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To: Media

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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANT LANGUAGE TEACHER IN JAPAN

Edmonds, WA – The Edmonds Sister City Commission is accepting applications for an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in Hekinan, Japan for a two-year term starting September 1, 2019 and ending August 31, 2021. The deadline for applications is March 29, 2019. Applications can be obtained by visiting the Commission’s webpage at http://www.edmondswa.gov/sister-city-exchange-programs.html, under Assistant Language Teacher; or by email or phone request to Carolyn.LaFave@edmondswa.gov / 425.771.0247; or by visiting Edmonds City Hall at 121 5th Ave. N., Edmonds.

The ALT must be an Edmonds’ or neighboring city resident and either a certified teacher or be able to demonstrate English language and communications skills that will be effective in a middle school classroom. The ALT should be an outgoing person who interacts well with middle school students, is interested in Japanese culture, and is eager to teach American cultural aspects along with English language skills. A BA is required for a Japanese work visa and background and security checks are necessary. The ALT should also be willing and available to communicate with the Edmonds Sister City contacts during their tenure in Japan. The ALT will become an employee of the City of Hekinan and final approval of the candidate will come from them.

"Assistant" English teacher means that the Japanese teacher of the class provides curriculum and lesson plans, and the American teacher supplements this with speaking practice and skills as well as class presentations as requested.

The City of Edmonds has had a 31-year relationship with its Sister City of Hekinan, Japan. The ongoing presence of an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) selected by the Edmonds Sister City Commission and hired by Hekinan is a very important element of this relationship. This position assists Japanese language teachers in the Hekinan middle schools and in many ways is Edmonds’ unofficial "ambassador" to Hekinan.

Michelle Rockstead is the current ALT in Hekinan, Japan. With seven months left on her contract she reflects on this enriching program. “The connection between Edmonds and Hekinan is invaluable to many people, especially in Hekinan. I’ve met so many people who continue to talk about how wonderful their visit to Edmonds was, five, ten, or even twenty years later. One of my coworkers told me that he and his wife even had their honeymoon in Edmonds!
Part of my job as the Edmonds ALT is to help continue to strengthen this sister city connection. Whether it’s telling my middle school students about the yearly exchange programs, or swapping stories with friends and volunteers, the sister city relationship is a near-daily topic of conversation.

I teach night classes to adults in the local community. All of them are incredibly enthusiastic about practicing English and learning about the world outside of their town. Many of my students and friends visited Edmonds last year, independently or as part of the adult delegation in the fall. Of those who have been to Edmonds, every single one has told me they want to go again.

Edmonds has been a warm and welcoming city for the people of Hekinan, and many of them have built lifelong friendships through this program. Hekinan has returned the favor by making me feel welcome and at home here. I’ve reconnected with old friends and made new ones. Many of these people have seen me through difficult times and helped me get involved in the community. This sister city program is truly a blessing, and I want to continue my involvement to pay forward the kindness that this community has shown me.”

If you, or someone you know, are interested in applying for this very rewarding position, please contact the Sister City Commission.

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