

**COORDINATORS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
**ACTIVITIES REPORT**  
**2021-2022 FISCAL YEAR**



【Coordinators for International Relations】

- **Anthony Gillan** September 2018 ~ (USA: Seattle, Washington)
- **Lara Justice** November 2021 ~ (USA: Nashville, Tennessee)

**MARCH 2022**

## Tsukidate Academy

Coordinator for International Relations (hereafter, CIR) Tony spent one day a week (Lara, one day monthly) at Tsukidate Academy, a combined elementary and middle school which opened in April 2020. They participated in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes, played with the children during recess, and presented English-language lunchtime broadcasts. Additionally, Tony taught and interacted with local residents at an English conversation course hosted by the School Community Center.

- **Activity Period** : April 2021 ~ March 2022
- **Cumulative Interactions with Children** : 488



## English Experiences at Kindergartens, etc.

The CIRs visited kindergartens and certified childcare centers throughout the city and held English Experiences, in which the children were able to enjoy English through dancing and games.

- **Activity Period:** April 2021 ~ March 2022

(English Experiences were not held during August and September due to Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Arigatō Host Town activities)

- **Number of Classes:** 100 occasions (once monthly at each kindergarten; two groups of children taught at both Hobara Kindergarten and Yanagawa Certified Childcare Center)
- **Cumulative Count of Participating Children:** Approximately 1,650



### Outline of a Typical Lesson

Greetings & Dance	After greetings of “Hello!” and “Good Morning!”, the CIRs and children sang and danced <i>Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes</i> .
<i>Simon Says</i>	This game taught verbs such as “clap” and “stomp,” with new verbs taught each month.
Song	In June and July, the song <i>If You're Happy and You Know It</i> was sung; and from September to February, the English-language children's song <i>Bingo</i> was sung.
Picture Book	From September, a picture book with simple English was read aloud to the children by the CIRs during each session.
Game	Each month a new game was introduced and played using English (for example, <i>Duck Duck Goose</i> , <i>London Bridge is Falling Down</i> , English-language <i>karuta</i> , etc.).
Presents	In order to instill fond memories, a new coloring sheet and word search was given to the children at the end of each session.

## English Activities at Family Park Date

English-language activities for children were held at Family Park Date, where the CIRs did things such as sing with the children and read picture books to them.

- **Activity Dates:** June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 27<sup>th</sup>, October 26<sup>th</sup>, November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 21<sup>st</sup>, and March 22<sup>nd</sup>
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 204



## English Activities at Smile Park Hobara

At Smile Park Hobara, English-language activities were held, in which children and the CIRs interacted through playing Japanese and foreign games, etc., in accordance with the ages of the participating children.

- **Activity Dates:** May 20<sup>th</sup>, June 25<sup>th</sup>, October 21<sup>st</sup>, November 19<sup>th</sup>, December 16<sup>th</sup>, January 20<sup>th</sup>,
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 32



## English Activities at Afterschool Facilities

Enjoyable, hands-on English experiences were offered at Kakeda Kid's Club and Hashirazawa Kid's Club.

Games using simple English were played, and true-false quizzes were used to introduce foreign cultures.

- **Activity Dates:** June 4<sup>th</sup>, December 6<sup>th</sup> (Kakeda Kid's Club)  
June 18<sup>th</sup>, January 6<sup>th</sup> (Hashirazawa Kid's Club)
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 116



## Hobara Elementary School's Challenge Classrooms

Hobara Elementary School's School Community Center Club hosts afterschool "Challenge Classrooms", in which school students can play in English. Originally planned to be held monthly, activities were reduced due to the pandemic. During this fiscal year, the activities included the creation of a video shown to the students, and a parent-child English playtime activity.

- **Activity Dates:** September 15<sup>th</sup> (video filming)  
November 15<sup>th</sup>, November 26<sup>th</sup> (parent-child activity)
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 116



## English Courses in the Silk Hall

English courses were held so that city residents could speak with the CIRs in English, and experience foreign cultures while improving their English ability. Enjoyable English conversation classes were held, teaching grammar and vocabulary, with recommended locations within Date City as a theme.

