



## Upgrade with a fresh prespective!

In this issue of Mimitaro, we interviewed Ms. Yuri Linh, who supports foreign students at schools.



In Vietnam, I majored in English and studied Japanese as a second language at a foreign language university. While working part-time as a guide, I met and married my Japanese husband.

During the 6 years he was posted in Vietnam, we were blessed with two children. After moving to Japan, we lived in Notogawa for 10 years, where I made many friends through kindergarten drop offs and pickups and again, we were blessed with our third child. When our oldest child graduated from junior high school, our middle child from elementary school, and our youngest was 3 years old, my husband was transferred to Australia and we lived there for 8 years. On the occasion of our middle child entering university this year, with my youngest child and my husband, the three of us moved back to Shiga and we now reside in Omihachiman. We decided to settle down in Japan, providing the opportunity for our youngest child to learn Japanese and receive education in Japan, following the positive experiences of our older children who recieved education in both Japan and Australia.

Through my children's school, I was exposed to both Japanese and Australian education and I now see the differences. I appreciate the Australian approach for not stereotyping the children and fostering originality and critical thinking. Using the art class as an example, in Japan, there would be a model to follow and evaluation will be done accordingly. In Australia, children will be giving the freedom to "make anything you want using the material," resulting in a diverse range of work. From elementary school, children are asked "What do you want to be? To achieve your dream, what should you do, and did you accomplish something today?" They are

encouraged to think on their own and take actions. While the atmosphere is relaxed, there is a concern that the education might be perceived as easygoing. Whereas in Japan, education is praised for its high quality, but the strict rules can create a sense of constraint. Also, perhaps because of the group activities, there is a lot of peer pressure, and children are concerned about what others think of them and hold themselves back. Therefore, I hope we can blend the strength of both systems to encourage independent thinking, while fostering consideration for others in our children.






Currently I support foreign students at elementary and junior high school using English and Vietnamese. I myself used to leave everything up to the school with my older children, but as I gained some parenting experience it made me realize the importance of having the mindset of raising children together with the school. Instead of simply relying on the school due to being "too busy" or feeling like we "don't understand," it is crucial for parents to stay involved. Regularly following up on the child's situation through what they bring home from school, studying Japanese culture, and understanding their environment are key to supporting the child growing up in a different culture. It's natural that foreign parents don't know about Japanese schools. Therefore, never hesitate to ask questions to the teacher, express your thoughts thoroughly, and make sure the teacher understands your child and family well. I hope for schools to become a more open and enjoyable place for the new generation. Through translation and interpretation, I aim to contribute to a broader understanding among children, parents, and schools.

Japanese society have wonderful traditional culture, but some aspects may seem outdated in today's global world. To make everyone happier, let's value the positives while adapting to the present and continually bringing in new ideas. Together, parents, schools, and society can upgrade and evolve!

## ~What is Young Carer (Caregiving Youth)? Whole family support~

Hello everyone, this is the Shiga Prefecture Child and Youth Affairs Bureau. In Shiga, we aim to create a prefectural government for and with children, with “Children, children, children (*Kodomo, kodomo, kodomo*)” as our keyword.

Do you know what a Young Carer (Caregiving Youth) is? They are children who are responsible for the daily chores and family care that adults are supposed to take care of. For example, there are cases like this.

				
Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5
Doing household chores and taking care of young siblings	Have elderly family members to watch over and care for	Have a family member with a disability or illness to care for or nurse	Working after school to support the household	Interpreting, etc., to support family communication

(Illustration © Children and Families Agency)

For children, “helping out” is a wonderful experience that leads to personal growth. However, the continued heavy responsibilities and burdens that are not appropriate for their growth can affect their mental and physical health, and unable to spend time being a child, some children give up on their dreams and career paths for the future. Sometimes children think that supporting their family is normal, and because they love their family so much, they are unaware of their own SOS and unable to talk about it, even if they are suffering.

In Shiga, we provide support for young carer with the keyword of “whole family support” to these children and their families with various problems. Through a non-profit organization, we provide a consultation service and a place where people in similar situations can get together, and we have also placed a Young Carer Coordinator to provide support.

Some children of foreign nationality are unable to express their true feelings because of the language barrier, or they are unable to have time for themselves due to their family’s need for interpretation. Let’s all support each other to create a society that ensures all children to have time to play and learn in the community and at home. Children are the treasure of society. Children and families who are struggling, please consult with us.

(From the Young Carer Coordinator)



### Kokoron Dial

Concerns of children/ youth and their parents/ guardians.

☎ 077-524-2030

9:00am - 9:00pm (Excluding Dec 29th - Jan 3rd)

After 9:00pm, you will be connected to 24h Child SOS Dial.

~Information on consultation services in each municipality~

Please inquire about the support and services you can receive.



## More smiles for children! ~ a different place to spend time ~









There are many organizations in Shiga that supports children.

“Young Carer support group”(★) are organizations that help children when they are having a hard time at home, when they want to relax, or when they need consultation.

“*Kodomo Shokudo* (Children’s cafeteria)” is a place where children can enjoy free or low-cost meals. (Some groups are open to adults in the community.)

“*Ibasho* (a place where one belongs)” is a place where children can spend their time as they wish. Let’s go have some fun!

