

BETHANY FLANNERY (OHIO), 2018-2019 LABO INTERN



I was first introduced to Labo through hosting several Labo exchange students when I was younger. I was able to glimpse into their world as they shared their culture with me. This and my own homestay in Japan showed me the unique experiences you can have in Japan, specifically the relationships you form with the people here. Now that I am here as a Labo intern, I can truly say that the things you learn and the experiences you have during the Labo internship are something you will never forget.

A Labo intern is basically a cultural ambassador. An intern goes to Labo Parties to share their culture and communicate with the Labo kids. The cultural exchange and the friendships you make along the way are what make this internship so unique.

Some of my favorite memories in Japan have been with my host families, with my intern friends, and at Labo parties. I love having Labo kids share stories about their homestays and helping the shy kids break out of their shells to communicate with me.

I have stayed with six long term host families throughout the year, as well as the many short term homestays that ranged from just one day to as long as a week! There aren't many organizations that offer a chance to be able to stay with multiple host families for up to several months throughout the different regions of Japan while traveling to different parts of your district in Japan for work. Not many people get this experience. The Labo internship allows you to see Japan in a way very few people outside of Japan can.

This year I have learned so much about myself and what I am capable of. I now feel confident to travel just about anywhere in Japan alone. Something about Labo really gets you out of your shell. All the new experiences and challenges put me out of my comfort zone, in a good way. This internship also made me more interested in my own country and made me more aware of my own culture.

So, if you have a love for Japanese cultural as well as your own, want to see more of Japan and meet some awesome people, I am sure you will want to join the Labo family as a Labo intern!