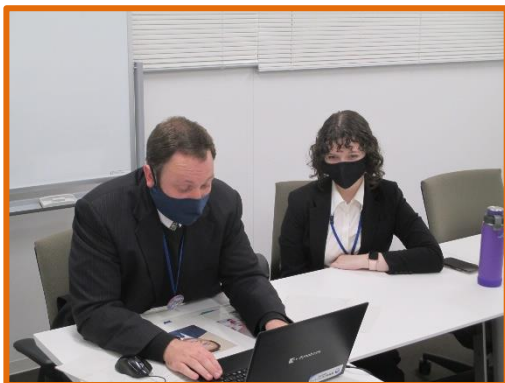
- **Activity Dates:** May 11<sup>th</sup> (Beginner Course)  
May 13<sup>th</sup> (Intermediate-Advanced Course)
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 12



## Remote English Conversation Course

As a countermeasure to the spread of the novel coronavirus and to further the use of digital technology, the CIRs held an online English course, enabling city residents to participate no matter where they live.

- **Activity Date:** November 15<sup>th</sup>
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 4



## Offsite English Courses

Lara taught English conversation in each of the five areas of the city, so that residents of every area could participate in English conversation courses.

- **Activity Dates:** February 18<sup>th</sup> (Date), February 25<sup>th</sup> (Yanagawa), March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Hobara), March 4<sup>th</sup> (Ryōzen), March 9<sup>th</sup> (Tsukidate)
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 27



## Japanese Language Course

A Japanese language course was held to support foreign residents of the city. During the course, Japanese terms related to garbage collection, traffic laws, and disaster response were taught.

- **Activity Date:** January 17<sup>th</sup>
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 2



## CIR Updates (City Homepage • Facebook, Twitter)

Reports on visits to charming areas within the city, as well as on the activities of the CIRs, were presented on Date's City homepage and social media accounts in both English and Japanese.

Month	Topic
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Pre-Event” Commemorating the Opening of the Soma-Fukushima Expressway</li> <li>• Tominari's Hanamiyama</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Conversation Course at Tsukidate Academy's School Community Center</li> <li>• Yanagawa's Utopia, YANA-Pia</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nukada's Little Lane of Hydrangeas</li> <li>• Enjoyable English at Kakeda Kids' Club</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Manga</i> Artist Autograph Exhibit at the Yanagawa Museum of Art</li> <li>• Gifts for the Guyanese Delegations</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving My Golden Health Card</li> <li>• Taking a Walk in the Takako Station North District</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Emergency Response Drill</li> <li>• Date-Made Cider</li> </ul>



English Conversation Course at Tsukidate Academy's School Community Center



Gifts for the Guyanese Delegations



Receiving My Golden Health Card



Taking a Walk in the Takako Station North District



October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning to Live with the Wisdom of Cultured Foods</li> <li>• Attractiveness Enhancement Seminar</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote English Conversation Course</li> <li>• Introducing the New CIR: Lara Justice</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hobara Summer Festival</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japanese Language Class</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps and Illustrations of Former Hobara Town</li> <li>• Date City's <i>Gurutto</i> Passport</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Courses at Each of the Former Towns</li> <li>• The Kannon of Unohanakōchi Temple</li> </ul>



