

City's approach for Foreigner

The interview with Saki Yamanaka



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Mrs. Saki Yamanaka

About her

She is from Fujiyoshida City and graduated from Tsuru University. Her major was English literature. She played tennis during her school days. Mr. Nakamura, the master of Bankam Café near Tsuru University was the tennis coach. She really likes to go abroad and has traveled to some countries.



Her job

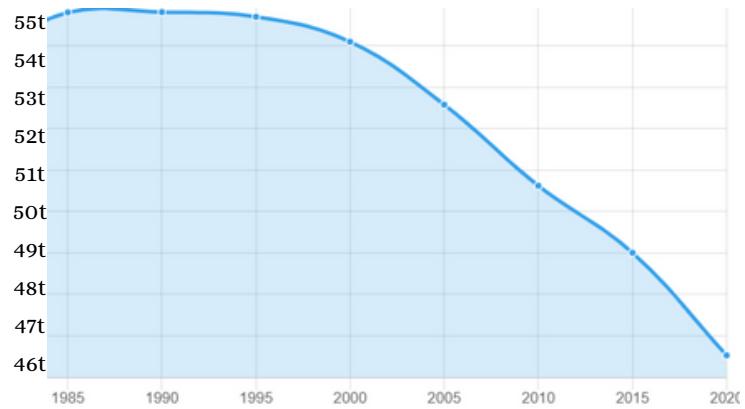
She belongs to the Fujiyoshida International Friendship Committee, and they do many different activities. They hold Japanese classes to help foreign workers live without trouble and support them in learning Japanese. They also organize seasonal events to make the community a place where foreigners want to stay longer, not just visit as tourists. In addition, they host fun events, like teaching janken (rock-paper-scissors) to Nepalese people, who don't have this game in their culture. Every year, they send junior high school students to sister cities, Colorado Springs in the United States and Chamonix-Mont-Blanc in France, to promote international exchange.





Population of Fujiyoshida

Recently the population of Fujiyoshida city is decreasing year by year, the maximum population was 55,000, but is now 46,000. However, the break down shows the Japanese population is decreasing.



Comparing to Japanese, the number of foreign residents who live in Fujiyoshida has been increasing. Even from April 2024 to December 2024, about 100 foreign residents increased. The number of Vietnamese has increased significantly, and they are the most numerous nationality in the city. Furthermore, the rate of increase in the number of foreign residents in the city in 2023 was the highest in Yamanashi.

So, her target is not tourists, but foreign residents. Her importance point is understanding cultural differences each other, and live together.



New initiative

As a new initiative, she tries to provide supports for foreign residents. She aims to make a society that Japanese and foreigners have equal relationships. For example, she did questionnaires for 1845 companies in Fujiyoshida city.

It can reveal real life of foreign workers in Japan. And then, she found problems of them and the ways to support not only foreign residents but also people who hire them.

She is planning to have event to promote cross cultural understanding and make foreign residents continue to live in Fujiyoshida city.



Future

She works for the International Friendship Committee and aims to create a society where Japanese residents and foreign residents can build an equal relationship and work together to improve the city. To achieve this, she conducts surveys with many companies in Fujiyoshida to understand the problems foreign residents face in their daily lives.

As a short-term goal, she hopes to increase the number of foreign participants in events and understand the issues and needs of foreign residents. For her long-term goals, she aims to promote cross-cultural understanding, help foreigners be recognized as citizens, and encourage them to continue living in Fujiyoshida as valuable workers.

Let's look forward to the international Fujiyoshida that Saki Yamanaka will create in the future!

