

## Here comes Chris! クリスさん、ようこそ！

Usually in Obihiro, new arrivals to our office happen in either April or August. This year this process has been a little delayed because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, thanks to the recent changes to immigration control in Japan, we're delighted to welcome our newest CIR to Obihiro, Christopher Andrade from the USA!

**Obihiro Pioneer:** Hello Chris! It's great that you've finally managed to make it to Obihiro! Would you mind telling us a little about yourself to get started?

**Chris:** Happy to finally be here in Obihiro after a long and quite strange journey! I'm Chris and I come from the United States. Specifically, I'm from New Haven, Connecticut, home of Yale University, birthplace of the hamburger, and home to America's #1 pizza. It's about an hour drive from New York City. In fact, I grew up there and moved to Connecticut when I was 12 years old! However, my family is all from Mexico, so I'm Mexican American and identify equally with Mexican and American culture. Spanish was my first language since my mother didn't speak English!

I have tons of hobbies, but some of my favorite activities including playing video games, listening to and making music (I was a DJ for a couple of years), and of course, learning languages! I speak English and Spanish natively, and I have studied

Japanese, Chinese, German, and Italian! I also enjoy sports. I played soccer and did archery throughout my childhood and learned how to ski and practiced iaido while in Japan.



Christopher Andrade,  
Obihiro City's newest CIR

**Obihiro Pioneer:** Wow, you've got so many talents! Amazing! So I understand that this isn't your first time in Japan? What brings you to Japan this time around?

**Chris:** That's correct. I was an assistant English teacher in Ueda City in Nagano prefecture for 3 years. If you like samurai culture, you might know it as the hometown of the Sanada clan! This time, I'm here as Obihiro's next coordinator of international relations for the US. Obihiro has two sister cities in the US (Seward, Alaska and Madison, Wisconsin), so I'm here to help with international exchange and facilitation the lives of Obihiro's citizens, hoping to improve my Japanese and experience new things along the way! Also, I have been on a mission to learn the shamisen for years. I wasn't able to when I lived in Nagano,

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# Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

Please be aware that these events may be cancelled to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers.

| When                         | What  | Where/Contact  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| 1/13<br>(Wed)<br>19:00-21:00 | <b>International Mini-Volleyball Night</b><br>国際ミニバレー・ナイト<br>Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport.<br><br>TIRC Multipurpose Hall<br>Fee: Free of charge<br>Organized by the Tokachi International Association   | Tokachi International<br>Relations Center<br>森の交流館・十勝<br>0155-34-0122<br>tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp |
| 1/16<br>(Sat)<br>18:30-20:00 | <b>International Talk (Kenya)</b><br>インターナショナル・トーク(ケニア)<br>Learn more about the countries of the world. This month's theme is "Kenya". Our guest is James, an exchange student from Kenya. He will introduce his country and share more about Kenyan culture, lifestyle and more. Participants can interact with the guest through a presentation, quiz and Q&A session.<br><br>TIRC Winter Garden<br>Fee: Free of charge (no registration required)<br>For junior high school students and older.<br>Organized by the City of Obihiro  |  |
| 1/23<br>(Sat)<br>10:30-12:00 | <b>Kids Playground (English School)</b><br>キッズ・プレイグラウンド(英会話学校)<br>Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, teachers from an English school will interact with the children through songs, dances and more.<br><br>TIRC Multi-purpose Hall<br>Fee: Free of charge (registration required)<br>Limited to the first 30 people to apply<br>Application period: Jan 6 (Wed) - Jan 22 (Fri), 9:00-17:00<br>To register, contact TIRC by phone or at reception<br>For children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians.<br>Organized by the City of Obihiro |  |
| 1/16<br>(Sat)<br>10:00-12:00 | <b>Ecopark Expedition "Finding Footprints"</b><br>エコパ探検隊「足あとが見つけたい」<br>Strap on some snowshoes and go looking for footprints left by animals in the park. Bring warm clothes and gloves.<br>Fee: 500 yen, 300 yen for second grade elementary school students and younger.<br>Limited to 20 participants<br>For preschoolers and above. Elementary school students and younger must be accompanied by a guardian.   |  |

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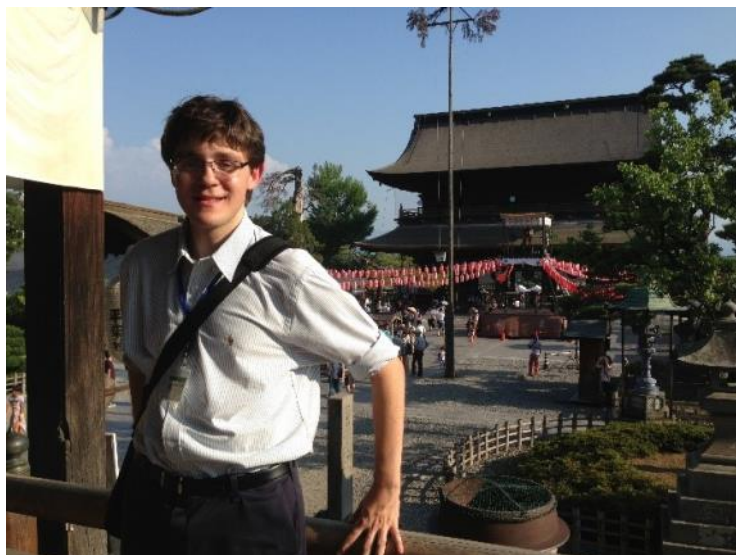
so I won't miss my chance while I'm here! Kyūdō is another thing I'd like to learn, since I love archery and it looks so fun!

