Kelli’s portion of the article in the Wheel of Dharma

No one could have prepared me for the wonders I would experience on this once in a lifetime journey to Japan. I was excited, yet nervous to had been selected to represent Southern District FBWA. Upon my arrival at Kansai Airport to crying as I left both homestay families in Osaka and Takaoka, I wish my stay would have never come to an end. Both homestay experiences were undoubtedly the highlight of the trip. Although we were able to see amazing sights, the unbreakable bonds formed with these families is worth far more to me.

In my first homestay with the Ishihara family, I was touched by the kind hearted, altruistic couple who welcomed us into their home with open arms. With my second homestay, I was hosted by the Doki family from Senpukuji Temple in Takaoka. I cannot express how thankful I am to have felt so much affection from people I had just met. From taking me to experience my first onsen to driving on the sand at Chirihama, the Doki’s treated us as the daughters they never had. In such a short amount of time, I felt as if I had become a part of their families; I felt as if they had both filled a space in my heart.

Eating Okonomiyaki in Hiroshima, becoming a professional manju maker on Miyajima Island and overlooking all of Japan from Umeda Sky building, I reminisce on all the experiences I was given and remember all those who have touched my life. Although I have left Japan, I hope to inspire others on how we can live our lives to the fullest by performing little of acts kindness, further implementing the Buddha’s teachings into our everyday lives.