

「Focus!」とは、長期留学生の留学先での学校生活やホストファミリーとの生活の様子を、城西高校 HP をご覧の皆さんにお伝えするものです。

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The Long Awaited Winter Break

The long awaited winter break has finally arrived, after a busy and stressful final week of the semester. Finishing all my tests and group project felt like a huge relief. Somehow, I was able to finish up my assignments, and it felt as if heavy pressure had been lifted off my shoulders. Especially toward the end of the semester, my tasks were piled up, and I often felt like I had a chip on my shoulder and couldn't relax that much. Because of that, my current status of being able to relax is very refreshing. I finally feel like I can take a breath again.

In the final days of the semester, the atmosphere in my classes changed noticeably.

There were almost no classes that had regular lectures, instead the overall mood became much calmer and relaxed. In my science class, since we have learned topics that involve genetics, we watched a movie related to forensic chemistry and criminal investigation. While watching the movie, I noticed that some of the concepts we learned in class were in the story. This helped me remember and understand material much more easily. I thought it was a good way to engage students while reminding them of things we have learned so far.

In other classes, teachers hosted quiz games based on the class material of this semester. These quizzes were done in teams and the teams competed against each other. The winning teams received small prizes like Starbucks gift cards or treats. By working together with my friends, I

was able to enjoy learning while also having fun. Having these kinds of activities at the end of the term helped improve the class atmosphere and made the final days of school much more enjoyable.



There was also grade assembly that had very relaxed mood. Everyone gathered together, drank hot chocolate, and watched a Christmas movie. Teachers watched the movie together with the students, and it looked like everyone was enjoying themselves. I learned that in Canada, it is common for families to gather and watch movies together during this season, which was interesting to observe and experience at school as well.

One thing that surprised me was seeing many small boxes that wrapped up and stacked on the teachers' desks. At first, I wondered who had

given them those boxes, later I found out that it is custom for students to give small gifts to teachers as a way of expressing gratitude. Honestly, from my own perspective, it felt a little bit like a bribe at first. However, after thinking about it more, I realized that this system probably makes teachers feel appreciated and motivated, which, I think, is a positive thing.

When I think of December, I usually imagine snow. Many people also associate Canadian winters with heavy snowfall. However, in the area where I live, Surrey, it does not snow very often, for geographical reasons. Instead, moist air coming from the ocean turns into rain, and the weather during this season feels similar to the rainy season in Japan. I was hoping for a white Christmas, so this was a little disappointing, but it is also something I could only learn by actually living here.

Winter break is still just beginning as I write this report, but because I have more free time, I have had more chances to hang out with my friends. Since it is rainy and quite cold outside, we usually spend time at indoor places such as shopping malls. Recently, I went to see a movie. Because movie release dates are different in Canada and Japan, I was able to watch a movie that has not been released in Japan yet. The movie theater itself felt like those in Japan, and considering the high cost of living in this area, the ticket price was cheaper than I expected. However, I ended up buying snacks at the concession stand, which made it more expensive overall.

During this winter break, I want to relax properly, rest myself both physically and mentally, and prepare myself to start the next semester with a positive attitude.

待ちに待った冬休み

待ちに待った冬休みがついにやってきました。忙しい時期も終わり、授業ではテストやグループプロジェクトなどを何とか良い結果ですべて終わらせることができ、自分としてはかなり重荷が下りた感じがしました。特に学期の後半は課題が多く、時間にも気持ちにも余裕がなかったので、今はやっと一息ついているような感覚です。



学期の最後の方は、ほとんど授業らしい授業がなく、全体的にほんわかした雰囲気ですべてを送ることができました。科学のクラスでは、今学期に遺伝などに関する内容を学んでいたため、それに関連した化学犯罪捜査の映画を観ました。教科書で学んだ内容が出てきたりして楽しみながら復習することができました。ほかのクラスでは、今までに学んだ内容をもとに先生がクイズを作り、クラス対抗のクイズゲームを行いました。勝ったチームにはお菓子やスターバックスのギフトカードなどの景品が用意されており、友達と協力して、学びつつも楽しむことができました。学期の最後にこうした活動があることで、クラスの雰囲気もより良くなったと思います。また、学年集会ではリラックスしたムードの中、みんなで集まってホットチョコレートを飲みながらクリスマス映画を観る時間もありました。先生も一緒に映画を観ていて、みんな楽しんでいた様子でした、ここでは

