

JET Send-Off Reception Speech by Acting Consul General Tomoko Dodo
July 26, 2013

Good afternoon.

First, to freshmen JETs, welcome and congratulations.

To community leaders, thank you for joining us.

Freshmen ALTs, it may not be exaggerating to say that English education in Japan relies on you. The Japanese are notoriously known for their poor command of English, facing phonetic obstacles that are difficult to overcome. As ALTs, your responsibility is to work with your students to help them communicate effectively and keep trying until they succeed.

Now, freshmen CIRs, you need to be innovative and work with your superiors, juniors and colleagues to develop new and stronger methods of communication in local government efforts to improve international relations.

In my recent dialogue with UW President Young and Ambassador Roos, we agreed that the JET Program has meaningful dual significance: to improve English education, or local government international relations, and also to perform the role of cultural ambassador, in Japan, in the US and anywhere else in the world you may go. Through pursuing your primary roles and responsibility as an ALT or CIR, you will also grow yourselves, attaining skills and knowledge and broadening your perspective and horizons, not for personal gain, but so you can reach out and give back.

At this moment you may be diamonds in the rough or, more appropriately for Seattle JETs, emeralds in the rough. I have high expectations for you to excel in your roles as educators or communicators, becoming gems of diplomacy and good will.

Work hard, do your best, and bon voyage!