

A Farewell Greeting From Consul General Nagashima

Shinji Nagashima
Consul General of Japan in Miami
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Dear Friends,

I am leaving the office of the Consul General of Japan in Miami on October 1, after nearly two years of sincere efforts in making the Japan-Florida relationship a bit stronger. Based in Miami, I have had numerous opportunities to travel the state to converse and collaborate with people throughout Florida.

Among those that I have met, I was particularly impressed by Japanese nationals who have been contributing decades of consisting efforts to making Japan-Florida relations even closer by working on various events and activities in their local areas.

Likewise, whenever I visited anywhere in Florida, I never failed to meet with a group of American friends waiting for me to share their experiences of when they lived in Japan; I always listened to their stories with great amusement and interest. Additionally, I looked upon with admiration the large number of Americans who have continued their contact with Japan for decades in areas such as business, culture and education.

In cooperation with Japanese volunteers and our American friends, the Consulate General of Japan has also organized many Japan festivals and various cultural events, including a recent ceremony inviting the US servicemen and women who were once stationed in Japan.

In addition to these efforts, I was also hugely encouraged by decades of reciprocal visits between Japan and Florida by companies, sister city organizations, groups of citizens, middle and high schools, as well as institutions of higher education; of this, I am afraid little is known by both sides.

While supporting those private initiatives, our office has also participated in the organization of a Japanese Government-funded exchange program for middle and high school students from both sides, as well as another program called Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET Program) inviting university graduates from U.S., including Florida, to teach English at Japanese middle schools, which has been highly successful in cultivating a vibrant friendship between Japan and Florida.

I am confident that these exchanges have created direct human contacts, which enabled participants to talk, share, and exchange ideas and experiences which have resulted in new partnerships.

I firmly believe that these partnerships are the result of the hard work by local governments, private organizations, and individuals over the years of exchanges, and it is these partnerships that play a great role in building bridges that fortify our relationship.

I wish to note that Japan-Florida relations are not limited to any specific area, but range over many areas from trade, tourism, investment, technology, culture, education, arts and sciences, civil society and sport.

Furthermore, I am particularly pleased that these dynamic exchanges of a diversified relationship serve as a driving force that furthers the development of mutual trust and friendship.

I sensed that dynamic when I recently visited with Mr. Bill Johnson, Florida's Secretary of Commerce, who aptly told me that he wished to expand the win-win, or mutually beneficial, nature of the Japan-Florida relationship.

I am thankful for having been able to work in such a great place with the suitable nickname of "Sunshine State," where future prospects are open and filled with bright and countless opportunities.

I wish you all good health and great success in the years to come.