

On May 26, 2024, the 20th annual All-USA High School Japanese Speech Contest, hosted by the Japanese Language Scholarship Foundation (Aurora Foundation), was held in LA. Leena Edais, who is a 2024 graduate of the Japanese Immersion Program in Anchorage, won 2nd place and shared her wonderful experience with us today!

Competing in the Aurora Foundation Speech Contest was an eye-opening and incredibly rewarding experience for me. After spending 13 years in the Japanese immersion program, it felt amazing to see all my hard work pay off. Being the only one to represent Alaska on a national stage was a huge honor and a proud moment for me.

In my speech, I shared my journey of learning Japanese and how it has helped me grow as a person. I talked about some of my favorite memories from visiting Japan, like immersing myself in the culture, enjoying the food, and meeting the wonderful people. These experiences have deepened my love for Japan and its language.

I also reflected on the challenges and triumphs along the way. Learning Japanese wasn't always easy, but the support of my teachers, family, and friends kept me going. The immersion program has given me a broader perspective and a deeper appreciation for different cultures.

The contest was a great opportunity to connect with other passionate Japanese learners from across the country. Hearing their stories was inspiring and reminded me of the power of language to bring people together. Winning 2nd place was a validation of all the effort and dedication I've put into this journey.

This experience has only strengthened my passion for Japanese culture and language. I'm excited to continue my studies and explore new opportunities in the future. I hope my story can inspire others to pursue their passions and enjoy the journey of learning a new language.



For more information about the speech contest, please see the link below to the Japanese Language Scholarship Foundation!

<http://www.jlsf-aurora.org/jpn/page/speech-contest-1>