

おおいた県



The 25th Japan-America Grassroots Summit in

# OITA



**JULY 6 – JULY 13, 2015**

Regardless of age, occupation, or language ability, you can join the Grassroots Summit.  
Make your friends in Japan through homestay program!

# Messages from the Organizers

## Katsusada Hirose

Governor of Oita Prefecture



I am so pleased that the 25th Japan-America Grassroots Exchange Summit will be held in Oita Prefecture. Oita is known as the Onsen (hot spring) Capital of Japan because nationally it has the greatest amount of onsen water gushing out from the earth's surface and as well as the highest number of onsen sources. Oita is a popular tourist destination because of its onsen, its rich nature, history, and culture, as well as its culinary delicacies from both the mountains and sea. Oita welcomes tourists from all over the world. Please be sure to get to know Oita's nature and food, and meet and befriend many people from Oita. I hope you make friendships here that are comparable to or surpass the friendship between John Manjiro and Captain Whitfield.

## Kiyotaka Himeno

Chair of Oita Grassroots Summit Executive Committee



Oita is blessed with beautiful nature, such as verdant mountains and a sawtooth shaped coastline. Furthermore, this beauty is reflected in differing ways in each region of the prefecture. Each region is filled with seasonal delights, and delicacies from the sea and mountains. We hope that you will be able to taste and enjoy them! We have decided to hold special interest group meetings in selected regions for the benefit of everyone. Whatever region's meeting you participate in, we think you will have a very satisfying experience. We are greatly looking forward to meeting you all in Oita Prefecture.

## Taizo Watanabe

Chairman,  
John Manjiro-Whitfield Commemorative Center for International Exchange



Oita has long been the Japan's gateway to the outside world and its culture. The first Christian mission from Portugal to Japan arrived in Oita in the 16th century. Oita is rich in natural resources and is culturally diverse. Oita is well known for having the largest number of hot springs in Japan and a warm climate. Oita also produces an abundant variety of products, and is famous for its beautiful maritime resorts. In many ways, Oita is comparable to San Diego, the site of the last Grassroots Summit in 2014. A great number of volunteers are all waiting to greet you in Oita.

# The Beginning of Japan - America Grassroots Exchange

In 1841, an American whaling boat rescued five shipwrecked Japanese fishermen who were marooned on a remote Pacific island. Among the five was a fourteen year old boy called Manjiro. Manjiro's intelligent good nature soon earned him great respect among the American crew. He was given the name John, and taken back to Fairhaven Massachusetts to receive an American education. Under the care of the ship's captain William H. Whitfield, Manjiro studied not only English, science and navigation, but also about American culture and values, such as freedom, democracy and hospitality.

At that time Japan was under the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate, whose policy of isolationism meant that leaving the country was an offense punishable by death. After 10 years in America, however, Manjiro was determined to return home, to pass on the knowledge and goodwill he had received from Whitfield and the community of Fairhaven. Not long after Manjiro returned to Japan, Commodore Perry arrived calling for an end to isolationism, an event which led to the birth of modern Japan. John Manjiro played a crucial role in these events, introducing and explaining American culture, values, technology, etc., to the Japanese.

The friendship between John Manjiro and Captain Whitfield has resulted in more than 170 years of friendship between their descendents. Members of the Whitfield and Nakahama families play a pivotal role in the Summits, and serve as a reminder of the enormous potential of grassroots exchange.



John Manjiro Nakahama



W.H. Whitfield

Friendship

# What is Grassroots Exchange?

“Grassroots exchange” is what happens when ordinary citizens of different countries meet and make friendships with each other. Through participating in cultural activities and staying in each other’s homes, they discover much about the other person’s culture and way of life. It is our hope that “grassroots exchange” will lead to increased mutual understanding, respect and friendship between different countries.

The “Japan-America Grassroots Summit” is an annual gathering that provides an opportunity for such an exchange and is held alternately in Japan and the U.S. The program includes homestays, sight-seeing, and various cultural activities. During the Summit, citizens from both countries have the opportunity to get to know each other, have fun, and deepen their friendships.

People of all ages and backgrounds participate in the summit, but they all have one thing in common: a desire to create stronger ties and greater understanding between the people of Japan and America.



# The Program of the 25th Grassroots Summit

## Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception

The Grassroots Summit starts with an Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception. Participants from America, Japanese volunteers and others connected with the Summit gather to enjoy the welcome provided by the Summit Executive Committee. In 2015, the Opening Ceremony and the Welcome Reception will be held in Beppu Suginoi Hotel which is well known with its great onsen (hot spring) facilities all over Japan.



Opening Ceremony in 2013

## Local Sessions (Homestay Program)

The 11 local Sessions will be offered by 11 cities all over Oita prefecture. The participants will experience person-to-person exchange with their host and learn about the unique culture of the local area through this 4 days 3 nights program.



Local Sessions in 2013

## Closing Ceremony and Farewell Reception

The Closing Ceremony and Farewell Reception are the final event of the Summit. They are attended not only by the American visitors and Japanese volunteers, but also the host families and others who have connections with the summit. This is the start of the true grassroots exchange.



Closing Ceremony in 2009

## Post Summit Optional Programs

For those who wish to experience more in Japan, several optional programs will be offered after the summit. Participants will be able to visit other regions of Japan, with both hotel and homestay options.



Post summit Optional Program in 2013

Hikotaro-ike