

SynthesAizu

May 2024
Volume 4 Issue 5

Association News

Parents' Salon Yoga

The Parents' Salon is a multicultural gathering of parents to build community while raising children in Aizu! Why not bring your child along and stretch, relax, and enjoy yoga?

After yoga there'll be free time to socialise with other parents, share stories, and talk about life in Aizu. Children welcome! (*Childcare is not provided, so parents are responsible for their children. AWIA Staff will be there too, to help you keep an eye on your child.*)

Date: May 12th (Sun) 10:00~11:30
(Yoga - 40min, Free Time - 40 min)

Place: Aizu Keikodo 1F Exercise Studio

Limit: 8 Families (Parent/guardian + children)

Target: Parents of preschool aged children

To bring: Water, towel, yoga mat (if you have)

Cost: ¥500/per family (free for members!)

Sign-up: By QR code by May 11th (Sat)



2024 AWIA Members Meeting

Join us for our Annual Members Meeting on June 8th! First, there will be a General Assembly with a report of activities from 2023 (budget report, and event look-back.)

Then, we will have a Special Speaker. **OIKAWA Koji** will give a presentation about Communication. His talk will be about giving a new perspective to speaking with people from other cultures, something that will be more and more important for Japan in the coming years.

As a young man, OIKAWA-sensei wanted to be a comedian, but when he couldn't make his big break, he moved to China and became a hugely successful Japanese Teacher. Using his background in comedy, he inspired many students to become highly successful at speaking Japanese with many of them winning speech contests. He was selected as one of News Week Japan's Top 100 Japanese People the World Respects in 2019, and received the Agency for Cultural Affairs Commissioner's Award in 2021. Come hear an interesting perspective from an interesting man!!



OIKAWA Koji

We will also be holding an After-Party! Join us for a dinner party at Restaurant Beans. Sign up early!

The deadline to sign up is **May 31st (Fri)**

Place: Aizu Culture Centre (Jotomachi 14-52)

General Assembly: 14:00-15:15

Special Speaker: 15:30-17:15

June 8th

(Title: From the Trenches of a Japanese Classroom: How to Communicate with ComPASSION)

Speaker: OIKAWA Koji

(non-members welcome! Sign-up deadline: June 7th)

After-Party: 18:00-20:00 (Reg: ¥4500 Student: ¥3500)

Place: Restaurant&Bar Beans

(2-25 Sakaemachi (beside AWIA))

After-Party Limit: 50 people

(First come, first served)

Sign-up: Send back the postcard included with your newsletter, or use the QR Code →



****No Interpretation for General Meeting or Special Speaker****

AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club.

Speak Japanese in a casual way with many people and have fun with Japanese culture.

When	Sunday, May 12th 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact mail@awia.jp by <u>Saturday, May 11th</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, May 18th 10:00~11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact mail@awia.jp by <u>Friday, May 17th</u>



会津若松市国際交流協会

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: mail@awia.jp

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

This Month in Fukushima

Aizu Sake and Music Festival

5/6 (Mon) 10:30-17:30

Enjoy local sake and music at this festival! You can see performances from 10 different bands with genres ranging from pop to jazz, rock, rockabilly and more! There will also be a flea market and various food stalls to check out while you listen to music! Why not check out the local music scene on the last day of the Golden Week holiday!



Entrance: Free! (enjoy a bit of complimentary sake!)
Place: Noguchi Hideyo Seishun Park (1-23 Nakamachi)

More info: <https://www.facebook.com/aizushuon/>

Kitakata Canola Flower Festa

5/7 - 5/19

Come see the Sannokura Ski Hill in Kitakata covered in a field of yellow Canola flowers. Sannokura is also famous for its sunflower field in August. You can enjoy a variety of activities, including concerts and Canola flower cuisine!

- ◆ **May 11th (Sat)** - Walk Rally - walk through the fields, collect stamps, and participate in quizzes! If you get the questions all right, enter a raffle to get local delicacies or original goods!
- ◆ **May 11th (Sat)** - Ocarina Concert!
11:00-11:40
- ◆ **May 12th (Sun)** Aizu Symphonic Ensemble
10:30-11:30
- ◆ **May 18/19th(Sat+Sun)** - Canola Flower Cut:
Bring a pair of scissors and take home flowers from designated areas



More info: <https://www.city.kitakata.fukushima.jp/soshiki/sangyo-a/10553.html>

Soma-Nomaoi: Samurai Horse Fest.

