



Japan Day 2019 Participation Summary and Survey Results

Highlights

- A total of 950 people participated in SJA's Japan Day. It is estimated about 40 percent of 700 guests were children/students from the community. The event was supported by 250 volunteers.
- About 9 percent of the participants responded to the survey. 56 percent of surveyed guests came with elementary school children. 42 percent of them learned about the event from Peachjar.
- Overall, the level of satisfaction was very high (98 percent). The guests enjoyed a showcase of traditional Japanese arts and culture, taste of Japanese food, and hands-on Japanese arts and crafts.
- At the same time, the surveyed guests were looking for more information on cultural contexts of the traditional arts, support by volunteers, and communication with booth facilitators.
- Among the surveyed guests, 38 percent expressed interest in learning Japanese language and culture at SJA's youth program, and 23 percent did at before or afterschool enrichment at elementary school. 24 percent showed interest in taking (or were already taking) Japanese at APS middle or high school.

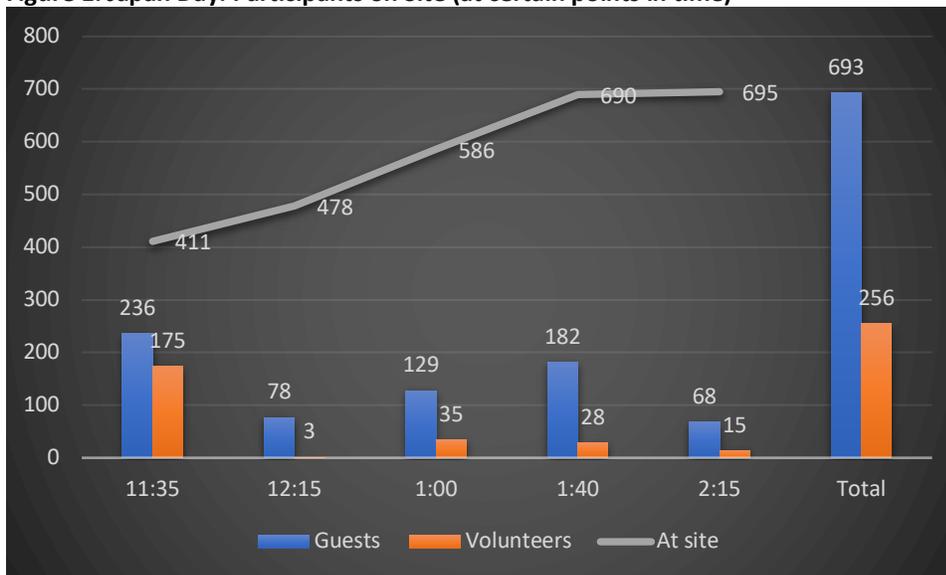
1. About the Japan Day Event

Study Japanese in Arlington (SJA) had its first Japan Day event on March 31, 2019 at the [Arlington Career Center](#) (ACC), from 11:00am to 3:00pm. The event's objective was to introduce Japanese culture, language, and companies to the community and to celebrate the sister school relationship between ACC and Engei High School in Setagaya, Tokyo. It was a free event, sponsored by the [Embassy of Japan](#) and supported by ACC and the [Arlington Public School](#) (APS). This report assesses event participation and post-event survey results, and concludes with SJA's reflections.

2. Overall Participation

2.1 Overview. A total of 950 people in and out of Arlington participated in the event: about 700 were guests and 250 were performers, workshop/booth facilitators, and volunteers. Figure 1 below presents the number of participants at ACC by the hour.

Figure 1. Japan Day: Participants on Site (at certain points in time)



Note: The bars indicate the number of guests or volunteers who arrived by the times listed. The volunteer arrival is an estimate and many arrived by 10 am to set up their booths or workshops. The grey line above the bars shows the number of participants (both guests and volunteers) at ACC at the specified times.

2.2 Registered guests. There were 700 guests, of whom 500 were pre-registered, while the remaining 200 were admitted entry at the door. The registration was managed through [Eventbrite](#). About 600 tickets were made available.

2.3 Unregistered guests. The admission for 200 unregistered guests was managed by a professional event coordinator at the door. Upon their arrival, these guests were explained that the event was open for registered guests only due to ACC capacity, but they might be able to enter as other guests exit. The capacity of the ACC Commons is about 600 on the first floor and 200 on the second floor. At the peak (around 11:30), 20 guests left who did not want to wait.

