

Meeting the Kawamura Family

Chie-san's family was incredibly fun to interact with. She has 3 children, Yuto, Kanato, and Yuna, alongside her husband, Kenshi. Yuto was incredibly active and was a joy to interact with. Kanato had just learned a little bit of English and was so adorable following his brother. Finally, Yuna was so cute, having just learned to count. Both parents, Chie and Kenshi, were wonderful as well, with some of the most welcoming words and conversations.

Friday

After meeting them in the evening, we went to Hanamaru, a udon shop. They encouraged me to try food I hadn't before, such as sharing the oden they had gotten. The food was delicious, and we returned to their house. After showing me around their place, they mentioned that I was free to treat the place as my own home and welcomed me. Yuto was very excited to play some Minecraft and invited me to join. I had fun that evening, but I slept early as the family starts their day very early.

Saturday

I woke up at 6 am as the family had started the day preparing breakfast. After trying more new foods for breakfast, such as natto, furikake, and raw eggs and rice, I found myself falling more in love with Japanese foods. After breakfast and a small break, we headed out to the HICE building to look at an art exhibit that featured Yuto's art alongside other students. The talent of some of the artists was incredible. After the art gallery trip, we headed to ACT tower for an exhibition that the kids wanted to see. After exploring the event, we got some food from the exhibition and sat down for lunch. The diversity of food was great, and we took the leftovers back for dinner later. I found a mahjong booth and stayed to play a few games before returning home with the family. The rest of the afternoon was spent relaxing and talking with the family about many different things. I really appreciate how open they were to talk about many different topics, from language learning to climate differences. After dinner was another bit of Minecraft, but I taught Kenshi-san how to progress farther in the game to eventually beat the Ender dragon. Yuto was very excited to progress and learn more as well.

Sunday

After another early night and morning, breakfast was largely the same, but great nonetheless. After a goodbye with Yuto and Kanato, they were off to their own field trip. We then went off to visit a Buddhist shrine with a wonderful garden. I really enjoyed the stroll around and the quietness of the garden. Following the temple visit, they took me to the largest mall in Hamamatsu, as I have yet to go to one at all. It was really nice as I did get to pass by some stores I was interested in and managed to get a lot of things I realized I was missing. It seems bland in hindsight, but going shopping with the parents was nice, for both them and me. We had lunch in a Japanese restaurant that specialized in sashimi donburi. After shopping, they dropped me off back at the dormitory.

I really enjoyed and appreciated the experience of living with a Japanese family, the different lifestyle, foods, and activities. I really can't stress enough how nice the entire family was and how welcoming they were. This homestay didn't just let me experience another lifestyle; it also gave me a family away from home. I truly appreciate everything they provided for me.

