

## 29th Annual JET Program Pre-Departure Orientation & Farewell Reception



On July 31, 2015, the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual JET Program Pre-Departure Orientation & Farewell Reception was held at Consul General Nagashima's official residence.

The Pre-departure Orientation was in honor of 44 JET Program participants that were sent from Florida on August 1<sup>st</sup> to work in schools across Japan. This year, we saw a large increase in the number of successful Florida applicants, exceeding the average of previous years by about 30 people.

Former JET participants were also in attendance, providing valuable advice about life in Japan.

Following the orientation, special guests joined for the Farewell Reception. In his speech to the participants, Consul General Nagashima advised that, while there will surely be difficult and even surprising times, their experiences in Japan will help to deepen their understanding of Japanese culture. He encouraged them to enjoy themselves as they faced these challenges. Ms. Nishioka, who served as a guest interviewer for the program, discussed the importance of experiencing reality with one's own senses. Ms. Nozu, instructor of Japanese at University of South Florida and President of AFTJ, then encouraged the participants to use their own experiences in the classroom, using the teaching strategies they had seen as students.

Finally, this year's JET representative from the departing group, Ashley Porterfield, prompted her fellow participants to take every opportunity. JETAA President Bahia Simons-Lane spoke from experience, closing the speeches by advising the participants to go forth with a positive attitude and make as many Japanese friends as possible.

Approximately 60 people attended this reception, including Ms. Nozu from University of South Florida and Dr. Wehmeyer from University of Florida, who traveled a long way to join us.

All of the JET participants were visibly excited to start their lives in Japan.

2015 JETs, we wish you the best of luck from the bottom of our hearts!