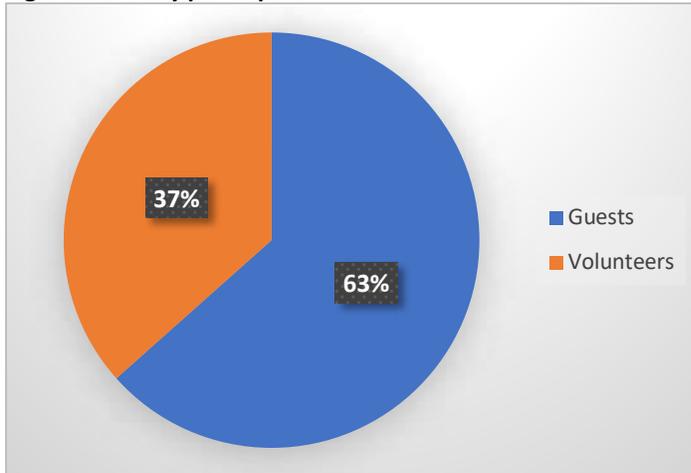
2.4 Performers, facilitators, and volunteers. About 70 percent of them were Japanese, while the remaining 30 percent were non-Japanese, who had interest or links with Japan, such as having lived in the country, having learned a Japanese art (origami, kendama, tea ceremony, manga, etc.) or language, or were married to a Japanese spouse. Volunteers were managed through [Signup Genius](#). The link was circulated through SJA mail list, most of who had participated in SJA activities, such as SJA’s youth or adult Japanese classes.

2.5 Duration of stay. The majority of guests stayed for about two hours. The two arrival peaks were around 11:30/12:15 (315 guests) and around 1:00/1:30 (310 guests). Meanwhile, about 20 percent of guests (or about 140 people) stayed throughout the event.

3. Post-event Survey

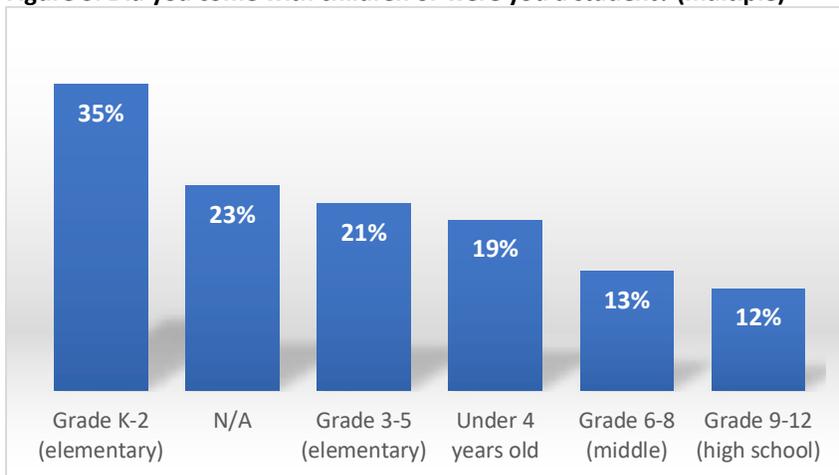
3.1 Survey participation. After the event, a [survey](#) was created on the Google platform and sent to all participants. 84 participants or about 9 percent of them responded (see Figure 2 for breakdown).

Figure 2. Survey participants



3.2 Surveyed guest demographic. Asked if they came to the event with children or if they were students, 56 percent of surveyed guests responded that they came with elementary school students (see Figure 3). Assuming 77 percent of the guests came with children or students, about 260 children/students (or 40 percent of all guests) were children/students.¹

Figure 3. Did you come with children or were you a student? (multiple)

