Michigan-Shiga High School Student Exchange Program 2008

A program designed to promote friendship and understanding among Japanese and American high school students.

How the Program Works:

- Twenty high school students, grades 9 to 11, are chosen to represent the State of Michigan.
- Twenty Shiga high school students are selected and paired with the Michigan students, based on similar interests.
- During the summer the Michigan students visit Shiga, Japan for two weeks. Each stays with a Japanese student and family, attends school and participates in daily life.
- The Japanese students travel to Michigan for two weeks in September. Each stays with the family of the Michigan student who stayed with him/her during the summer and attends school with that student.
- Applicants should be open-minded, flexible, willing to accept new challenges and ready for rewarding experiences.
Background Information

In 1968 Michigan and Shiga Prefecture in Japan became sister states. Through that partnership many exchanges have taken place involving teachers, community members and students. Michigan currently has 13 sister cities within Shiga Prefecture. The Michigan Department of Education and the Shiga Board of Education initiated the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program in 1990.

*In a global economy, education is especially important. In Michigan, we are excited to be educating citizens of the world. The cross-cultural exchange our young people experience at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities is important for us both.*

~ Governor Jennifer Granholm (7/26/2005)

Application Considerations for Michigan Students

- Students and parents must attend the orientation meeting in April, held at Michigan State University.
- Michigan students will depart from and return to Capitol City Airport in Lansing.
- Families of selected students must host a Japanese student for two weeks in September.
- Michigan families must arrange to both meet their Japanese students and attend the Farewell Reception in Lansing.
- The high school attended by the Michigan student must be willing to welcome a Japanese student to its classes for two weeks in September.
- Previous study of Japanese language on the part of the applicant is helpful, but not necessary.
- The cost per student is $2,600, to be paid in advance, however NO money should be sent with this application. This fee includes airfare, so the estimated fee may be subject to change due to fluctuations in flight costs. There are new entry safety procedures upon entering Japan, these can be viewed at [http://nettv.gov-online.go.jp/prg/prg1203.html](http://nettv.gov-online.go.jp/prg/prg1203.html).

Timeline

- 2-08-08 Applications must be postmarked by this date
- 2-27-08 Michigan candidates notified of their status
- 3-07-08 Overnight orientation for Michigan candidates at Michigan State University
- 3-08-08 Orientation for candidates and parents at Michigan State University
- 6-25-08 Michigan students depart Michigan for Shiga, Japan
- 6-26-08 Michigan students arrive in Shiga
- 6-27-08 Michigan students meet their Shiga host families
- 7-11-08 Michigan students depart Shiga
- 7-11-08 Michigan students arrive in Michigan
- 9-04-08 Shiga students arrive in Michigan
- 9-05-08 Michigan families meet Shiga students at Michigan State University
- 9-20-08 Farewell Reception for Shiga students and their host families in Lansing
- 9-21-08 Shiga students depart for Japan
2008 MICHIGAN/SHIGA STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

www.msu.edu/user/gifted/shiga

STUDENT APPLICATION
For Michigan students currently in grades 9 - 11

Please Type or print clearly in Black Ink

1. GENERAL INFORMATION (Information collected is kept confidential.)

Legal Name: _________________________________________________________________

Last    First    Middle

Nickname: ____________________ Sex: _______ Date of Birth: _______________

Street: ____________________________________________________________________

City: _________________________ State: ______________ Zip Code: _____________

Email Address: ______________________________________________________________

Home Telephone: _____________________________________________________________

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _______________________________________________

Work Telephone, Father: ______________________ Mother: ______________________

Name of School: __________________________ Current Grade Level: ____________

Name of Principal: __________________________ School Telephone Number: _______

School District: ________________________________

Please complete the chart below listing information about any individuals residing in your home.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship to you</th>
<th>Age</th>
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2. **PERSONAL INTERESTS, HABITS AND PREFERENCES**
   In even the most compatible family situations, the daily requirements of sharing and cooperating can be difficult. Cultural differences can add to the difficulty. Please answer the following questions, keeping in mind that your frankness will aid in your host family placement.

