

Local Ski Lessons in Swiss Village

Yasaka Elementary's 5th and 6th-years Leave Lines in the Snow

January 25, Yasaka

Fifty-three 5th and 6th-year students from Yasaka Elementary School took a ski class in Shinrin Park Swiss Village's ski slopes (Yasaka) on January 25th. The children have fun skiing while learning basic techniques, rules, and manners for the slopes, and the event has become a tradition.

On the day of the lessons, school staff, parents, guardians, and school support volunteers came to participate as instructors, totaling twenty-seven people. There were ten different groups of children, from beginner to intermediate level.

Those with no skiing experience learned how to glide easily on the skis, and intermediate-advanced students carved up the slopes while learning techniques to improve their stem turns and parallel turns.

First-time skier Hinaki Kitagaki (5th-year) grinned and said "I thought it was scary, but when I tried gliding on the skis it was really fun. I was happy I could grasp the techniques!"



↑ The kids were taught by many instructors and had fun gliding along the slopes.

“I Felt Invisible Electromagnetic Waves”

Electromagnetic Wave Lesson at Amino Kita Elementary

February 9, Amino

On February 9th in Amino Kita Elementary School, forty-one 6th-year students experienced the mysteries of electromagnetics in an “Electromagnetic Wave Class.” This is held every year to encourage the students’ interest in the topic.

An “Efficient Use of Radio Spectrum Administrator” from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications served as lecturer, doing experiments with electromagnets, wireless radios, and LED lightbulbs. The children learned about the special characteristics of electromagnetic waves while turning on lightbulbs with electromagnetic waves, blocking them with cardboard and wire netting, and using antennas to sense the strength or weakness of the light.

Student Kouta Hatanaka said with a smile “Electromagnetic waves are something you can’t see, but in the experiment I was able to feel them near me.”



↑ In an experiment involving an electromagnet and iron sand, the electromagnetic waves cause “ripples,” which the children watch with fascination.

Crossing Generations by Making Straw Shoes

An Exchange Between Fifty Arayama Ward Residents

January 22, Mineyama



↑ Participants sharing advice and gossip as they work.

In Arayama Community Center (Mineyama) on January 22nd, a “Straw Shoe-Making” class took place, and local residents had fun making straw shoes the way it was traditionally done long ago. This event was created last year in order to make the straw shoes used every year at the fall festival, and for intergenerational communication.

Ward residents Tadakazu Mitsuno and Junichirou Tsubokura were teachers for the day, instructing everyone from elementary schoolers to 80 year-olds on how to weave the shoes and how to attach the sandal straps. Participants gave each other advice and compared finished products, all while step-by-step knitting a total of fifty-five sandals for both adults and children.

Ward chairman Kyouji Horii said “There aren’t a lot of opportunities for ward residents to overcome generations and have an exchange. Being able to laugh loudly together while working on the same project becomes the strength of the community in times of emergency and empowers the revitalization of the region. I would like to continue this in future.”

Omiya Children's Choir Musical Coming Soon

Passionate Practice for the 30-Year Anniversary Performance

March 12, Omiya

On March 12th in the Omiya Agricultural Center, Omiya Children's Choir will be presenting a musical performance, and they are practicing for it passionately. The group (group leader: Michiko Shimizu) will soon be celebrating its 30-year anniversary, and currently, comprises of thirty-three children from Omiya. They practice the performance many times over, every week on Saturday.

At the concert, in addition to the choir singing, they will also perform the group's first musical since it was founded. In "Taiyou no Uta" (Written and composed by Kan Wakamatsu) the children go on an adventure and overcome struggles by working together, all while presenting songs and dance.

Also performing in the concert are "Omiya Children's Choir Former Members," "Komachi Cantabile," and also "Omiya Middle School Brass Band Club" and "Ensemble Tree's." The group leader Shimizu said "As each group in town joins together to perform as one regional unit, I hope we can all be in harmony."

Date and Time: March 12th (Sunday) 1:30pm

Place: Omiya Agricultural Center

Program: 1st – Omiya Children's Choir and

2nd – Musical - "Taiyou no Uta"

Price: Free



↑ The children are practicing hard for their performance.

Ukawa Ward Immigration • Settlement Policy Proposal

Activity Report From the College Students of the “Community Development Collegiate Committee”

January 29, Tango



↑ Students from instructor Imazato’s seminar for the Ryukoku University’s Policy Studies Club present an immigration and settlement plan proposal to the region’s residents.

This fiscal year, students of Professor Kanako Imazato’s seminar for the Ryukoku University Policy Studies Club presented an activity report on January 29th in Ukawa Active Live House (Tango), about their research activities conducted in the Ukawa ward. About fifty residents from the region came to participate.

The students analyzed the results of their public hearings and local observations, identified that all of the region’s problems had their basis in the aging population and general population decrease, and presented their “Ukawa Ward Immigration and Permanent Residence Plan.” They proposed ideas such as introducing the region’s charms to urban areas in “lunch meetings,” short-term programs for experiencing rural life, loaning vacant houses to people who want to move in, and offering support for jobs and life for people in these doing a “trial” in these vacant houses.

Through these efforts, the university and the region will cooperate, aiming to solve problems and revitalize the region as just one part of the “Community Development Collegiate Committee” plan. After this the students will continue their activities in Ukawa.

Children Exterminate “*Oni* of the Heart”

Kumihama Kindergarten’s Setsubun Event

February 3, Kumihama



↑ Children crying with fright at the *oni*.

On February 3rd at Kumihama Kindergarten, a Setsubun event was held, and the children drove out the *oni*, ogre-like demons from Japanese folklore, from their hearts.

The children wrote their own weak points, like “picky *oni*,” or “selfish *oni*” onto paper which they stuck to their clothes, and then split up by school year for bean-throwing, a tradition meant to drive away evil spirits. When everyone was finished throwing beans, three *oni* wielding metal clubs appeared from the playground. The children cried with surprise, but in order to make them leave, they had to gather their courage and stick the papers they had written earlier onto the *oni*, to make them carry the papers back to the mountains. After they left, a god of fortune appeared instead, and the children sighed with relief and smiled.