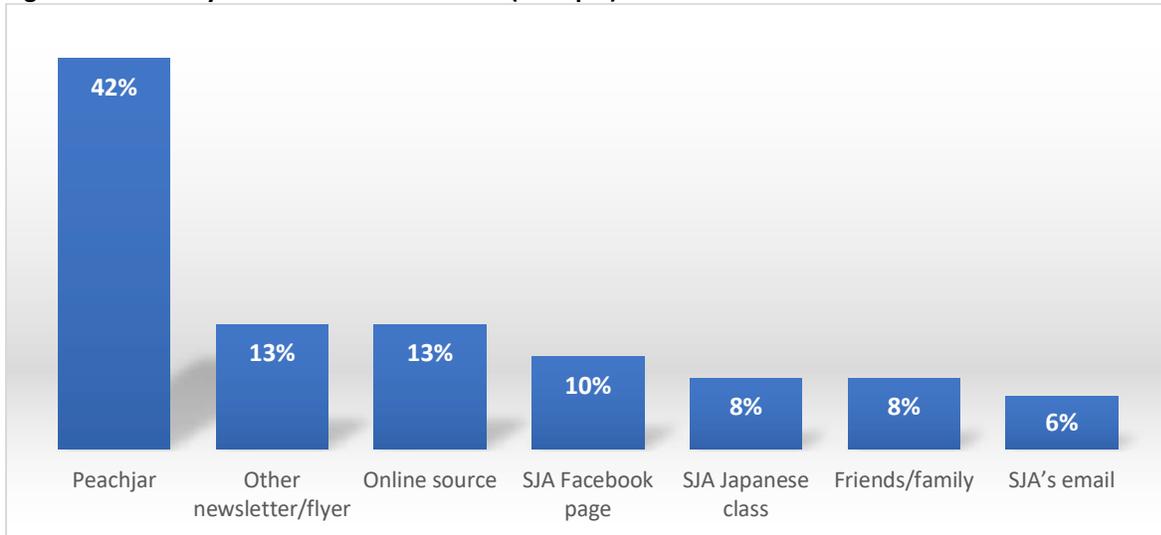


3.3 Source of information. Asked how they learned about the event, 42 percent of surveyed guests responded that it was by Peachjar, APS' on-line information system (see Figure 4). This was followed by communication by SJA, such as Facebook, Japanese programs, and email (24

¹ It is estimated that one participating family was composed of 1.5 adults and 1.5 children.

percent in total). Other newsletters/flyers included school or community newsletters, while online sources were event sites (Eventbrite and google search) and websites (SJA and JASW).

Figure 4. How did you learn about the event? (multiple)



3.4 Overall event reception. 98 percent of the surveyed guests were either very satisfied or satisfied with Japan Day (see Figure 5). 92 percent of them gained better understanding of Japan and Japanese culture (see Figure 6), and 98 percent of them responded they would attend a similar event in the future (see Figure 7).

Figure 5. Level of satisfaction

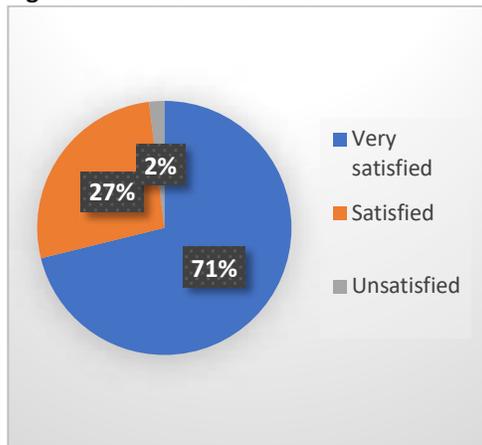


Figure 6. Better understanding of Japan

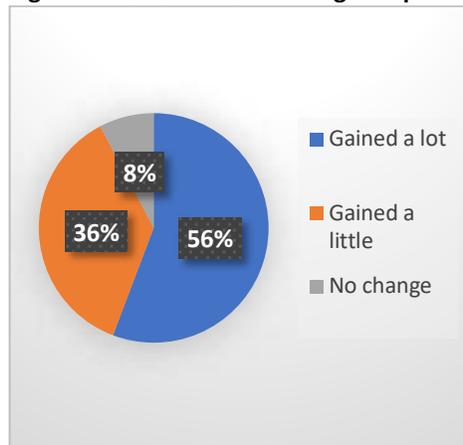
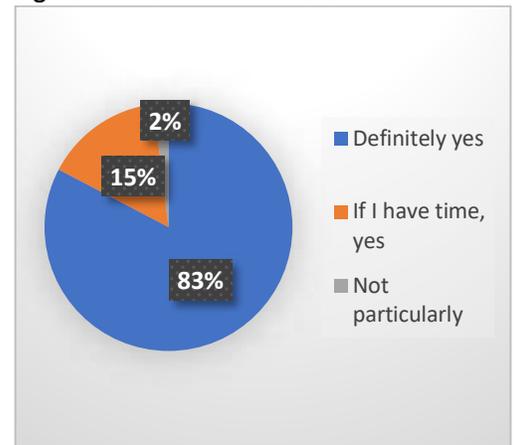


