

MY NORIKURA RESIDENTIAL A BST Student Recounts

It all started on the 28th of May at Meiji dori, while the excited class was chattering and the awfully gigantic coach stood still as a statue. Unfortunately, our teaching assistant was unable to attend the journey. So, a reception teacher took her place. When the last suitcases were added in, the bus engine had started. Tonnes of goodbyes and farewells were shouted and we departed. By the look of it, the bus was certainly busy. Some children were observing the outside views, some showing each other photos and others playing games such as chopsticks, truth or dare etc. I sat next to one of my close friends, Ashleigh. I was too engaged in playing games that when we reached it felt like the bus ride had been only ten minutes!!

Finally we had arrived at mount Norikura in Nagano prefecture. As we were going to Northstar, a brown building with a triangular roof, A wave of excitement rushed over me as this was my first trip away for 2 nights, 3 days! Smiling, I took my shoes off and sprinted into the cosy alpine reception lounge. Staring at the furniture, I hugged the red velvet cushions and dreamt of what my room would look like if it were any better. Friendly faces of the staff looked back at me. Though they were strangers, everyone seemed to like them. So did I. They introduced Northstar and then helped us into our rooms. Now the fun began.

The tatami mats and sliding doors were all there, as if the room was a Japanese palace. Every room had a name and our room was called 'Grand tetons'. 4 girls accompanied me as we exhaustedly dumped our luggage into an empty area. Sadly, we had to make our beds! NOT FAIR! But that's that, and we had to make them. So we dragged the quilts, laid them out, and pulled the sheets over. I agreed, it was difficult, but soon everything was finished. After taking our belongings, we headed down to start hiking. Receiving our scavenger hunt slips, we set off! During the hike, there were muddy and wet bits where we needed to be cautious. Only one break was required where we had a faraway view of Bandokoro waterfalls. Once we reached the destination, there was spraying mist from the raging falls. Going down was terrible as there were many chances of slipping. After showers I had a delicious dinner of beans, potato and tofu. Soon we were snuggling warmly in bed, looking forward to the next delighting day.

The next day was very tiring. Firstly, we had a short walk to the sports area. As soon as we reached, we darted to wall climbing. The high wall included metal rocks which were said to harm you. The harness went on first and then your climbing shoes. Language was to be learnt such as 'On belay?' or 'Climbing'. As soon as we had climbed enough, we would let go of the wall to slide down the rope. What fun that was! Next was orienteering which is all about compass skills. We looked at different maps of Norikura and learned how to use a compass. With a little practice, we paired up and started searching for laminated sheets. I found it quite boring. After I had changed into jeans, we started repelling. A muddy 5 metre wall stood there. We had a harness here too and a helmet. Repelling is all about descending so you had to climb to the top and lower yourself. It was indeed very terrifying! Last up was crafts. You had a choice of doing a bear or a Kamoshka (an animal that originated from Norikura). We had to go outdoors to sandpaper our wood. Then it was time for painting. The best part about it was that the choice of colours was optional! When the paint had dried a bit, we stuck the pieces together. The staff said a thank you for trying. After dinner was the activity I was waiting for-the campfire! We toasted marshmallows and made cookie sandwiches. It was the best experience of my life! I was still so happy I couldn't sleep. I was wide awake, wriggling in bed!!

The Final day. Depressed, I grabbed my suitcase and started packing. I loved Norikura so much I could stay there for another month! Just then we had free play! I played river toss, fishing and much more. Sadly, it was time that we left that wonderful place. I waved furiously at the staff, clearly showing that I would miss them. The ride wasn't that exciting, all we seemed to do was watch 2 movies. At last, the bus stood in front of BST. There were many moans and groans that the residential was over. Everyone seemed to have loved it.

So did I.

THE END.

Norikura Year 3 Trip Video 2014
<http://youtu.be/EB8BR8MRMLY>