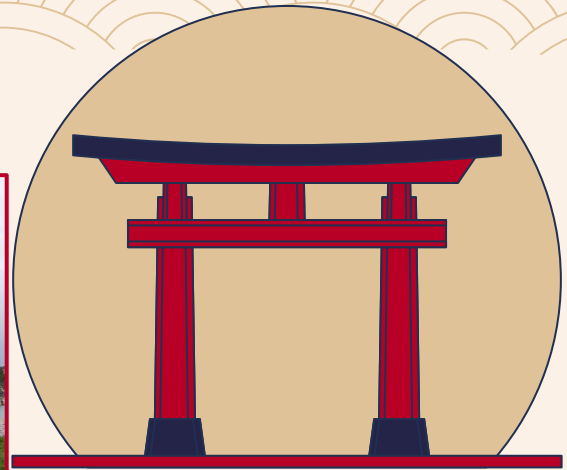


The graphic features a large red sun in the center, partially obscured by a dark blue mountain range at the bottom. The mountain has a white snow-capped peak. Two dark blue, stylized clouds are positioned on either side of the mountain. The background is a repeating pattern of light beige, concentric, scalloped lines. The text "2024 Fort Bragg-Otsuchi Exchange" is centered in white on the red sun.

2024  
Fort Bragg-Otsuchi  
Exchange

# Introduction



This exchange was a one of a kind gift to all of us, going to another country for 10 days was the best experience we could ever ask for.

This presentation will go over our entire trip with broad details, also, we'll talk about the people, the culture, Otsuchi, the festival, Tokyo, and our general takeaways.

Obviously, such a trip can't be perfectly summarized into a single slides presentation, but we'll do our best.



# Homestay Life



Staying in another family's home was a very immersive way to experience another culture. Some of the best takeaways were:

- Adapting to our surroundings
- Being open to trying new things
- Learning to be very patient
- How living in Japan is like in general
- Learning how to be part of a Japanese family

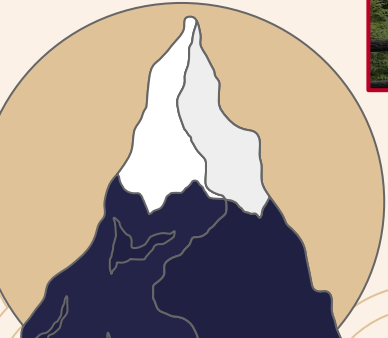


## What we learned from/in Otsuchi

We learned about the horrible tsunami that swept Otsuchi and learned about the chaos that ensued from it. Out of all the coastal towns, Otsuchi was hit the hardest.

Their entire town has weekly tsunami evacuation drills that every single person at the schools partake in, from 1st graders, all the way to staff and 12th graders.

One of the greatest things we learned in Otsuchi was about the tradition of their festival in which we all got the chance to participate in it. More on that in another slide.



# Learning about the Disaster

- Learned about the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011
- A very sensitive topic as many people were lost
- Over half of the city was destroyed to the earthquake, tsunami, and subsequent fires
- Took them 5 years to elevate the land alone and many more to restore infrastructure
- We greatly helped them in the recovery process and it strengthened our bond as Sister Cities



# What we learned from being immersed in another culture

Being immersed in another culture taught us many skills, traditions, values, and perspectives. It also helped us open our eyes to a whole new world. Other things we learned while being there were:

- Different forms of communication
- Respect and Etiquette
- Food and cooking
- History of Otsuchi
- Schools



# School

- The school was more structured and students were more attentive
- Students were expected to clean the school
- Lack of trash and litter around the school
- The quality of the food served was much better than here

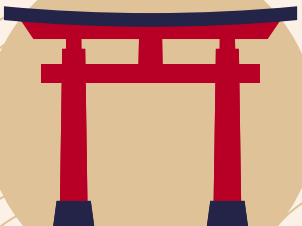
## Activites

- Archery
- Calligraphy



# The Relationship Between Otsuchi and Fort Bragg Students

- You meet so many people with widely varying backgrounds from you
- You form many unforgettable friendships
- All the people in Otsuchi were always friendly and welcoming
- You become close to them in such a short amount of time





# Building Bonds beyond words

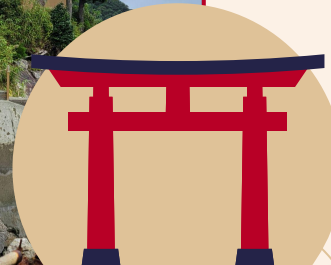


- Even without speaking the language well, we still communicated well.
- The host families kindness made it easy to connect.
- Gestures and facial expressions helped us understand each other.
- These simple actions showed our feelings and intentions.
- Regardless of language barrier we built unforgettable bonds that will be remembered forever and we all learned from one another.



# Personal Change and Growth

- Helped with becoming more independent and outgoing.
- Taught the importance of perseverance and having a good attitude.
- Also taught how critical it is to be prepared for everything!!



## The Otsuchi Festival:



- Festival's Significance: Shichi-Fukujin
  - Otsuchi collaboration with other towns
  - The "God Carrier"
- Otsuchi's Traditional dances
  - Traditional dances performed at each house!
  - Tiger Dance,
  - Lion dance
- Shishi-Odori (Lion dance)
  - Original traditional Lion dance (folk lore)
- Jonai Daikagura





## Experience of trying new things



Coming to a new country and trying things you've never done or eaten before was a big fulfillment that made the trip 10 times more worth it.

- Food was one of the biggest overcomes for most of us, since the Japanese palate is different, but we pulled through and tried many things.
- Being open and communicative was very helpful for staying in a home with people you've never met before.





Thank you so much for listening!

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Image credits go to Ayane Kasuga (Sekiyu), Chris Island, and the Otsuchi Exchange Program