Maps and Illustrations of Former Hobara Town



Attractiveness Enhancement Seminar



Introducing the New CIR: Lara Justice



Date City's *Gurutto* Passport

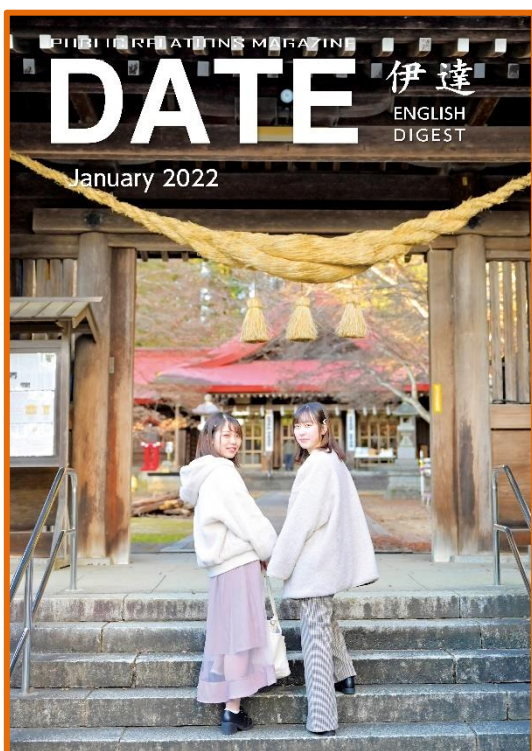
## CIR's Monthly Column in *Public Relations Magazine DATE*

CIRs wrote a monthly column in the municipal public relations magazine, comparing Japanese and American culture, or reporting on CIR activities. Beginning in February, Lara wrote articles for the even-numbered months, and Tony for those of an odd number.

Month	Topic	Month	Topic
April	Online College Education	October	Disaster Gathering
May	<i>Gentsuki</i> Motorcycles	November	Lights On for Safety
June	Leftovers Come Home	December	Slow Cookers
July	Green Curtains	January	<i>Maria-mochi</i>
August	Home Altars	February	Groundhog Day
September	School Buses	March	Great East Japan Earthquake

## *Public Relations Magazine DATE English Digest*

In order to inform foreigners of municipal government information, excerpts from Date City's monthly public relations magazine have been translated into English. Copies of *Public Relations Magazine DATE English Digest* can be found at Hobara and Yanagawa Stations or any of the General Branch Offices, and can also be viewed online on Date City's homepage or via Facebook.



Coordinator for International Relations' Monthly Column by Anthony Gillan

### 国際交流員の連載記事「マリア餅」 *Maria-mochi*

It seems to me that New Year's Day is the most celebrated day of the year in Japan. Certainly it is the most beautifully celebrated event, with decorations such as the pine-and-bamboo *kadomatsu* and rice-straw *shimenawa* placed near building entrances, and flocks of *kimono*-clad people lining up to make their *hatsumode* (first shrine visit of the New Year). In Western cultures, Christmas usually far outweighs the New Year in terms of importance, and often any decorations found around the New Year are actually those for Christmas, left out until the very end of the Christmas season. Growing up in America, I learned that if New Year's Day had any deeper significance than being the day to recover from New Year's Eve, it is as the Octave of Christmas, and for Roman Catholics, as the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. As Catholics are obliged to attend Mass on this day, the trip to attend Mass on January 1<sup>st</sup> has become a sort of *hatsumode* for me as a resident of Japan.

After attending this Mass one year, I found myself aimlessly wandering through a department store near Fukushima Station, waiting for the next train home. Being New Year's Day, the store's stock of *kagami-mochi* rice cakes had been marked down to half price. Their elaborate appearance caught my attention, and their steeply-discounted price gave me enough incentive to buy one, even if I was just going to eat the rice cake inside and throw out the layers of decorations it was packaged with. Yet as I held it on the train ride home, I couldn't help but try to think

of something better to do with the gaudy bits of paper and plastic paraphernalia, than merely use them to adorn the inside of my garbage bin. So once home, I took a miniature red paper fan out from the box, and attached it behind the head of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It resembled a halo, and the large decorative sheet of paper that I took out next had the image of a "treasure ship", which eerily resembled the square-rigged sailboats that missionaries, such as St. Francis Xavier used to make the perilous voyage here, hundreds of years ago. That sheet of paper was to be placed under the round, plastic *mochi* container, and atop that case I placed the newly-decorated Marian statue. I was worried that the tall, heavy statue wouldn't be able to stay balanced atop the round *mochi* mound for long, but to my happy surprise it remained there for several days, until I finally took down my new New Year decorations.