   A. **Interests:**
      School related activities: _________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________________________
      ______________________________________________________________________
      What do you do during your free time? (sports, music, hobbies, outdoor activities, work, etc.,) please specify ________________________________

   Have you decided on a career or future study?               ________Yes __________No
   If yes, please describe:
   ________________________________________________________________

   B. **Personal Habits and Preferences:**
   Do you have pets that live in your home?            ___________Yes __________No
   Please report the kinds of pets and how many: ________________________________

   Do you mind if your host family has a pet in the house? ___________Yes ________No
   If yes, please describe your concerns: _______________________________________

   Are there any smokers in your home? ________Yes __________No
   Do you mind if someone in your host family smokes in the home? _________________
   Often, there are more Japanese female exchange students than male. Are you willing to be paired with an exchange student of the opposite sex? _________
   Do you follow a special diet? Please specify ____________________________

   Are you able to be flexible with your diet in Japan? _____________________________
   Are you willing to try fish and other Japanese food (which may be unfamiliar to you) in order to fit in with the regular eating habits of your hosts?

   C. **Other information that would be helpful in placing you with a host family:**
   What else would you like others to know about you?
   ______________________________________________________________________
3. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

A. If you have lived, studied, or traveled abroad, please describe your experiences: Specify countries visited, length of time, purpose of travel, and name of program, if any. ________________________________________________________________

B. Have you ever been the guest of a family abroad? If so, please describe the circumstances. ____________________________________________________________

C. What languages are spoken at your home? ___________________________________

D. What foreign languages do you speak or understand and how long have you studied them? _________________________________________________________________

E. What traveling experience have you had without a family member (camp or exchange program)? _____________________________________________________________

4. LIFE AT YOUR PARTNER SCHOOL ABROAD

A. List the courses you are currently studying and their levels. ____________________________________________________________

B. Which subjects do you find most interesting? ____________________________________________________________

Least interesting? ____________________________________________________________

C. What particular subject or area of interest would you like to learn more about while abroad? Please describe. ____________________________________________________________

D. You may be asked to speak to a class in Shiga or answer questions about a particular topic or aspect of life in the U.S. What would you talk about?

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

E. Courses you have taken in Japanese language or culture (no prior work is needed): ____________________________________________________________
5. LETTERS OF SUPPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Please submit with this application the following:

- A one-page, typed essay describing your reasons for wanting to participate in the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program. In this essay, please discuss what you would bring to this experience and how you would share this experience with others in your school and community. Describe how your interest in Japan has developed and what you hope to gain from this experience.

- The High School Commitment form signed by your principal along with a copy of your current high school transcript.

- The two Recommendation Forms filled out by a teacher or counselor who knows you well and by another adult other than a family member, who has worked with you, in school or out of school. Please have the forms returned in sealed envelopes.

- Because this program is a family experience, please submit a letter of support from your parents or guardians.
6. **CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

I am aware that my participation in the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program is contingent upon the following:

- Acceptance into the program according to the selection procedure established by the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program Committee. Twenty-five students will be selected as candidates; following the orientation, twenty students will be selected as participants and five as alternates.

- Deposit of $50 upon *acceptance as a candidate*.

- Payment of balance of program cost ($2,550) upon *acceptance as a participant*.

- Completion of all necessary forms.

- Agreement to uphold standards of acceptable behavior, both Japanese and American, as a representative of my school, state and country. Since this program is of high standards, I understand that participants in this program always adhere to appropriate behavior and conduct. At any time during my involvement, if my attitude and behavior are deemed inappropriate, I may be removed from the program.

- Possession of a valid passport. If you have a passport, list the expiration date: ________________. Please enclose a photocopy of your passport photo page. If you do not currently have a passport, it is strongly advised that you apply now to ensure you have one prior to departure.

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**Before you sign the following statements, please give careful consideration to the following:**

Students should be open-minded, flexible, willing to accept new challenges, be ready for rewarding experiences, and have a strong interest in Japan and learning about Japanese culture.

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I am committed to and enthusiastic about participation in the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program, and I understand the goals and conditions of participation in the program.

__________________________  __________________________
Signature of Student       Date

I am committed to and enthusiastic about my son's/daughter's participation in the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program, and I understand the goals and conditions of participation in the program.