この時期に家族で集まって映画を見るのが文化としてあります。

学校生活で一つびっくりしたことがあります。先生の机の上に、クリスマス風に装飾された小さな箱がいくつも積み重なっているのを見て、最初は誰からもらったのだろうと思っていました。後で調べてみると、生徒が先生に感謝の気持ちとしてプレゼントを渡す文化があるそうです。正直、自分の感覚では少し賄賂みたいだと思ってしまいましたが、先生にとってはかなり嬉しい仕組みなのだろうとも思いました。

十二月といえば、自分の中では雪のイメージがあります。カナダの冬は雪が多いと思っている人も多いと思いますが、実は自分の住んでいるサレーの地域では、地理的な影響であまり雪が降りません。その代わり、海のほうから吹いてくる湿った風が雨に変わり、この時期は日本でいうじめじめしていやな梅雨のような天気が続きます。ホワイトクリスマスを期待していたので少し残念ですが、これも現地で生活してみて分かることの一つ

だと感じました。

冬休みは、このレポートを書いている時点ではまだ序盤ですが、時間に余裕がある分、友達と遊ぶ機会が増えました。ただ、外は雨が多く、しかもかなり寒いので、モールなどの屋内施設で過ごすことがほとんどです。最近では映画を観に行きましたが、カナダと日本では公開日が違うため、日本ではまだ公開されていない映画を観ることができました。映画館自体は日本とあまり変わらないと感じましたが、物価が高い地域にしてはチケット代は意外と安かった印象です。ただし、売店でお菓子を買ってしまい、結果的には出費が増えてしまいました。また、モールの中にあるゴーカートで遊ぶこともありました。学校のことをあまり考えずに生活できている今の時間は、とても楽しく感じています。この冬休みでしっかりリフレッシュして、次の学期に向けて気持ちを切り替えていきたいです。

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A Lot of Events

This month also had some events that I had never experienced before. Also, we had the last school day before a long vacation, so I felt a difference compared to usual school life.

On December 17th, I had a cooking event at school. There were many students from different countries, and they cooked dishes from their home countries. In most cases, there were more than two people from the same country. However, I was the only Japanese student. Also, I don't usually cook at home, so I was nervous. But the teacher helped me, and I was able to cook well.

At first, I wanted to cook rice cakes and miso soup. However, there was no rice for the rice

cakes, so I only made miso soup. I thought that people from other countries might not like the taste of miso soup, but they had a lot and seemed to enjoy it. Some friends even already knew about it, including one who lives in Europe. I felt that Japanese traditions are spreading around the world.

After cooking, we introduced our meals. There were dishes from around ten countries. I didn't know some of the meals, so it was a good experience for me. I felt that each country's taste has its own originality. For example, in Turkey, they sometimes eat lavash bread with rice. In Japan, we usually eat each food separately, so that was really interesting. I learned a lot from

this experience. It was helpful to learn about dishes from around the world.

On December 18th, we had a dance party held by the school. This is my best memory since I came to Canada because it was my first time joining a dance party. There are a few reasons. First, we don't have dance parties for students in Japan. Dance parties are not common events in Japan, but in Canada, they are popular and many students join them.



Many students came to the party, and it was so fun. Since it was my first time, I was nervous before dancing. But I started to relax after seeing some friends. The most impressive memory from the party was that almost all the students danced actively and were more friendly than usual. I felt a difference between Japan and Canada. If they were Japanese, they wouldn't dance like that. They would be shy.

Sometimes music I didn't know played, but I copied other people's movements and was able to dance like them. Sometimes, groups made a circle and danced together. Near the end, I requested a song from the DJ and danced with my friends. That was also a great memory. So, my first dance party became a really good memory.

On December 19th, it was the last day of school,

and I heard that something special would happen during class. That's why I was excited to go to school. On that day, I was surprised when I arrived in the classroom. Some students were playing games on a monitor, and they were playing in front of the teacher. That scene really impressed me. In Japan, we are not allowed to bring games to school. But they even brought video games to school. I felt the difference in freedom.

