

Até mais (See You) Karen!

As March is the end of Japan's fiscal year, it is a bitter sweet time for many. Students are graduating and moving onto the next exciting chapter of their lives, while co-workers that finally got used to their jobs are changing offices. In this month's issue, we will hear from Ms. Karen Narita, who will be leaving her position at the Tokachi International Relations Center after 4 years of work.

Obihiro Pioneer: Karen, thank you for your 4 years of hard work. Please share with us your feelings on the time that you spent here in Obihiro.

Karen: I have so many! First of all, the cold! Even after 4 years, I still think "how do human beings live in such a freezing cold place?!" Despite the 6 months of winter, I enjoy the convenience of being able to go to a ski resort nearby. Also, while Obihiro is a small city, having JICA and "Chikudai" (Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine) here makes me feel like half of the world is gathered here.

At work, we hold various events all year long. While I enjoyed most of them, it was difficult figuring out the "Japanese way of thinking" as I tried to improve the events. One of my favorite parts of this job were the school visits. The Brazilian education system is so different. I really enjoyed seeing all of the reactions from the students when I taught them about Brazil.

As for myself, I first came to Obihiro right after graduating university



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and have only experienced part-time and short-term jobs. At the time, I had no idea about what would I be doing in Obihiro nor how to be a "working person." Now, I feel that I have matured and am ready for a new adventure. By living abroad, I've realized the good things about Brazil that I never noticed before!

OP: Please share with us your favorite thing about Obihiro.

K: After 4 years, I couldn't just choose one!

- Cheese and pizza!
- The blue sky
- Being close to ski resorts
- The ambiance of the TIRC! I'll miss having lunch in the winter garden.
- Small local restaurants around Obihiro and Tokachi (all of the restaurants in Brazil are large!).
- Being able to drink water straight from the tap and breath the fresh air while riding my bicycle around town.



OP: Any advice for your successor?

K: Working in Japan is not easy if you are coming alone. But your daily life can be fun if you make some friends. This was one of the reasons why I never got homesick during these 4 years. Try to involve yourself in local activities and make the effort to see the beautiful scenery in Tokachi/Hokkaido.

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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
3/8 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
3/11, 3/25 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment.	
3/18 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	40th Kids Playground Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month you can enjoy popular activities among children in Thailand. Hand plays & songs, crafts, storytelling and much more.	
3/25 (Sat) 18:30-20:30	60th International Talk ~Tao and Karen's Farewell Talk~ Learn more about the countries of the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month, outgoing Obihiro City CIR Tao from China and Karen from Brazil, will talk about their time in Obihiro.	
1/28 - 3/20 (Sat - Mon)	Lake Shikaribetsu Kotan (Village) しかりべつ湖コタン "Kotan" is the Ainu word for "village." Seen only in the coldest time of year, you can come and experience an entire village made of snow and ice. Try dipping in a hot spring made of ice! There are free buses running from Obihiro Station to Lake Shikaribetsu! Please refer to the homepage for more information.	Lake Shikaribetsu 然別湖 しかりべつ湖コタン 実行委員会 0156-69-8181 http://www.nature-center.jp/kotan/index.html
3/26 (Sun) 10:00-11:00	Fish Day 魚の日 Every 4th Sunday is "fish day." To celebrate, fish and other ingredients taken from the sea are used to make healthy dishes native to the north. A variety of products are on sale for the event.	Hiroo Town Fisheries Cooperative Food Division 広尾漁協食品部(広尾郡 広尾町会所前2丁目79番地 先)

Farewell Tao

This April, we bid farewell to two of our Obihiro CIRs. In addition to Ms. Karen Narita from Brazil (featured on page 1 and 4), our newest member, Ms. Tao Yixin from China will also be wrapping up her time here in Obihiro. Before she moves onto her next adventure, Obihiro Pioneer had the chance to interview her.

Obihiro Pioneer: Thank you for the past year. Please share with us about your time here.

Tao: Thank you. It's been quite a year. When it comes to work, I was able to experience so many things that I never expected to do as a CIR. From visiting local schools to teach about my country to helping at various events, I've had the wonderful opportunity to meet many citizens of all ages.