Figure 7. Attend a similar event in the future

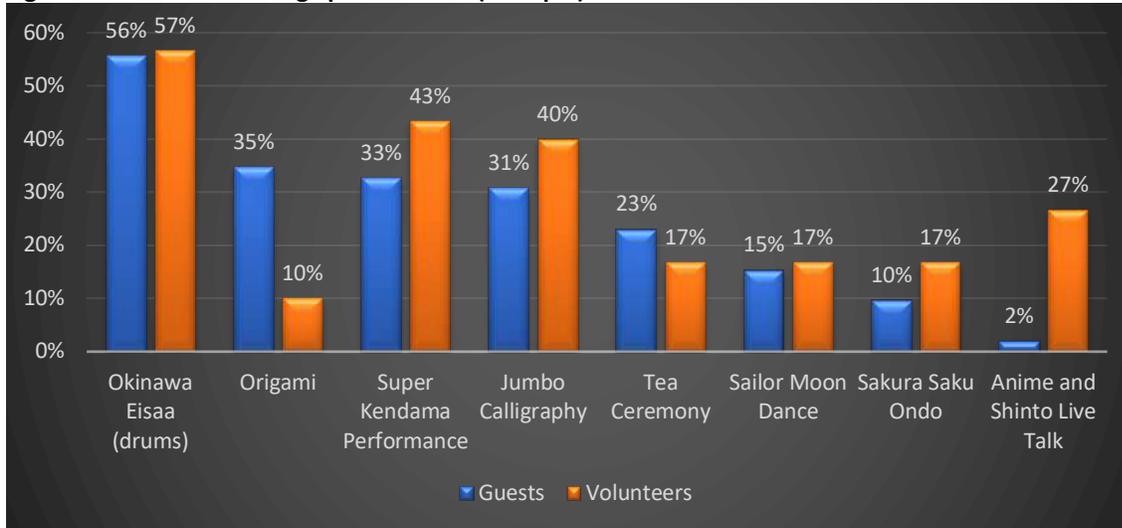


3.5 Popular activities. There were three types of activities: (a) stage performances, (b) workshops, and (c) booths.

(a) Stage performances. The most favorite performance was the Okinawa Eisa (drums and dance) by both guests and volunteers. Among guests, this was followed by origami, kendama, and calligraphy. On the other hand, among volunteers, who are overall more familiar with Japanese culture, Eisa was followed by kendama, calligraphy, and the anime and Shinto talk (see

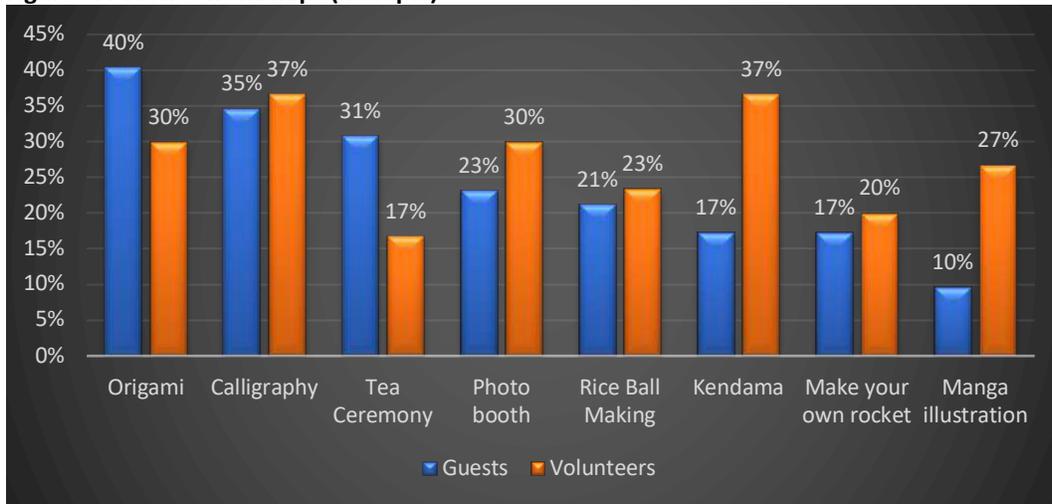
Figure 8 below). Overall, guests seemed to like the showcase of traditional Japanese art and culture, while the volunteers seemed to value participatory performances, such as the Shinto talk and Sakura Saku Ondo (final group dance).

Figure 8. Most favorite stage performance (multiple)



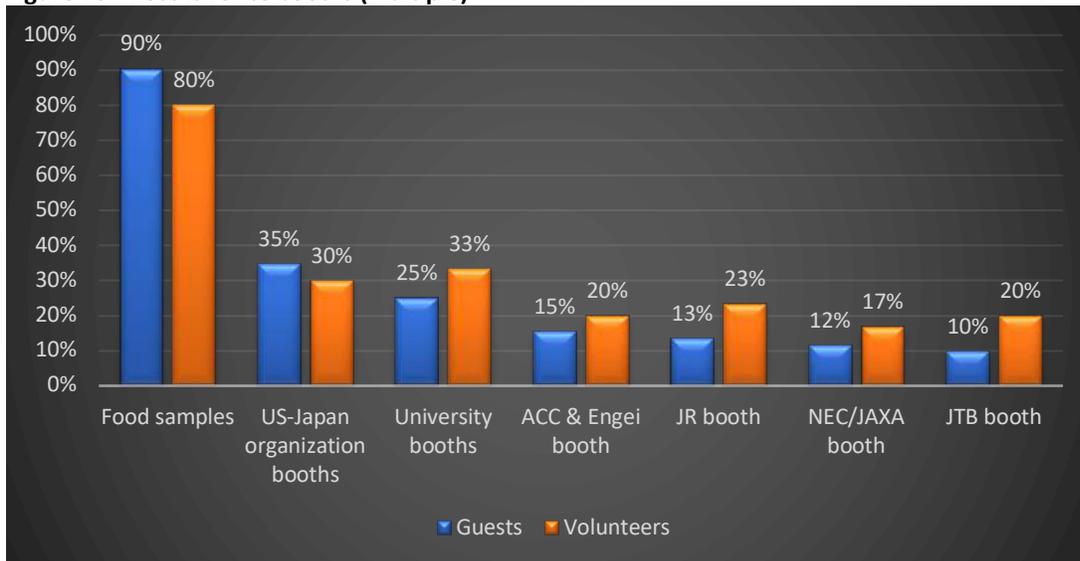
(b) Workshops. Among guests, the most favorite workshops were origami, calligraphy, and tea ceremony. Volunteers, on the other hand, cited calligraphy, kendama, origami, and photo booth as their favorites (see Figure 9 below). As demonstrated by the stage performances, guests appeared to enjoy traditional arts and crafts experiences. Additionally, guests seemed to appreciate activities staffed by well-informed volunteers who could explain cultural elements and provide contextual information. Despite the limited number of slots, tea ceremony was highly valued among guests, because the ceremony and its world were fully explained by American performers in a way that was understandable to non-Japanese. Surveyed guests also responded positively to activities where they met with volunteer assistance. There was a shortage of volunteers to help guests wear yukata, or summer kimono, at the photo booth. Kendama might have been more difficult than it appeared on the stage, or the guests might have wanted more support by masters or volunteers.

Figure 9. Favorite workshops (multiple)



