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**Local 4-H Youth Experience Japanese Culture
International Exchange Program is Underway Around New York State**

Twenty-seven New York State families have begun their adventure of sharing their homes with a young person from Japan through the 4-H Youth Development program. The NYS 4-H Japanese Exchange program is an initiative of the New York State 4-H Office at Cornell University, in cooperation with County Cornell Cooperative Extension offices around the State. The 25 Japanese youth, ages 13-17, and their 2 Adult Chaperones arrived at the Syracuse International Airport on July 23rd and connected with host families from all corners of New York State. The Japanese youth have been staying with host families who have a child of a similar age and will prepare to head home to Japan on August 18th. The host families are located in 22 NYS Counties from Western NY, the Finger Lakes region, the Adirondacks and the Hudson Valley.

In Monroe County, the Rimkus family is hosting one of the Japanese delegates, Shunka Inagaki. Daughter Hannah shared, "It's so much fun to show her around Rochester! From going to the beach to bike rides we have been having a great time! We are excited to take her to Seabreeze and on other day trips around the area." Shunka bonded with the family right away. Shunka's host mother, Amy Rimkus, also expressed that it has been fun to hear about Shunka's life in Japan as well. "It's been a way to learn about her culture and way of life and share a little about ours. I would recommend this program to anyone who is open to a new adventure!"

The New York State program is supported by a National nonprofit organization affiliated with 4-H called States' 4-H International, based in Seattle Washington. States' 4-H International works with 4-H programs in nearly 20 States to coordinate inbound and outbound cultural exchanges ranging from one month to 10 months between 4-H youth and youth from Japan, South Korea, Norway, Costa Rica and many more countries. The Thirty day summer Japanese program will provide an opportunity for nearly 550 Japanese youth to experience life in the United States this summer. For more information on the program please visit www.States4hexchange.org

The goal of the 4-H International Exchange program is to encourage participating youth to gain a greater understanding and appreciation for cultural diversity, global connection, and

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civic engagement. 4-H is the nation's largest youth development organization, reaching over 6 million youth through a community of young people across the U.S. and implemented through the Cooperative Extension System of the United States Department of Agriculture. The New York State 4-H program reaches over 170,000 youth per year, connecting them to hands-on learning opportunities in science, healthy living, civic engagement and agriculture and food systems. 4-H helps youth ages 5-19 from rural, suburban, and urban communities grow into competent, caring, contributing members of society. 4-H programs reach youth in every New York State County and the five boroughs of New York City. For more information on 4-H Youth Development please visit <https://nys4-h.org/>.



The 2023 States 4-H Japanese delegation to New York



Shunka Inagaki from Japan with host sister Hannah Rimkus