As the New Year in Japan is a time for families to gather, enjoy traditional activities, and pray for good fortune, this holiday had always left me feeling alienated as a non-Japanese foreigner, living alone and without faith in mere luck. Yet by combining traditional Japanese New Year decorations with those that mark my own culture and faith, I have been able to find more meaning and happiness in New Year's Day. From now on, I intend on decorating a *Maria-mochi* every year on January 1<sup>st</sup>; as not only is it a way to celebrate this Catholic feast day, but it also takes advantage of clearance-priced *mochi*!

## “Arigatō Host Town” Translation Activities

As Date City had become a Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Arigatō Host Town, Tony enabled coordination with the Republic of Guyana delegations through the translation of emails, documents, and SNS posting, etc., back and forth between English and Japanese.



- **Number of Translated Documents:** Approximately 40

## Fire Department’s Combined Emergency Response Drill

Multilingual emergency response was practiced in a combined drill with four fire departments from across Fukushima Prefecture, with Tony playing the role of a bus accident victim, speaking only English with paramedics and during an emergency phone call.

- **Activity Date:** September 24<sup>th</sup>
- **Cumulative Count of Participants:** 96



## Regular Meetings with Assistant Language Teachers

The CIRs attend monthly meetings with Date City’s assistant language teachers (ALTs), to support communication between these teachers and the Board of Education. They also assist in matters related to the daily lives of the ALTs, and Tony (a 5-year ALT veteran) gives guidance on English Education.

- **Activity Dates:** April 20<sup>th</sup>, May 17<sup>th</sup>, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, September 16<sup>th</sup> (with a class observation at Kakeda Elementary School), November 18 (with a class observation at Tsukidate Academy), January 18<sup>th</sup>
- **Number of ALTs:** 7

## Date City CIR Facebook Page

Information on the city and CIR activities is provided in English. Please view it via the QR code below!


Date City CIR Facebook Page  
[Date City Coordinators for International Relations](#) → 

## Date City CIR Instagram

Date City’s CIRs are also active on the SNS platform Instagram. They share the charm of Date City throughout the world with photos of the beautiful natural settings within the city, as well as of sites steeped deeply in history.



Date City's CIR Instagram  
**@magnify\_date**



MAGNIFY\_DATE



～ **Message from Lara** ～

Although not even half a year has passed since I began my employment, during that short time I have been met with the utmost kindness. As I began this job knowing little to nothing, I'm sure I was a handful to teach at first. It is thanks to patience and guidance of those around me, however, that I have been able to grow as not only a Coordinator for International Relations, but also as a person. As I have talked to Date City citizens, either through work or everyday life, I have felt a deep love of the city and a strength garnered from overcoming a variety of hardships. Regardless of the city's size, the charm of Date City is never-ending! I cannot wait to see what amazing facet of this city I will have the pleasure of discovering next. More than anything, however, I am elated to see the smiles of the children and city residents that participate in our CIR-run events. I am looking forward to continuing to create fun opportunities to engage with English, while also introducing the abundant charms of this city that Tony and I so love!



～ **Message from Tony** ～

Even in the midst of the novel coronavirus pandemic, we have been able to be very active while implementing thorough anti-infection measures. Translation and other assorted tasks related to the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics were very difficult, but through those efforts the residents of "Host Town" Date City were able to experience the Olympics and Paralympics, so I am deeply satisfied. With the abilities of my new coworker Lara, the appeal of Date City can now be proclaimed more extensively through SNS. Even outside of SNS activities, we have become able to support the lives of more city residents with Japanese-language classes and English courses in each area of the city, etc. Alongside city residents, I want to continue creating Date City's bright future for their benefit, and so will strive to do my utmost every day.