatsu together, forming bonds that went beyond event success. The culmination of these experiences, the teamwork and the exposure, all promise to be valuable assets for my future endeavors. As well as Aizuwakamatsu International Association, the Fukushima Sri Lanka Friendship Association that was established last year will act as a bridge, connecting the Sri Lankan community with the Japanese community, enriching cultural values and fostering lasting connections.

In conclusion, Aizuwakamatsu has not only been a destination for academic pursuits but a sanctuary for personal growth, cultural exchange, and lasting connections. As I reflect on my time here, I am filled with gratitude for the supportive community, the enriching opportunities, and the memories that will forever hold a special place in my heart. When the time comes to bid farewell and return to my home country, I know that Aizuwakamatsu will remain a cherished chapter in my life's narrative.



Events in March

1	FR	
2	SA	10:00 JICA Desk 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
3	SU	Closed 
4	MO	Closed
5	TU	
6	WE	
7	TH	
8	FR	
9	SA	10:00 AtsuHana: Japanese Convo. Club 14:00 Sports+: Mini Sports Fest
10	SU	Closed
11	MO	Closed
12	TU	
13	WE	
14	TH	
15	FR	
16	SA	10:00 FIND: English Conversation Club 15:00 Nihongo Kodomo Hiroba
17	SU	Closed 
18	MO	Closed
19	TU	
20	WE	Closed (Spring Equinox)
21	TH	
22	FR	
23	SA	
24	SU	Closed
25	MO	Closed
26	TU	
27	WE	
28	TH	
29	FR	
30	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
31	SU	Closed

Other Information



AtsuHana

AtsuHana, Japanese Conversation Club.

This month, we're going to learn some interesting Japanese. Come try something new and talk to others in Japanese!

When	Saturday, March 9th 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact mail@awia.jp by <u>Friday Mar 8th</u>

Due to the nature of FIND and AtsuHana, we ask that participants wear a mask. Thank you for your understanding.

FIND English Convo. Club

Why not come and speak English with people from all walks of life and maybe make some new friends? Everyone is welcome, no matter your English level.

When	Saturday, March 16th 10:00~11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact mail@awia.jp by <u>Friday, Mar 15th</u>



Mini-Volunteer Opportunity

Have some time this Spring?

Stop by the International Association Office and help us out! We're looking for people to help us put stickers on our pamphlets to update the information. We also have a few other easy tasks that we could use your help on!

Stop by anytime!

(Giving us a heads up before you come is appreciated but not necessary.)

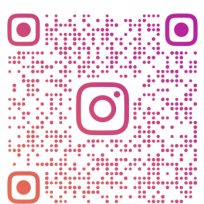
Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

Come help us fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! No need to sign up, just drop by if you can!

Date: March 30th, Saturday

Time: 13:30~

Place: Aizu Wakamatsu International Association Office



We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA_PHOTO

<https://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for updates in multiple languages!



Use this QR Code and access our email form to sign-up for events