__________________________  __________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian      Date

**This completed application should be postmarked by February 8, 2008 and returned to:**

Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program  
Gifted and Talented Education Programs  
186 Bessey Hall  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1033
Michigan-Shiga
Student Exchange Program

High School Commitment Form

________________________________________ is applying to be one of twenty Michigan students to be accepted into the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program. The Michigan students will spend two weeks in Japan in July 2008, and will in turn host the Japanese students they stayed with for two weeks in September 2008.

Name of High School:
______________________________________________________________________

Principal:
______________________________________________________________________

School Address:
______________________________________________________________________

School Phone Number: __________________________________________________
Area Code Number

_______________________________ has an overall G.P.A. of _____________.

Student’s name

I understand that the above named student may be hosting a Japanese student for two weeks in the fall of 2008. We agree to support this endeavor by welcoming the Japanese student to our high school during that time.

Has this student ever been suspended or expelled, to your knowledge? Yes No

Signature of Principal: __________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Contact person, if other than the school principal (name, title and phone number):
_______________________________________________________________________________________

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 517.432.2129 or mcdon288@msu.edu.

This completed application should be postmarked by February 8, 2008 and returned along with a copy the applicant’s current high school academic transcript to:

Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program
Gifted and Talented Education Programs
186 Bessey Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1033
Recommendation Form

MICHIGAN-SHIGA STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Note to applicant: Please make an additional copy of this page for the required second recommendation.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RECOMMENDER: Your answers to the questions on this form will help us select students for the Michigan-Shiga Student Exchange Program. Please place the completed form in an envelope and write the student's name on the front. Seal the envelope and sign your name across the flap to ensure confidentiality. Return the sealed envelope to the student who will forward it unopened as part of his/her application, which must be postmarked by February 8, 2008. For questions, please call 517.432.2129.

STUDENT INFORMATION:

NAME OF STUDENT ____________________________________________

NAME OF SCHOOL ____________________________________________

How do you know this student and for how long?

Please rate the student according to the following list of ten characteristics. This list reflects factors that research has shown are important to successful intercultural adjustment. Please bear in mind that this is an important international program, and students should be able to get along well with peers and demonstrate high ethical standards.

RATING SCALE: 1 = LOW  5 = HIGH

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<th>Characteristic</th>
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<td>Open-mindedness &amp; resourcefulness</td>
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<td>Sense of humor</td>
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<td>Resilience:ability to cope with failure</td>
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<td>Communicativeness</td>
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<td>Curiosity</td>
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<td>Positive and realistic expectations</td>
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Please tell how long you have known this student and in what context you have known him/her.

________________________________________________________________________

Please comment on the student’s maturity and character and give your opinion of his/her ability to handle the pace and intensity of being in an unfamiliar environment, while representing his/her high school, state and country.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you know of any reasons (behavioral, emotional or otherwise) why this student should not participate in this program?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________  ______________________________________
Typed or Printed Name and Position     Phone Number
Questions to be answered by parent or guardian:

If there has been any recent major change(s) (separation, divorce, death) in your family circumstances, please briefly describe the change(s) and the impact on each family member.

If you are divorced or separated, please indicate how often the children have contact with the other household and how this will impact the host student.

Has any family member or anyone else living in the home ever been convicted of a crime or are there felony charges pending against anyone living in the home at this time? [ ] yes [ ] no If yes, please attach a brief explanation that gives dates, reason for conviction, and outcome.

Has any family member ever had his/her driver’s license suspended or revoked? [ ] yes [ ] no If yes, please attach a brief explanation that gives the date the license was revoked, the reason, and the date of reinstatement.

Is any family member or anyone else living in your home required to register as a sex offender under Michigan Law? If yes, please explain.

Questions to be answered by the student applicant:

Have you ever been expelled, suspended, disciplined, or placed on probation by any secondary school you have attended because of (a) academic dishonesty, (b) financial impropriety, or (c) an offense that harmed or had the potential to harm others, or (d) involvement in drugs or alcohol? [ ] yes [ ] no If yes, please attach a brief explanation.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (including juvenile court) other than a minor traffic violation or are there felony criminal charges pending against you at this time? [ ] yes [ ] no If yes, please attach a brief explanation.