

The 2006 Japan Foundation Prizes for Global Citizenship Announced

Since 1985, the Japan Foundation has been awarding the Japan Foundation Prizes for Global Citizenship to organizations and individuals engaged in international cultural exchange activities rooted in the unique characters and traditions of their respective communities.

The recipients of the 2006 prizes were announced on November 13, 2006.

Junior Global Training School (Aomori Prefecture; Representative: Ken KUDO)

Every August, the Junior Global Training School hosts 100 elementary school students from the Republic of Korea, Russia, the United States, and Japan to participate in three-days summer camp in Aomori City. The children sleep in a schoolhouse and spend their days together, enjoying the splendor of the famous Aomori Nebuta Festival and building friendships that go beyond borders. Children of various nationalities are placed in groups of two or three in a buddy-system approach, and volunteers from high schools and universities serve as instructors and interpreters. This annual program enjoys broad community support, with participation from the children's parents, schools, local businesses, and governmental organizations. The participants remain involved with the program for years, many of them going on to serve as school volunteers after they reach high-school age. This international exchange program aiming to produce true junior global citizens provides a valuable model for cultural exchange in regional communities.

Multicultural Center Tokyo (Tokyo; Representative: WANG Michelle)

The Multicultural Center Tokyo carries out a range of activities to help young foreign residents of the capital. It operates a multicultural "free school" for foreign children who cannot attend Japanese schools, offers educational guidance and other advice to children seeking to go on to high school and to their parents, and runs a multicultural child-rearing network, among other activities. Japan's high school entrance examinations pose an especially difficult challenge to these children when their language skills are insufficient, and the Center provides learning programs for both the Japanese language and such subjects as mathematics and English. While numerous NPOs across Japan are working in the area of multicultural coexistence, by focusing on the areas of education and parenting, the Multicultural Center Tokyo is meeting the immediate needs of today's increasingly diverse society.

Japan Contemporary Dance Network (Kyoto Prefecture; Representative: Norikazu SATO)

While contemporary dance has long been unfamiliar to the majority of Japanese people, the Japan Contemporary Dance Network has sought to spread knowledge of this art form throughout Japan, discovering talented dancers in all the country's regions and providing them with a chance to perform on a global stage. Based in Kyoto, this group coordinates joint productions by Japanese and foreign dancers. Its networking activities connecting Japan with the rest of the world also include the publication of a bilingual directory of Japan's dancers, dance theaters and performing arts specialists. The intermediary role played by this NPO between dance communities and the larger society, both in Japan and elsewhere, makes it a vital network for Japanese and foreign dance troupes, choreographers, and individual dancers.

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