5/25-27 (Sat-Mon)

Watch skilled riders participate in the race and mock-battle events. All riders wear traditional samurai armour and with tall flags on their backs. Many families have been participating for generations!

It's unforgettable!! Enjoy the main festival on May 26th (Sun).

Traditionally held at the end of July, the Soma-Nomaoi Samurai Horse Festival has been moved to the end of May so both spectators and participants can enjoy milder weather during the festival.



Place: Hibarigahara Saijochi Race Track
(4 Chome-13-27 Haramachiku Hashimotocho, Minamisōma)

More Info: <https://soma-nomaoi.jp/schedule/>

Minami-Aizu Train Tour

6/15 (Sat)

What: See Himesayuri flowers and Minami-Aizu!

Highlights: See the largest field of wild Himesayuri, as well as enjoy the old town of the Maezawa Magariya Shuraku Settlement! A unique Minami-Aizu experience.

Cost: Adult: ¥9800 Child: ¥9000 (includes transportation, lunch, entrance, etc. Sign up early!!)

Meet: 8:50 @ NishiWakamatsu Station Ticket Window (2F) (return at 17:30)

Contact: Aizu Tetsudo to sign-up (0242-36-6162)

Fukushima United FC Match

6/9 (Sun) 14:00

Place: Aizu Athletic Park Stadium
(Mondenmachi Oaza Oyama, Murakami)

Cost: FREE!!!

Highlights: See an official Fukushima United FC soccer match against the Vanraure Hachinohe team for free! Seating is the open grass of the Sports Park.



More Info and Sign-Up: (deadline 5/26)
<https://www.city.aizuwakamatsu.fukushima.jp/docs/2024040400031/>

Tadami Train Tour

6/19 • 6/26 (Wed)

What: Tour the Tadami Line!

Highlights: Enjoy train travel, and the Mugenkyo no Watashi River Crossing in Mishima, the Tadami Museum of Folklore and History and more!

Cost: ¥3900 (includes transportation, lunch, boat ride, etc. Sign up early!!)

Meet: 8:50 @ NishiWakamatsu Station Ticket Window (2F) (return at 17:00)

Contact: Aizu Tetsudo to sign-up (0242-36-6162)

Member Spotlight

斉藤 哲男さん SAITO Tetsuo

SAITO Tetsuo has been a member of the International Association for a long time. He's very kind, and likes to show his friends from overseas around Aizu. This time, he used his English skills to support a family who recently moved from Bangladesh. They had a lot of trouble going through the procedures at city hall, signing up for kindergarten etc., and he became acutely aware of the language barrier and institutional barrier that foreigners experience when they come to Japan. Thank you very much, Mr. Saito!



Struggling with Interpretation: Someone Help Meeee!

In January 2024, a family from Bangladesh moved into the house across from me: Mr Musa (who already lived in Aizu Wakamatsu city and is a student at the University of Aizu), his wife, and his 4-year-old child. This move was especially difficult for them, because they moved from a warm country in the middle of the harsh Aizu winter. His wife and child had just arrived in Japan and could not speak Japanese, so I took them around in my car. While driving, I told them "red, stop," "green, go," and "turn right," and a cute voice behind me repeated it for me. That's how I started teaching Japanese. When their 4-year-old child first uttered "Ojisan." I felt very happy.



I decided to help them prepare for daily life here. First, we went to the resident section at City Hall to register their residence cards. There, we received information about applying for child support benefits. Since you can't receive child support benefits unless your child is in nursery school or kindergarten, we looked into whether a nearby kindergarten would be able to accept the child. In the end, we chose Xaverio Gakuen, which emphasizes English. I was told to set-up bank account payments, but when I went to Toho Bank, I found out that the family needed to apply in person (it would be difficult for me to apply on their behalf). The next day, when I took the husband there, I was told they needed to run a check of his status of residence etc. so we had to go back to the bank again the next day. After



all that back and forth, we finally managed to complete the procedure.

