



# PACIFIC AND ASIAN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

1601 East-West Road, 4th Floor • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96848-1601

Telephone: (808)944-7780 • Facsimile: (808)944-7785

---

August 23, 2006

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Photos Attached

Contact Person: Tandy Awaya

Phone: (work) 944-7784

Email: paac@paachawaii.org

## **Local Teens Explore Japan Off the Beaten Path**

Navigating through Tokyo's transportation system on a system scavenger hunt; attending an Okinawan high school; meeting with an A-bomb survivor in Hiroshima; visiting the country's largest recycling research center and playing taiko drums in Kitakyushu; and attending the US Consulate General's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Reception in Okinawa are just a few experiences gained by twenty of Hawaii's high school students that participated in the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council's (PAAC) 2006 Japan Summer Study Tour in June. Throughout this 17-day exploration through several cities including Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, Kitakyushu, and Okinawa, students also observed and discussed many of the country's current issues including the U.S. military presence in Okinawa, recycling efforts, and the aging population.

Many students also reflected on the opportunity to play the taiko drums and participate in the Kokura Gion Daiko Matsuri in Kitakyushu. "As the drums began to play, more and more groups joined in and eventually the whole arcade was vibrating under the power of the drums. Once this started to happen, every living soul there began to jump and nod to the music. . . The colors, food, lively faces-they all play a part in preserving the zest of matsuris and is what keeps them a part of . . . life in Japan today," wrote Roosevelt High School student David Togami.

Additionally, students explored perspectives on history and issues that faced the country such as World War II. Dorothy Fukushima of Pahoehoe High School reflected on her visit to the Hiroshima Peace Park: "The strongest exhibit for me was . . . a model of massive wreckage and a mother and her two children after the A-bomb. Their hair stood up and their flesh hung like wet tissue paper from their bloody bodies. Seeing this made me

**MORE . . .**

**Continued: Local Teens Explore Japan Off the Beaten Path**

think about how cruel war is, how fragile human life is . . . and how utterly strong people are. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were incinerated by the A-bomb and I think it was courageous of them to start completely anew and show the world the deadly destruction of nuclear weapons.”

Each year, through a generous grant from the Freeman Foundation, PAAC awards Summer Study Tour scholarships to twenty students from Hawaii public and charter high schools statewide. Destinations in previous years were China and South Korea.

The Pacific and Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) is a private, non-profit organization that serves as the World Affairs Council for the State of Hawai'i. PAAC promotes increased understanding of world affairs, particularly Asia-Pacific issues, by sponsoring speaker forums and conferences, facilitating cross-cultural exchange of international visitors, and conducting global education outreach programs at Hawai'i high schools and community colleges statewide. Visit PAAC on the web at [www.paachawaii.org](http://www.paachawaii.org)

####