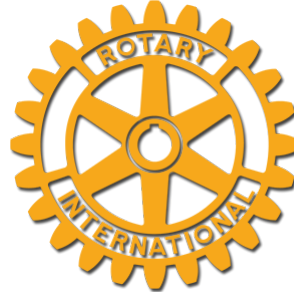




Thursday, February 23, 2023

# Rotary

## Club of Plymouth



## Greetings from Japan- Grace Our Exchange Student

By Angela Ridpath on Thursday, February 23, 2023



Enjoy an email from our own Plymouth Rotarian Angela Ridpath's daughter, Grace. Grace's grandmother, Debra Kranz, is District Governor in District 6310!

Hello. My name is Grace Ridpath. I am an exchange student living in Nagasaki, Japan (Rotary D2740). I am from Plymouth and my sponsor club is the Cass City Rotary club (D6310). I will be graduating from Salem High School in 2024.

While brainstorming about how to write this newsletter article, I started to think about all of the biggest events of my exchange. I opened my notebook and flipped to a blank page to jot down potential article topics. I asked myself questions like "What did I learn from moving host families? What lessons did I learn from attending Japanese school?"

Despite my constant pondering, my lined piece of paper was looking emptier and emptier by the second. I was waiting anxiously for a new big event to occur that would give me something meaningful to write about, while completely ignoring the life-changing reality that I am currently living in.

One of the most important lessons I have learned since I started living in



IMAGINE  
ROTARY

### Club Meeting

Plymouth  
Meets at Plymouth  
Cultural Ctr.  
525 Farmer Street  
Plymouth, MI 48170  
Time: Friday at 12:00 PM

### Events

February 23rd  
[New Member Huddle](#)

### Club Leaders



[Penny Joy](#)  
President



[Chris Porman](#)  
President-Elect



[James Gietzen](#)  
Secretary



James Van Horn III  
Treasurer



Marti McLeish  
Club Public Image Chair



Charles J. Bares  
Rotary Foundation Chair



June Kirchgatter  
Membership Chair



Nicholas Moroz  
Club Service Chair



Timothy E. Joy  
International Service Chair



Denise King  
Youth Exchange Chair



Dale F. Yagiela  
iPast President



Marie A. Morrow  
Club Executive Secretary

Japan is to embrace the everyday. I find myself in new and interesting situations everyday and it is a non-stop growth process.

In some ways, I almost feel as if I do not have much to write about. Although exchange is a crazy, amazing, wonderful experience, it is also just life. Besides the differences in surroundings, I am still me. I go to school, I go home and eat dinner, take a bath and go to sleep. Those around me laugh and talk about the latest news at work/school, they wait in traffic during rush hour, they forget their car keys inside the house and run back inside after realizing they've forgotten. It's a routine we all know very well. The only difference for me is that I am performing this routine in Japan.

I often smile to myself as I realize that Americans aren't the only ones who complain to friends about being hungry during school or giggle as they talk about who is the scariest teacher. Even in a country that I expected to be completely different from America, similarities subtly reveal themselves constantly.

Of course, everyday life in Japan varies from American life slightly due to cultural differences, but the routine of everyday life is a universal experience. Whether it be going to a shrine or watching the Super Bowl, creating moments of happiness and opportunity in this monotonous routine is one of the most important things that exchange students learn.

Everyday is a growing experience. Everyday throws another new and exciting challenge at me and allows me to grow in ways I could've never imagined. From the smallest moments to the biggest, I have learned that it is all a part of the experience. The experience of an exchange student. An experience unlike any other.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout this experience.

Thank you for taking the time to read over my short update article!

Sincerely,  
Grace Ridpath

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## Club Officers