Christopher (CJ) Clark

June, 2010

A few months before I left for Japan I was very excited that I had been given the chance to go. As the date came closer to leave though I became extremely nervous, I wasn't confident in my Japanese and I was afraid I would never understand how to get by.

Right when the plane landed in Japan and I entered the airport, that entire feeling was overwhelmed by awe at all the new things in front of me. I had never traveled before this experience and I am so very happy I was able to.

The time I spent in Japan was amazing. It was a bit of a struggle at first because my Japanese wasn't very good, but as you persevere through the tough time, you start to truly enjoy yourself. After I had made friends in school and outside of school, I really loved it there.

I liked learning about a new language and culture. You learn about all types of Japanese culture as well, because of all the different families you stay with. At first this seemed more like I was a burdened being tossed from family to family, but as time went on I realized how much I really learned. Each family taught me different things about Japan culture. I never stopped learning the entire time I was in Japan.

I learned not only about the language, culture, and people, but also about myself. I learned that there is so much more out there in the world than just Bloomington-Normal, and that I want to explore it and learn. I was glad that I didn't give up and I kept trying or I wouldn't be where I am today.

Japan is an amazing country and the people are so nice and helpful. Just like every country there are ups and downs, but I don't believe there were too many downs. Being a foreign exchange student was the best thing that ever happened to me and I wouldn't trade the experience for anything.