

October:

Is it October already? Woah, time flies. Happy two-month anniversary to all the new ALTs out there. It looks like it's that time of the year where the leaves change and all Michiganders gather to feed on cider and doughnuts. Like a zombies out for flesh, oh how I long for them.

English Board

It took me forever but I finished my first English Board just in time for October. I wrote a story, posted crosswords, made a quiz and even made a matching game. A special thanks to one of my JTEs for loaning me some Halloween decorations. I hope everyone enjoyed the board, even if they didn't get a chance to read it.

I also got to do some Halloween lessons for the first years! With my little black cat, I got to proudly show off one of my favorite holidays and the students seemed to really enjoy it. That was so much fun. Especially when I got to surprise the kids during my description of a haunted house. All the students did great deciphering my presentation! I was so

happy! The students also seemed to enjoy the rock, paper, scissors evolution game where they had to evolve from candy to pumpkin to witch. Almost everyone went from "This is candy" to "This is a witch." Well, everyone except me. I was on a losing streak and never made it past candy.



Halloween Parties



On October 20th, some of the other local ALTs and I went to our first Japanese Halloween parties. There were about 150 kids who showed up to play games and dance with us at the community center. We even got to see one of our favorite friends from the BOE (Board of Education) and her niece, it was a fun

surprise. The volunteers danced to Rocky Horror Picture Show's Time Warp... Three times. It was cute to watch the kids say "Trick or treat" after finishing their origami and ask for candy as their reward. I dressed as *Kuchisake Onna*, and I guess it was pretty scary. Some of the kids would slowly walk away from me when I approached them and one girl went so far to tell me I looked scary after I took off my costume. It made me happy.

This month on "students that acknowledged sensei at school," I've had students start saying hello and I've had students tell me they love me. I've also had students who would help me with games by screaming "SHOW ME THE BOARD" for a game. Then there's students who tried to mimic me until I shouted a tongue twister at them, which confused the whole class. Then when I went to a soccer game, some track and field students hung out with me and gave me the run down about school. Lastly there were the students I saw at sushi this month. I saw at least 10 of them there but only 3 seemed happy to see me. On another note, if the boys I took a picture with printed the picture and left it on my desk, it would make my day.

I'm now trying to go to the Judo club consistently. They're such an awesome group of students and they're so patient with my failures. I enjoy doing warm ups with them then watching how they practice moves. The days I go to Judo are the best days. We practice a half hour before the Kendo club comes in to practice on the other side of the room. So, one day when Judo finished, I tried to sneakily watch Kendo. One of the Judo teachers and I had fun reading the names of the Kendo students. It was great kanji practice. What I didn't notice was that the Kendo teacher saw me watching them. He came over with a kendo stick and showed me a basic strike. He also described the culture behind the sport. All in Japanese, so as much as I'd love to say I caught every word... I did not. But I was excited that he took the time to explain it to me and I tried my hardest to understand and retain all that I could.

It turns out that there was a staff volleyball game brewing this whole month and I wasn't aware. Had I known, I would've joined them in a heartbeat. I want to get involved with more school things, which includes staff related things. The only reason I knew it was happening was because a little bird told me. I didn't feel comfortable playing, even though they offered, because I didn't get to practice with them so I just watched. I never thought watching volleyball would be so exciting. I would get overly excited when my school would score and I even found myself cheering as loud as I could, which wasn't more than a whisper. I was ecstatic when my school won the first match. You could definitely tell who coached what sport, which I found incredibly interesting. Some of the teachers' first reactions were to headbutt and kick the ball while others would slam dunk the ball over the net with high jumps. Then there were those who played the game more traditionally and by the rules. The various techniques applied from other sports was very entertaining. I hope to be able to partake in the next staff event.

The day before Halloween, I got to watch some amazing choir rehearsals at a hall close to the school. I was so impressed. America doesn't really do anything like that. Only those in choir class or choir club get to sing. I was getting excited for what they would sound like at the concert the next day. At lunch, I saw my first real Jack O' Lantern in Japan. Carved from real pumpkin and everything. It was so exciting, I almost asked if I could take a picture. I hope I can make one next year. After lunch, and after I found my way to the gym, one of my JTEs and I danced to the band's rehearsal. I bet we looked awesome, but not as awesome as some of the teachers we were cheering on dancing up a storm on the other side of the gym.

Finally, Halloween day! Scary, right? No. No scary happenings on Halloween this year. All classes were cancelled for a choir contest. Shout out to those who won the choir contest, you worked hard and deserve your victory. After lunch, I shamelessly sang and swayed to the band playing perfect renditions of Beauty and the Beast as well as Pirates of the Caribbean. It was so nostalgic to hear them again. It made me want to watch the movies then and there. Then it was time to wander. There were various areas to look at: science posters, volunteering table, art tables and craft tables. I got caught at the volunteering table where I was offered to put on a hat and vest. I thought it would be amusing so I put them on and struck a pose. I got a thumbs up from the students and started to take all the gear off when the head teacher came out of no where and wanted a picture. I thought she meant one of the students. Nope. She meant me and this other student who was wearing a vest too. So that happened. I quickly gave back the gear after the picture to ensure more pictures weren't to come. Then I had a wonderful talk with a different teacher all in Japanese. That made me feel better about me Japanese.

Lastly, I partook in my personal annual tradition of watching Nightmare Before Christmas. It was perfect. I think my second month was pretty fruitful. What do you think?

Until next time.