After that, I received a call asking me to attend an information session about admission to kindergarten. I had thought that procedures so far had been quite difficult, but I then had to struggle to give this explanation in my own clumsy English. "I'm at my absolute limit!! Someone please help meeee!" It was quite difficult with my language ability (English proficiency 20%), so I struggled more than I thought I'd have to. It took some time, but somehow, we were able to complete the process. After that I was exhausted.



At every step of this process, from many people that I interacted with, I felt the words: "I can't speak English!" *What? Why?* Most people have studied English all the way through university, so they should have about 10 years of English experience. Even so, you can get by with just vocabulary! I thought Aizuwakamatsu City was an international tourist city? Let's all do our best to "Let's speak in English!"

Finally, I would like to say that Aizuwakamatsu City, where so many people from overseas are starting to live, needs more people who can interpret. And it's not just in English. If we don't do this, people coming from overseas won't be able to feel at ease. I think there should be more discussion about creating livable cities in the future.

FREE English Tours at Tsuruga-jo Castle All Year!

English Tours will be available regularly starting in May! Get an in-depth tour of the Tsuruga-jo grounds by a volunteer guides trained with the Association. Maybe you'll learn something you never expected!

Dates: May 2024 - March 2025 every 2nd and 4th Sat, Sept 21(Sat), Sept 23(Mon)

Time: 10:00-15:00 - no reservation needed! 1 guide available all day.

Place: Tsuruga-jo Tourist Information Centre (観光案内所)

Free!

Have relatives or friends visiting Aizu? Take advantage of this free service!!



Events in May

Other Information

1	WE	
2	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
3	FR	Closed (Constitution Memorial Day)
4	SA	Closed (Greenery Day)
5	SU	Closed (Children's Day)
6	MO	Closed
7	TU	
8	WE	
9	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
10	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
11	SA	9:30 Hello World Club 10:00 Satellite JICA Desk 15:00 High Schoolers' Discussion
12	SU	Office Closed 10:00 AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club 10:00 Parents' Salon: Yoga
13	MO	Closed 
14	TU	
15	WE	
16	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
17	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
18	SA	10:00 FIND English Convo. Circle 15:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba
19	SU	Closed
20	MO	Closed
21	TU	
22	WE	
23	TH	15:00 Board Members Meeting 18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
24	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
25	SA	9:30 Hello World Club 13:30 Newsletter Preparation
26	SU	Closed
27	MO	Closed
28	TU	
29	WE	
30	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
31	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)

#SamurAizu

Follow @samuraizu_official on Instagram! It's the official English Instagram of the AizuWakamatsu Tourism Bureau, run by SamurAizu Ambassadors (members of the Association!) Check it out to see the beauty of Aizu and support your local community. Use #samuraizu to show off Aizu to the world!

Be a Guest on the Radio!

Want a chance to be on the radio? AWIA collaborates with FM Aizu (76.2) with a segment once a week: Chikyuu Marutto Tele-report (World-wide Tele-report). Guests can share their experience of living in Aizu or abroad. Each segment is about 5-10mins, so no pressure! Guests can join live, or come and pre-record their interview. Interested? Contact us!

When: Wednesday Nights ~17:40 (5-10min segment)
(interview is in Japanese only)

ON AIR

If you have time, why not listen in?

Want to be a guest? Contact us: mail@awia.jp

Children's Storybook Time

Multilingual Storytime!!

A great opportunity for your child to hear stories and interact with languages from all over the world! This time is Khmer, Tagalog and English! It's free!

Date: June 9th (Sun) (Sign-up start: May 1st)

Place: Aizu Keikodo Rms 1, 2, 3

Participants: 45 children (age 4-12)

Sign-Up: Aizu Library Counter, or through the poster (sent out to children, but also available at the AWIA office!)

Contact: Aizu Library TEL: 0242-22-4711
(send form via:) FAX: 0242-22-4702



Hello World Club - May 11, May 25

Hello World Club is an event for Elementary School students to interact with and learn about other cultures! Each day features a different member of our Community.

This month is the Philippines and China!



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: May 25th, 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 to access our email form to sign-up for events