**Obihiro Pioneer:** *We're all looking forward to working with you here in the Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section! On a slightly different topic, do you have anything you'd like to do while here in Obihiro?*

**Chris:** I'm excited to experience Obihiro's food culture. Everywhere you go in Japan, you'll see Tokachi milk, cheese, vegetables, all sorts of things that come from here. I also understand that there are many delicious dishes that can be found here, so I want to take it all in! I also want to get back into skiing and ride the famous Hokkaido slopes.

**Obihiro Pioneer:** *Final question, have you any particular goals that you'd like to achieve during your time here as a CIR?*

**Chris:** My biggest goal is to be a good ambassador for my country. I want to teach others about the US, help correct stereotypes, and help create cultural bridges and



Christopher taking advantage of some nice weather by visiting a temple.

foster intercultural understanding. I hope to work my hardest to improve not only sister-city relations, but also motivate others to want to learn more about foreign cultures. I'm excited to be here and if you see me around Obihiro, please don't be afraid to say hello!

**We'd like to thank Christopher for granting us the time for this interview during this busy period. Christopher will be joining the Obihiro Pioneer staff, so look forward to articles by him in coming issues!**

## Check out TIRC's Youtube channel! 森の交流館・十勝のYoutubeチャンネル

Did you know that TIRC has a Youtube channel?

Featuring interviews and cooking classes by various international residents of Obihiro, there's a whole host of content currently available with even more yet to come!

Check it out by scanning the QR code provided.



**Due to COVID-19, release dates for new films may be postponed.  
Please contact Cinema Taiyo directly for more details.**

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](http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml)



| Title   | Language | Dates  |
|---|----------|--|
| The Witches ( <i>Majo ga ippai</i> )  | Jpn Sub  | Until 14 <sup>th</sup>                         |
| Wonder Woman ( <i>Wandaa Uuman</i> )  | Jpn Sub  | Until 28 <sup>th</sup>                         |
| Pokémon the Movie: Secrets of the Jungle<br>(劇場版ポケットモンスター ココ, <i>Gekijou-ban Pokettomonsutaa Koko</i> ) | Jpn Dub  | All Month                                      |
| Ainu Mosir ( <i>Ainu Moshir</i> )   | Jpn Dub  | From 8 <sup>th</sup><br>Until 21 <sup>st</sup> |
| Violet Evergarden: The Movie<br>( <i>Vaioretto Evaagaaden</i> )   | Jpn Dub  | From 8 <sup>th</sup><br>Until 28 <sup>th</sup> |

## Events Continued

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| When  | What   | Where/Contact  |
|---|--|--|
| 1/23-1/24<br>(Sat-Sun)<br>Sat 10:00-<br>Sun 11:30 | <b>The 12<sup>th</sup> Parent-Child Snowman Contest</b><br>第12回雪だるまコンテスト<br>Work with your family as a group to make a snowman however you like!<br>Limited to 30 parent-child groups<br>Fee: 100 Yen per person   | Tokachi Ecology Park<br>Visitor Center<br>Eastern Triangle Plaza<br>十勝エコロジーパーク財団<br>0155-32-6780<br><a href="http://www.tokachi-ecopark.jp">www.tokachi-ecopark.jp</a> |
| 1/23-2/21<br>(Sat-Sun)<br>19:00-21:00             | <b>Tokachigawa Swan Festival "Sairinka®"</b><br>十勝川白鳥まつり「彩凜華®」<br>"Sairinka" is a fantastic display of light and sound set in the extremely cold Tokachigawa Onsen. This amazing display created by multiple lights set in a vast snowbank promises to be an unforgettable experience. | Tokachigaoka Park<br>音更町十勝川温泉観光協会<br>0155-32-6633<br><a href="http://www.tokachigawa.net">www.tokachigawa.net</a>  |
| 1/24<br>(Sun)<br>10:00-16:00                      | <b>2021 Ecology Park Winter Festival</b><br>2021エコパ冬まつり<br>Enjoy a range of winter activities including an ice slide and kids bobsleigh at the biggest event of the Ecology Park Winter Festival!<br>Fees are charged for individual activities.                                       | Tokachi Ecology Park<br>Visitor Center<br>十勝エコロジーパーク財団<br>0155-32-6780<br><a href="http://www.tokachi-ecopark.jp">www.tokachi-ecopark.jp</a>                           |

**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](http://www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp) (click on "Information for Foreigners")

"Obihiro Pioneer" is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro City Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to the Editing Team at [international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp](mailto:international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp).