

# KeizerCommunity

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## Rotary exchange student will miss Keizer

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

Walking in McNary's 2017 graduation was bittersweet for Rotary exchange student Kanta Ohyama.

He was happy to participate in a ceremony like he would never experience in Japan but also sad that it meant his nine-month stay in the United States was coming to an end.

"There were so many emotions," said Ohyama in English that has greatly improved since he arrived in Oregon on August 27.

Sharing his emotions and opinions was something Ohyama had to get used to as people aren't as expressive in Japan.

"I learned how to explain myself to people and how to make friendship," Ohyama said. "I think that's so good for me."

The friends Ohyama made is what makes it so hard to leave.

"I made so many friends at school," he said. "They are so funny."

Ohyama stayed with three host families, each for three months, in Keizer while he attended classes at McNary and the Career and Technical Education Center. Since two of the families were Mormons, Ohyama went to seminary everyday before school and then to church on Sundays for six months.



Keizer Rotary exchange student Kanta Ohyama, of Japan, spent the last three months of his stay in America with Chuck Fisher.

"I don't have any religion so that was good to experience," Ohyama said.

Ohyama took a wide range of classes—German, Animal Behavior, Weights, Construction Math and American Gov-

ernment. "I didn't have any knowledge about American Government," Ohyama said. "I studied with a group and my friends helped me. That makes the subject easier for me. That was still hard. I like American school better than Japan. Japanese school is too strict. We study so much."

Ohyama also got involved in extracurricular activities after school, working his way up

from junior varsity to the varsity soccer team. In five games, he scored four goals.

"Everything is different between American style soccer and Japanese style soccer so I was so confused when I got here and started playing," Ohyama said. "I just tried to be a member of the team and do something for teammates."

Ohyama gave golf a try as well.

"I just want to have experience to play golf because when I get older," Ohyama said. "In Japan, old people play golf. It's expensive to play golf in Japan because land is small."

With his host families, Ohyama went camping, kayaking and hiking. Even though his grandparents own a fish company, Ohyama had never been fishing.

"There's no sea around my city (Gunma)," Ohyama said. "My parents are busy and I'm busy. I asked them in Rotary and they helped me."

Ohyama was surprised how quickly he caught his first fish—a rainbow trout on a camping trip.

Ohyama was one of 42 international students from Rotary District 2840 to come to the Pacific Northwest.

They, along with 42 American students from Rotary District 5100, met for a two-week orientation in California and the district conference in Seaside. Ohyama also enjoyed going to the Keizer Rotary meetings each Thursday.

"I love making connections with people," Ohyama said. "I think that's important for me and will be so useful in my future, if I can go to college in America."

The trip, which concludes on July 19, was Ohyama's second to America. His older sister

is a student at Missouri State University.

Ohyama has two more years of high school to complete in Japan. After college, he would like to get a job with the United Nations.

"I just want to change the environment and help people," Ohyama said. "That would be good for me."

### Keizer Rotary seeks host families

Each year, over 8,000 students from over 80 countries participate in the Rotary Youth Exchange program. The program promotes international goodwill and provides a transformative experience for the youth and their host families.

Host families and students often build friendships that last a lifetime, including visiting each other years after the exchange has ended.

Exchange students become members, not guests, of the host families and attend McNary High School. Three host families are needed for each student, each year. The student changes host families in conjunction with school quarters.

Host families are unpaid volunteers and provide room and board for the student. Keizer Rotary provides a monthly allowance to cover phone service, school lunches and miscellaneous expenses. The host family is not responsible for transportation to Rotary events.

Two host families (winter and spring terms) are still needed to host the Austrian inbound student for the 2017-18 school year. Contact Chuck Fisher [chuckfisher@comcast.net](mailto:chuckfisher@comcast.net) 503.361.8730 or Pam Vorachek [pvorachek@msn.com](mailto:pvorachek@msn.com) to find out more information.

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