That day, we only had two classes and homeroom. We did karaoke and watched a movie. It felt different from usual, so it was fun. In homeroom, the school gave us pancakes. Then I was surprised because some Canadian friends dipped watermelon in maple syrup. They did the same with other fruits. I was shocked!

In Canada, students don't have the custom of cleaning the classroom themselves, so the last day of school is like a celebration, and students can do anything. Actually, I think this system is really good for getting closer to other students. I think Japanese schools should do something similar because when students can do what they really want, they can become friends faster. I felt that this is a better way to connect with others than the current Japanese style.

This month was another really good one for me.

盛りだくさんのイベント

今月も今まで経験したことないようなイベントが盛りだくさんな月だった。また今月は長期休み前最後の登校日もあったので普段よりも日本との違いを感じた。12月17日、この日は放課後に料理のイベントがあった。沢山の留学生が自分達の国の料理を共有する目的だ。ほとんどの留学生は同じ国の留学生が2人以上いるのだが、自分の学校に日本人は私だけだったのだ。それに加え普段

私は料理をしないため本当に完成させられるか不安があった。しかし先生も積極的に手をかしてくださり、上出来に仕上げる事ができた。当初はお餅とお味噌汁を作ろうと思ったが、もち米が手に入らなかったのも味噌汁だけを作った。初め他の国の留学生は味噌汁の味が苦手なのではないかと心配していたが、多くの人が美味しそうに飲んでくれた。またいくつかの留学生は味噌汁をすでに飲んだことのある人もいたので日本料理が海外でも知られていることを実感した。全員が作り終えると皆自分達の料理の紹介をした。10 各国近くの国の料理があり中には知らないものもありとても面白かった。また色々な国の料理を一度に食べるからこそ、それぞれの食文化に独自性があるのにも面白いと思った。例えばトルコ、日本では別々で食べるラヴァッシュと呼ばれるパンとお米を一緒に食べたりととても面白かった。また多くのことをこの場で学ぶことができた。

12 月 18 日、この日はダンスパーティが開催された。これはカナダに来てからの私の一番の思い出だ。まず私は今までダンスパーティをしたことがない。そもそも日本にそのような習慣がないからだ。日本では珍しいがカナダで一つの主流なイベントだ。沢山の生徒が参加しておりとても楽しいイベントだった。なぜこのイベントが自分の中で心に残っているのか、それには理由がある。ほとんどの生徒が積極的に踊っており、また今まで話したことない人でもとても関わりやすかった。ここは日本との違いだなと感じた。もし彼らが日本人だったらあれほど積極的に踊らないと思う。またもっと控えめな人が多かっただろう。時折知らない音楽が流れ友達とのノリについていけない時もあったが、なんとか真似して自分なりに楽しく踊れた。大勢で円を作って一緒に踊ったりなど会場全体で楽しむことができてとても面白か

った。終了付近では、自分から DJ にリクエストをし、その曲で友達と踊ったのもいい思い出だ。



12 月 19 日、この日は長期休み前最後の学校だ。最終日に特別なイベントを授業中にやるなど告知をされていたためとても楽しみだった。そして当日私は日本との違いに驚きを隠せなかった。初めに驚いたのは教室に着いた時だ。生徒がモニターを使ってゲームをしていた。しかも先生の目の前でやっていた。その光景に驚きを隠せなかった。日本では絶対にできないため余計に衝撃だったと思う。日本との自由さの違いを再認識させられた。その日は授業は 2 コマしかなく、それにホームルームだけだった。カラオケをしたり映画を見たり最後の日を満喫するような雰囲気だった。またホームルームではパンケーキが配られた。そこで驚きだったのがカナダ人の友人がスイカをメープルシロップにつけていたのだ。さすがメープルシロップが有名な国だなと思った。カナダでは自分達で教室を掃除する習慣がないため最終日は遊ぶ日のような印象だった。自分も最終日を満喫できたと思う。またこのシステムは日本の学校でもやるべきだと思う。最終日限りで生徒のしたいことを各々させる。これが実は一番他の生徒との仲を縮めやすいと私は思った。