

2016-2017 LABO INTERN

Wesley, USA



Hello! My name is Wesley, and I was one of the North American interns during 2016-2017. I am from the United States of America and came to Japan once four years ago for two months.

It took a few times applying for this internship, but I definitely have to say it was worth the effort and wait. From the first week you land in Japan, your schedule is packed full of things to do. The first month and fifth month you have orientation and language school in Tokyo. Every day is different, and you get to

meet people from lots of other countries during the language school. Language school is a very fun and unique chance to meet other people from around Asia who probably do not know any English. Learning how to talk to them is a blast!

After you move from your training month, you get to enjoy Labo Parties every week. It really is a lot of fun showing all the kids your photo album and playing games together. It is also fun to ask the older kids questions and see them try to use their English. Sometimes a Labo Party will have a seasonal theme, or be a food party where all the parents bring potluck dishes, so you also get to try many different kinds of very good home cooking. It is all very fun, but make no mistake, it definitely takes energy!

It is a bit difficult to say what my fondest memory is since I had so many good experiences, but definitely visiting my old host family and an old exchange student we had hosted were good memories. Winter camp was also a blast, and I had an amazing trip to Shizuoka and Hamamatsu for Labo Parties.

Being a Labo intern has helped me see more of the world and the various Asian cultures as well as how people from those cultures interact. I also had the chance to move out of the house and be (almost) independent for a year. What are the themes of an exchange program? Something like challenge, self-discovery, and new cultures tied in with learning communication. Well I definitely had all those things and I think I am much better off because of it. If you want to try living in Japan for a year while learning (sometimes intensively) about Japanese culture, while meeting many new people of all ages every week, then I definitely recommend signing up for the internship.