

Japanese university students seeking host families

By Dennis Fujimoto The Garden Island | Friday,
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Nagoya University of Foreign Studies students (front row) Pamela Okahara, Ai Takayasu, Yae Sakamoto, Ayaka Takagi, (second row) Professor Eric Hirata, Hina Takada and Yuya Sato enjoy Spam musubi created by Hirata.

Photo courtesy of Gerald Hirata

LIHU‘E — A group of students from Nagoya University of Foreign Studies are seeking host families for an upcoming stay on the island of Kaua‘i.

One boy and five girls are looking to stay in the Lihue area during a four-day, homestay tour of the island from Feb. 21.-24.

“My nephew who lives in Japan, Professor Eric Hirata, teaches at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies,” said Kauai Soto Zen Temple President Jerry Hirata.

“He is bringing six of his students on Feb. 15 through 26 as part of a service-learning program at the university.” Professor Hirata is in the Department of Global Governance and Collaboration, the Regional Revitalization program.

The program allows students to do fieldwork with local communities by understanding the challenges and obstacles they face, how work is done to achieve their goals, while providing students to become more involved in social issues around the world.

“Experiencing the local lifestyle with a family is an important component of the program, serving to enhance the learning experience through personal contacts and relationships,” Jerry Hirata said.

“During their homestay, the students will be occupied all day with pickups in the morning and drop offs in the late afternoon following work, which would be around 5 p.m.”

During the Kaua‘i tour, the students will be working with native Hawaiian nonprofit organizations, such as Hui Maka‘ainana o Makana and at Limahuli Gardens.

The students will learn about Hawaiian culture, Japanese-Hawaiian history, and do cultural exchanges with students at Kawaikini New Century Public Charter School and Kaua‘i Community College.

During the students homestay experience, they will be occupied with a heritage tour, Japanese immigration and plantation history, a Kaua‘i Community College exchange and excursion, a Kawaikini School exchange and excursion, and a day with host families.

Families interested in sharing a home experience for the Japanese university students should contact **Jerry Hirata at 808-346-4650** or email **kahulakauai@gmail.com**.

“Your hospitality and kindness is greatly appreciated,” Jerry Hirata said.