

7 July 2014

JETAA invited Mrs Akie Abe, wife of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to its Tanabata event



On Monday morning, July 07 2014, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme Alumni Association (JETAA) organised a Tanabata event at the Villa Maria Winery in Auckland and invited Mrs Akie Abe, wife of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, members of JETAA, participants of JENESYS2.0 programme and people involved in the Support Our Kids operation in New Zealand (SOK is a continuous project aimed to support children that have been affected by the great East Japan earthquake to be independent as early as possible).

At first, there were presentations on their activities and experiences in Japan by the representatives of JETAA, JENESYS2.0 and SOK. A member of JETAA who worked at junior and senior high schools in Ise City, Mie Prefecture, said, “*Kyushoku* (school lunch) is the most impressive memory. I

came to like *Kinpiragobo* (sautéed chopped burdock root with soy sauce and sugar).”, a JENESYS2.0 participant who did a homestay in Ibaraki Prefecture said, “I want to visit Japan again as my experience in Japan is unforgettable. I would like to become a Japanese language teacher.” And a participant who is involved in the SOK said, “I feel rewarded by this activity. I would like to continue this homestay support activity so that the dreams of the children of the Tohoku region come true.” As the day was the actual date of *Tanabata* (*star festival*), a member of JETAA explained the story behind it. After that, Mrs Abe and all participants wrote their wishes on the coloured strip papers and hung them on the bamboo tree.

Mrs Abe thanked the people involved in the SOK for their activities which are giving children a dream, and sent her support messages to members of JETAA and JENESYS2.0 that she wished them to continue their positive activities and to become a bridge between Japan and New Zealand.

After enjoying an informal talk session in a friendly atmosphere, all participants along with Mrs Abe welcomed both Japanese and New Zealand Prime Ministers, Mr Shinzo Abe and Mr John Key, at the side of the entrance.