Group name	Content	Venue	When	Contact
NPO Kodomo Social Work Center	★Young Carer support, Ibasho, bento (meal delivery), Camp	9-8 Kannonji Otsu	Everyday	077-575-4378 
NPO Serikawa no Kappa	★Young Carer support, Ibasho, Online consultation	2-3-4 Kawahara Hikone	Everyday	0749-20-9084 
Tabunka Kyosei Shien Center SHIPS	Multicultural Kodomo Shokudo	1-13-12 Kusatsu Kusatsu	4 <sup>th</sup> Sat	077-561-5110
Kanchan no Chisana Ie	Multicultural Community Exchange, Kodomo Shokudo	956-2 Jorakuji Azuchi-cho Omihachiman	Once in 2 months	090-3708-3315 
NPO Yanchadera	Ibasho for the teens, Kodomo Shokudo	Within Kusatsu-shi	1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> Sat	
Paradeiro	Ibasho Kodomo Shokudo	13-2 Echigawa Aisho-cho	3 <sup>rd</sup> Fri, at dinner time	090-4030-1492 
Otsu Alternative School Triumph	Alternative school Ibasho Watercolor painting class	4-3-25 Hamaotsu Otsu	Tue, Wed, Fri	050-5374-0311 
Child Village	A third place for children and adults (Ibasho)	2-39-4 Heidaira Otsu	4 <sup>th</sup> Sat 10am - 4pm	email chimihirano@gmail.com

- Please contact and confirm before you go.

### ♪ *There are many more “ibasho,” “shokudo,” and play sites for children* ♪

- ◇ Play and learn, Omi Kodomo Shokudo (Kodomo Shokudo in Shiga)



- ◇ “Shiga Kodomo Taiken Gakkou” (Hands-on learning school)



There are a variety of hands-on programs under the five themes of “Interaction,” “Life/ Creativity,” “Nature,” “Satoyama/ Rice paddies,” and “Culture and art/ History.”



# Mimitaro Information



**Happy New Year!**

**Best wishes for 2024!**

**Year of Dragon Mimitaro**

## ◆ Setsubun Festival Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sat)

To scare away ogres and bring in good fortune, bean-throwing events will be held.



Minakuchi Shrine 3-14 Miyanomae Minakuchi-cho Koka  
Tachiki Shrine 4-1-3 Kusatsu Kusatsu  
Taga Taisha 604 Taga Taga-cho Inukamigun  
Hiyoshi Taisha 5-1-1 Sakamoto Otsu

## ◆ Sagicho Festival

Two days festival to pray for good harvest.

March 16<sup>th</sup> (Sat) 1:00pm-5:30pm

March 17<sup>th</sup> (Sun) 10:30am-10:00pm

Himurehachimangu Shrine

257 Miyauchi-cho Omihachiman

## ◆ Best time to see cherry blossoms

**End of March to beginning of April**

✽Recommended Cherry Blossom Spots in Shiga✽

Miidera-Temple	246 Onjoji-cho Otsu
Lake Biwa Canal	Miidera-cho Kannondera Otsu
Kasahara Sakura Park	683 Kasahara-cho Moriyama
Juraku no Sato	4-4-1 Toji Konan
Hikone Castle	1-1 Konki-cho Hikone
Ho koen	Koen-cho Nagahama
Kaizu-Osaki	Kaizu Makino-cho Takashima

## ◆ Kibougaoka Spring mini camp

Enjoy nature and outdoor activities!

March 10<sup>th</sup> (Sun) 9:30am-4:00pm

Shiga Pref Kibougaoka Bunka Kouen

(1178 Kuzushi Ryuo-cho Gamo)

Fee: 1000yen/age 3 and up, 1500yen/age 15 and up

Application: From Jan 13<sup>th</sup>, by email (Please include: postal code, address, phone number, name (Katakana), gender, age, and email address of all participants)

email: e-yagai@kiboupark-shiga.or.jp



Next issue of Mimitaro is scheduled in April



# Mimitaro News



## ◆ Joint professional consultation for foreigners

Various consultations are available on residency, labor, daily life, human rights, etc. Face-to-face consultation. Interpretation available. 30 min per person.

Date: Feb 26th (Mon) 1pm-5pm

Venue: Otsu Biwako Godo-chosha

5th floor common meeting room

Organized by Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau Reservations required →

Or call, Shiga Foreign Residents Information Center TEL: 077-523-5646



## ◆ Information on Covid-19 vaccination

Free vaccinations are available until March 31<sup>st</sup>.

## ◆ Free HIV/AIDS Consultation and Testing

- Tests can be taken anonymously.
- Other available tests: syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C
- Results will be given within 1 to 2 hours.
- Venue: Public health centers (Otsu City/ Kusatsu/ Koga/ Higashiomi/ Hikone/ Nagahama/ Takashima)
- Reservations are required by phone.

Inquiries: Health centers in the prefecture (Japanese only)



If you need an interpreter, please call Shiga Foreign Residents Information Center TEL: 077-523-5646

## ◆ Period to file for final tax returns (*kakutei-shinkoku*) February 16th (Fri) to March 15th (Fri)

If you need a correction for deduction due to payment of high medical bills or housing loans, business income earners, those with income in more than one company, please file for final tax returns at the tax office.



## Spring is the season of school entrance

For those who will be entering elementary or junior high school in April, "Notification of Enrollment" will be sent from each city/town round the end of January. Please attend the entrance orientation (in February) provided by each school, make preparation, and attend the entrance ceremony in April.

Video for foreign children and guardians

"Nice to meet you! Let's be friends"

"Tell me about elementary school in Japan!"



**Shiga Foreign Residents Information Center**  
(within Shiga Intercultural Association for Globalization)

TEL: 077-523-5646 FAX : 077-510-0601

email: mimitaro@s-i-a.or.jp