



Teach Abroad – Himeji, Japan



2016-2017 Participants



Teach Abroad In Himeji 2016 Participants



Christina Pruitt (ASE) is currently a teacher at Connolly Middle School in Tempe, Arizona. She teaches 6th grade English Language Arts and 6th, 7th and 8th grade Language Learners. Last semester, five of her language learners tested out of the ELL/ELD program. Those students are now in general education classes where they are thriving and teachers continue to compliment their determination and hard work.

Christina is also the Varsity Girls' Basketball coach at Connolly. Today her team is facing off against Gilliland for the Championship trophy and bragging rights as the best team in Tempe School District. Prior to Connolly, Christina worked for Teleos Preparatory Academy in Phoenix. Teleos is a Great Hearts charter school that serves minority and low-income families. Great Hearts offers a classic approach to learning. She began working with Teleos in 2014 as a Teacher's Assistant and was then promoted to teacher in the Fall of 2015. She taught 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Literature and Composition as well as a 5th grade History class.

She graduated with her Masters in Secondary Education in the Fall of 2013 from Arizona State University. Christina worked for three years for ASU and used the tuition waiver, offered to state employees, to pay for Graduate school. After taking the SEI (Structured Emersion Instruction) course, she decided that she wanted to work with language learners. She is looking forward to learning Japanese and communicating frequently with students at Connolly who have agreed to be her pen pal.

Born in Los Angeles California, **Araceli Amador (ASE)** moved to Yuma, Arizona at 13. Her love of Arizona grew when she attended the University of Arizona in Tucson. Araceli received my Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and received a minor in Spanish, which also incited her love for languages and different cultures. Araceli taught for four years as a Kinder and 1st grade ELL (English Language Learner) teacher, where all of her students were native Spanish speakers. One inspiring aspect of the job was speaking to my students' parents who wished that they could help their kids with their homework but lacked the language skills. Araceli decided to get a Masters in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. She wanted to be able to offer parents the skills they needed in order to help their students. Araceli attended Arizona State University and through the Master's Program, she was able to intern in South Korea. She worked with elementary and middle school children for a month in an English Camp and absolutely fell in love with the culture and people. This is what motivated her to apply for a position in Japan. She can't wait to learn from my future students and to teach those skills and feels extremely blessed to have been offered this opportunity.



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Jarrod Blair (ALT) was born and raised in Arizona, along with his older sister and his rather large extended family (5 aunts/uncles, 10 cousins). His favorite hobbies growing up were basketball and JRPGs (Japanese Role Playing Games), but he has more recently been interested in weightlifting and anime. Jarrod is also extremely interested in broadening his cultural horizons, which is why he traveled to Africa in 2006 (to help build chicken coops) and to Europe in 2012 (to study philosophy and to explore a few countries). He graduated from Arizona Christian University with degrees in Biblical

Studies and Business Administration in 2012, and he will soon be graduating from Arizona State University with a degree in Physics and a minor in Philosophy. Apparently he loves to learn! He also loves to share what he has learned, which is why he is passionate about helping others along their educational journeys. It is for these reasons that he is excited to work as an English teaching assistant in Himeji, Japan. He feels that it is an opportunity to both teach English and to learn about the ethics, beliefs, and culture more generally in Japan. Additionally, he is excited to share his knowledge of exercise with the Japanese people and to learn about their take on healthy dieting. Perhaps he will even cosplay once or twice!

Although born in Maryland, **Madison Bai (ALT)** claims St. Louis, Missouri as her hometown, and will thus unapologetically remain a devoted fan of the Cardinals' baseball team. Madison moved to Scottsdale, Arizona in 2011 with her parents, and her younger brother Sam. The next year, she graduated from Desert Mountain High School and subsequently went on to study Business: Global Politics at Arizona State University. She would later add the TESOL certificate and a German minor. Even at a young age she enjoyed learning about different cultures and languages, which would inevitably lead to an insatiable desire to travel as an adult. This, in addition to her love of working with children, led her to pursue a certificate in TESOL. Madison finds that as an English teacher in a foreign country she have a unique opportunity to facilitate cultural exchange and increase cross-cultural communication and awareness. Madison was able to put this belief into practice when I taught at an English Camp in the Jeollanam-do province of South Korea in the summer of 2015. It was an unforgettable experience, and she hopes to bring everything she learned in Korea to Himeji. Madison is excited to have another opportunity to work abroad and to build relationships with a new group of people.



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Amber Hunt (ASL) was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona in a multicultural household with a younger sister. For the past four years, she has lived in Tucson studying at University of Arizona with three majors (Political Science, Linguistics, and East Asian Studies) and one minor (Spanish). She studied abroad in Japan for three consecutive summers, first in Nagoya and second in Tokyo. While in Japan, she gained a deep appreciation for Japanese culture and language, especially through her interactions with her host families and fellow students. During her third summer abroad, Amber went to South Korea where she spent a

month as an English language instructor to elementary and middle school students in a focused summer camp. That month in South Korea reassured Amber that she wanted to spend more time in East Asia teaching English, and is very excited to become an Assistant Language Teacher in Himeji, Japan.

Outside academics, Amber worked at the UA Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (S.A.L.T.) Center for two years. There she tutored students with learning and attention challenges in Spanish, Japanese, and various other subjects. Additionally, Amber spent a year as a Student Ambassador for the UA College of Humanities promoting the college and its diverse programs to prospective and current students. After graduation and participating in the Sister Cities program, she intends to go to graduate school for international relations and possibly join the State Department.

Being born and raised in Arizona, **Steven Savage (ALT)** been referred to as a “desert rat” more than once. The Grand Canyon state and the people he has met have helped shape his every fiber into the person he is today. After graduating from Arizona State University with a degree in Political Science and a certificate in International Studies, Steven began working for the state of Arizona doing social work for adults with developmental disabilities. Getting to work for and within the community is the most rewarding experience. In his spare time, Steven pursues a passion in music, having played with multiple local bands and musicians from around the valley. His favorite memories are those of playing for hours with friends, growing not only as a musician with them but also as a person. Throughout his life, Steven believes that growth and self-improvement are the most important aspects of living a fulfilled life. This opportunity to be a part of the Phoenix Sister Cities Teach Abroad Program will not only allow him to fully immerse himself in another culture, but will also allow him to grow as a person from the experiences to come.





Michael Zipperer (ALT) moved from Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Chandler, Arizona at seven years old. Because of the move, he saw the diversity of Phoenix through its people and from his perspective, through his friends. Michael's lifelong friends are all first generation United States citizens who are from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Cuba, France, and Croatia. Being able to spend his formative years surrounded with a high quality group of people in terms of character with the chance to be exposed to their varied and interesting cultures is what, started a cascading necessity for him to travel and experience.

Michael had the opportunity to travel through Colombia and Central America with one of these friends; a trip that would have him change my degree from biology to city planning as Michael could see firsthand how the urban environment can help or harm the people who live there. After switching degrees and continuing to seek opportunities, he had the chance to work on a research project with University students in Luneburg, Germany for three semesters. Now he is graduating with a degree in Urban Planning and cannot wait to experience Japanese cities first hand. Besides traveling, Michael also enjoy fitness, getting out into nature, and trying new food. He genuinely believes that we are the sum of our experiences and that has led me to pursue the teaching opportunity in Himeji, Japan and Michael am extremely excited to share my knowledge while learning from and building relationships with my students, community, and fellow teachers.