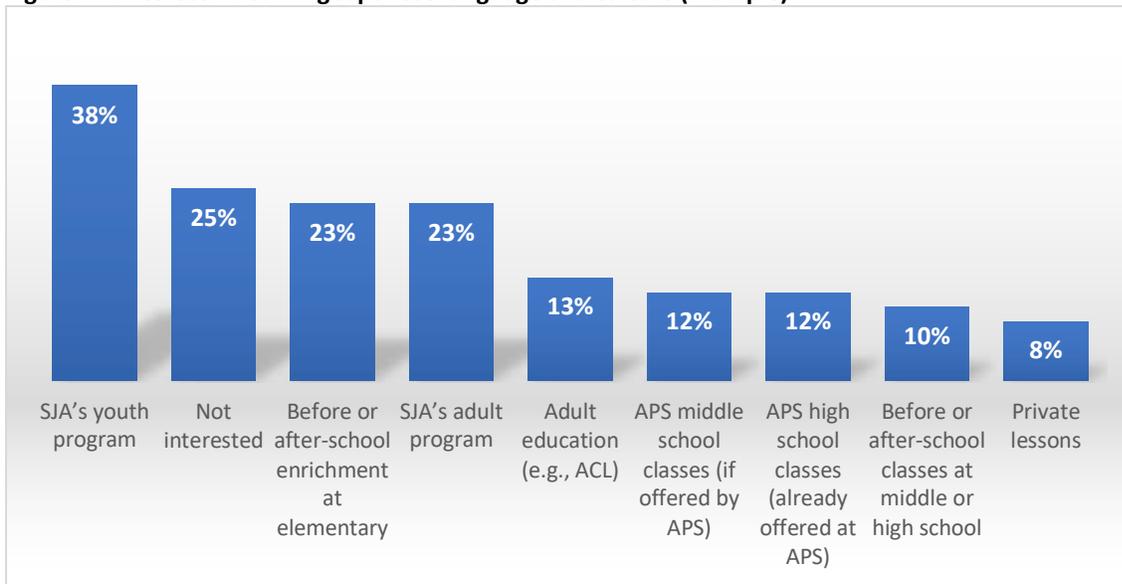
(c) Booths. The most popular booths were the food samples. Among guests, US-Japan exchange organization booths ranked the second, followed by university information booths (see Figure 10 below). Because majority of the guests were families with elementary school children, they were not particularly interested in studying Japanese at university or going to university in Japan. As in the case of tea ceremony workshop which received positive responses for its engagement and delivery of information, the university booths could have reached out more proactively to the guests and explained their programs, which the US-Japan organization booths seem to have done better.

Figure 10. Most favorite booths (multiple)



3.6 Learning Japanese language and culture. Asked if Japan Day interested you learn Japanese language and culture, 61 percent of surveyed guests indicated their interest in SJA’s free Japanese language program (youth and adult combined). 24 percent of them said they would take (or were already taking) Japanese at middle or high school. 23 percent showed interest in before or afterschool enrichment at elementary school, to which SJA could potentially contribute in the future.

Figure 11. Interest in learning Japanese language and culture (multiple)



4. Event feedback

4.1 From survey

- It was awesome and put together really well! Can't wait for next year's event.
- Great event! Do it again! (by many surveyed guests and volunteers)
- It was a well organized and pleasant event. Thank you to all the SJA Board members for their hard work and dedication. The SJA put community together so gracefully that everyone seemed to be happy to be part of the Japan Day. The event was not only a celebration of Japanese culture, but also it was very informative. Local businesses, organizations, and schools were well represented. I was moved by the sister school relationship between ACC and Engei HS. I felt honored to witness the continued friendship between Engei HS and the US is now carried over to the next generation. I liked the remarks of the principal of ACC as well. Congratulations to SJA board members on the great success of the Japan Day! I hope SJA will seek ways to make the Japan Day an annual event and the event to be recognized as part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival.
- I think a few vendors would help liven things up. I would have bought kendama for my children, as well as books, a film, snack, or other cultural items.
- Have some more crafts table for kids with Japanese theme activities. Maybe some Japanese games kids play or board games. Some Japanese cartoons that can be seen with subtitles.

- I attended the event with my 15-year-old son hoping to learn more about Japanese culture. The hands-on or experiential element of the event was high (doing origami, trying on a kimono, etc.), but the information-conveying element was low or indirect (people would answer questions if you asked, but no one was presenting or sharing it without being asked). I appreciate the intention of the event and despite my disappointment, I do hope you will give it another try next year. Just look for ways to increase how and what it shares about Japan and its culture. Some suggestions might be:

PLANNING

- Make a list of all that is awesome, intriguing, and traditional about Japanese culture, then seek out groups, individuals, or displays that can share it with your attendees.
- Invite the language instruction and educational institutions who are attending to include some language or other cultural "teaching" element in their display.
- Invite Japanese clubs to prepare a display or demonstration on a certain topic. The more involvement by others, the better!

