

2016-2017 LABO INTERN

Ashleigh, USA



Labo has been an amazing journey for me. When I first became an intern I had no idea what to expect and no prior experience with the company. Yet, everyone I met was friendly and welcoming. I loved going to Labo parties and meeting the members. They were genuine, curious, and taught me so much.

The reason I call this internship a journey is because I learned so much about myself and about people in general. One particular story I will always cherish. I went to a Labo

party that had three high school girls going to the United States and New Zealand for one month homestays. They had many questions and we acted out skits of host family scenarios. We bonded straight away although we were all shy at first. By the end of the party, one of the girls began to laugh frantically for a long time. It took everyone a while to realize she was seriously crying. I felt all of her emotions at once- her nervousness of going to a different country, her excitement to see what was beyond her home, and her happiness about connecting to someone so different from herself. That level of understanding someone else wouldn't have seemed like such a big deal before the internship but after this moment I was amazed. I truly saw what a great impact Labo was for Japanese kids.

In the office, Labo staff helped me when I needed it and worked very hard on Labo projects. They inspired me to do my best and they always cared about my wellbeing. As for life outside of Labo parties or events, those experiences made me love Japan. I've lived with a traditional host family in the deep countryside surrounded by mountains, to living with a more carefree family in a modern city. I connected with every family I stayed with and they will always hold a special place in my heart. When I had trouble they always made time to help me and when I made a mistake they gave me constructive criticism. There was always laughter in the house no matter where I lived.

While traveling people were kind and patient. Japan is a very beautiful and interesting country. If you are considering becoming a Labo intern and are passionate about coming to Japan, don't think twice. There will be challenges you may face like cultural misunderstandings but that is normal, that is a part of the adventure, when living in another country. Just do your best. The friendships you will make and things you will experience are worth so much. For me, I am so happy I was given this opportunity. It is truly one of the best decisions of my life so far.