5 years ago, I lived in Tokyo for 3 years. Hokkaido life sure is different! The beautiful nature, the delicious food, just as I expected of Hokkaido. As an avid traveler, I thoroughly enjoyed this past year in Hokkaido. Even after I return home, I am sure to tell everyone around me about the wonders of Hokkaido.

OP: You're from Shanghai, correct? How was your first Hokkaido winter?

T: It was fun! Because it doesn't snow in Shanghai, I was dazzled when it snowed for the first time since I came to Hokkaido. Even in winter, Obihiro has many sunny days. Having the sun come out right after the snow has stopped makes for the best scenery with cream-like snow shining in the light. Mornings and evenings are cold, but once I get home I immediately turn on my heater, which quickly warms up the room. There's been many a night where I ate ice cream while the heater was on.

If I had to name one inconvenient thing about winter, it would have to be removing the snow off of my car. If it snows a lot, I have to also clear the snow in front of the car,

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otherwise I'm stuck! I've had more than a few mess ups, so it's been rough...

OP: Yikes! With the high snow fall that we've been having this season, it must've been rough. On the other hand, what were some of your favorite things about Obihiro?

T: The food here is delicious! Soup curry, Indian Curry, jingisukan (grilled lamb meat) it's all delicious. Buta-don (grilled pork bowl with rice) is must for any meat-lover.

Of course, the sweets are also great. With all of the farms in Tokachi, it's no surprise. To be honest, I'm not the biggest fan of bread or cake, but I found myself eating them quite a bit since coming to Obihiro. I still don't really like cheese so it was a shame that I couldn't enjoy it.

OP: Any words of wisdom to your successor?

T: To gain unique life experience, do your best and have fun.

OP: What are your plans from here on out?

T: First of all, travel. I've spent a year here on the spacious Hokkaido, next I would like to head to a smaller island. Maybe Kyushu or Shikoku. I still have a mountain's load of things to experience in Japan, so I will be continuing my travels even after Obihiro.



We thank Ms. Tao for taking the time out of her busy schedule to share her experience with us! We wish you the best of luck as you continue your travels across Japan.

If you would like to hear more from Tao or Karen about their time in Obihiro, be sure to see them at their special **International Talk on**

☆ **March 25th from 18:30** at the
☆ **Tokachi International Relations Center!**
(more details on page 4)

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml

Title	Language	Dates
La La Land	Eng Subtitles	From 24th
xXx: Return of Xander Cage	Eng Subtitles	Until 16th
Collateral Beauty (Subarashi Kikana Jinsei)	Eng Subtitles	All Month
Moana	Eng Dubbed	From 10th
SING	Eng Dubbed	From 18th

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Working in Japan will provide you with the opportunity to learn a lot. In the same way, I'm sure that the Japanese people you interact with will also learn from you. Just be yourself and good luck.

OP: What are your plans for after your term ends?

K: Since coming to Obihiro, I haven't been home so I will be heading back to Brazil for some rest and a vacation. Afterwards, I will be coming back to Obihiro, but I would like to try living in North America or Europe once day.

OP: Lastly, is there anything else you would like to share?

K: I appreciate having the opportunity to work

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for Obihiro City at the TIRC. I enjoyed working with the other 3 CIRs and other co-workers. If you visit Brazil, please contact me! Até mais (see you)!

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to hear from Ms. Karen before she finished her time at the TIRC. We wish you the best of luck in your next adventure!

*If you would like to hear more from Karen, she and Chinese CIR, Tao will be speaking on **March 25th** for a special International Talk night. See **below** for details.*

60th International Talk ~Tao and Karen's Farewell Talk ~



This spring, we bid farewell to 2 of Obihiro City's Coordinators for International Relations (CIR), 4th year Karen Narita

from Brazil and 1st year Tao Yixin from China. Before they return to their respective countries, the two will

collaborate to share their experiences and stories at the **Tokachi International Relations Center** on **March 25th** from **18:30**. Please take this opportunity to hear about their time in Obihiro and interact with them on their last major job as an Obihiro CIR!



Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

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