AT THE EVENT

- Prior to each performance, provide some brief information about each game/art/dance/etc. and how it is part of Japanese culture.
- Have more timed or on-going demonstrations throughout the building in order to share cultural-related information, grab people's attention and keep people moving around.
- The kids' contests were fun and got people actively involved.

I was sorry to miss the tea ceremony -- I didn't know the schedule in advance and got there after it was finished; I was not one of the few to sign up throughout the day. I hope these ideas might be helpful in some way. Good luck next year!

4.2 Other comments (at ACC or via email)

- I couldn't imagine this would be such a big event. Wonderful! There were substantially more non-Japanese participants compared to other Japan events. It was such a great opportunity to introduce Japan. Members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce don't participate in weekend events, but we should for PR in such a big, energetic event like this.
- Thank you for organizing this beautiful event. It was such a spectacularly well-organized celebration of Japanese language and culture. I know that the community members who attended were thoroughly delighted. I appreciated the creative and efficient use of space. I had no idea that the Career Center could be so transformed. I know that it was a lot of hard work by all the SJA members and in particular, board members and all the wonderful volunteers. Thank you for helping the APS and Arlington Career Center community celebrate our new Sister School relationship with Engei in such a memorable way.
- It was such a wonderful event. Congratulations! We (Japanese) are here in US to introduce Japanese culture to Americans. We had such a great audience!

- Local artists and entrepreneurs enjoyed their participations. Tea ceremony facilitators were able to introduce tea in a casual setting. Manga illustration workshop was only for an hour but attended by 100 guests.
- A lot of volunteers, including high school students, said it was so impressive and such a fun event.
- The level of satisfaction was also high among booth facilitators. For instance, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program interacted with about 100 participants, and the Japan America Student Conference (JASC) for university students had about 15 people signed up for information. Several university students introduced their Japanese programs, including why they study Japanese and how fun it is. They motivated themselves as well!
- SJA and universities could have taught a short Japanese language emersion.
- Only a few participants showed interest in studying at universities in Japan. A lot of people did not know top rank universities in Japan or understand why study in Japan.

5. SJA's Reflections

- One of the most successful elements was the advertisement through APS' peachjar. Because we received many queries, we introduced event registration, and all 600 tickets were reserved in two weeks! The attendance rate among the registered guests were 83%. Considering the event attendance is about 70% in general, the event was extremely successful.
- Based on the post-event survey and also personal interactions and reactions from attendees, participants and performers, the event received a positive reception and a warm encouragement. While there are areas for improvement, Japan Day was extremely well executed and achieved a high level of participant satisfaction.
- According to the fire safety regulations, ACC's capacity is about 600 on the first floor and about 200 on the second floor. To ensure we were below the capacity, we hired a professional event coordinator, who managed the entry of unregistered guests. The venue was not too congested, allowing guests to enjoy the event in sufficient space and flow. To ensure safety, we also hired a police officer who oversaw the parking lot and the venue. Considering the number of participants,, the event was well managed without any injury, accident, or theft.
- ACC students participated in the opening ceremony, food service, and ACC booth. They also had exchanges with Engei students. The event contributed to strengthen friendship between the two sister schools and on-going discussion towards sister city relations between Arlington and Setagaya.
- The event provided an opportunity to form artists' networks between Japanese and American performers and promoted US-Japan relations at grassroots level. Additionally, it also helped create supporters' network of such relations among universities and US-Japan exchange organizations.
- The survey indicates guests valued booths by US-Japan exchange organizations more than universities or Japanese companies. There were comments that facilitators should have proactively interacted or communicated with the guests. There also was a suggestion that

more Japanese children's games should have been offered. The guests were interested in current Japan and looking for more opportunities to communicate and learn about Japan.

- SJA is a very young organization. We started organizing in May 2018 and became a NPO in September 2018. In about three months, we planned, prepared, and successfully executed a successful event at this magnitude, thanks to support from ACC, APS, the Embassy, and the volunteers.
- Based on the very positive feedback received and lessons learned from our first Japan Day event, we would like to continue hosting it at ACC or an APS school, with a longer-planning time and more input from students and their families. We might reduce the number of college and study abroad booths but increase the number of model Japanese language lessons at different proficiency levels. We might also need to specify admission times on tickets in advance for parking and crowd control at ACC. We hope this will become a regular feature or contribution by SJA to the National Cherry Blossom Festival.