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# Teach Abroad Himeji Fall 2022 Participants



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**RyleeAnn Buss** was born and raised in Saint Petersburg, FL but moved to Flagstaff, AZ when she was 16 years old. Around this this time she studied abroad as a high school exchange student in Sapporo, Japan for a summer with the American Field Service, partaking in an intensive Japanese language program and living with her host family. She started self-teaching Japanese from the age of 12 but was able to connect deeper to the language and culture after her time spent there where she grew very close with her host family and continues to visit them today.

RyleeAnn's passion for travel began at a young age and inspired her to move to Honolulu, HI directly after high school where she furthered her Japanese language skills and became an avid free diver, nature enthusiast, and poké fanatic. After living on Oahu for a year and a half she was offered a scholarship at Arizona State University and started pursuing her bachelor's degree of Journalism at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication in Downtown Phoenix, Arizona. During her time as an undergraduate, she continued her Japanese studies while specializing in photojournalism, food writing, and videography.

She studied abroad again in 2021 going to Perugia, Italy for a semester where she earned a certificate of Food Studies and Sustainability to expand her international understanding and indulge in one of her other passions, being a foodie! RyleeAnn hopes to blend her love for journalism, travel, food, and sustainability through visual storytelling and writing after graduating from ASU in May '22.

RyleeAnn knew from the moment she left Japan as a student that she wanted to return on day as a teacher and lend a hand to those who are in the same position she once was. She cannot wait to arrive in Himeji and see what everyone will learn from one another. RyleeAnn is also looking forward to spending more time with her host family, traveling to regions of Japan she has not yet been, and photographing all the beauty Japan has to offer.



**Alexander Fisher** was born just outside of Washington D.C. but spent the vast majority of his life growing up in Arizona when he moved to Phoenix at the age of two. Early in his primary school career, Alex was exposed to his very first foreign language class, Chinese, which left major impressions on his educational and career interests. Following several years of learning Chinese, Alex was privileged to take part in a group study abroad to China, taking intensive cultural and language classes throughout Beijing and Jinan.

This study abroad experience and passion for foreign languages has undoubtedly shaped Alex's career path, a path in which he seeks to participate in the Peace Corps and join the Foreign Service to diplomatically support U.S. relations with other East Asian countries, namely China and Japan. This has led Alex to the completion of a bachelor's degree in Government and Asian Studies, as well as the gaining of French proficiency from Georgetown University; this has been coupled with the fulfillment of several professional internships, ranging from positions on Capitol Hill to various regional lobbying firms. Additionally at Georgetown, Alex helped create *BigHoya LittleHoya*, a program that was dedicated to helping first-year students acclimate to their initial year at Georgetown amidst the height of the pandemic, while also engaging in numerous multicultural clubs and attending local embassy events.

Alex thrives through finding himself in challenging scenarios, exploring cultural sites, trying different foods, and being engaged in the community through sports and other extracurricular activities. In Himeji, he's most looking forward to connecting with students both in and out of class, forging new relationships, learning Japanese, and improving his intercultural communication skills. He feels extremely honored to be an ALT for the Teach Abroad program and hopes this is yet another positive step on his path to working and living in the region!



**Justin Fultz** was born and raised in Phoenix and is currently residing in Mesa with his wife and two-year-old son. He attended Arizona State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History. He went on to pursue his master's degree in Secondary Education, graduating in 2013. It was through his studies that he developed a love for other cultures and a passion for education. In 2014, Phoenix Sister Cities selected him as an Assistant Supervisor of English, transforming his life forever. During his time in Himeji, he forged lasting relationships by sharing Arizona's culture and creating a fun exciting teaching environment for his students. He looks forward to once again fostering a joy in learning and enriching the lives of young people and adults in Himeji. He is excited for the opportunity to continue his

work building a bridge connecting these wonderful cultures and securing a lasting friendship between our two great cities.



**Rachel Goldstein** has called the Arizona desert home for as long as she can remember. However, from a young age (and largely due to her travel loving parents) she has always been struck by a sense of wanderlust. Rachel is quite certain about two things in life, 1: she loves to travel and explore new cultures, and 2: she loves languages.

At a young age, Rachel was speaking both English and Indonesian and thoroughly enjoying the perks of living in a bicultural household. (Double the holidays? Double the good food? All the family—can't go wrong!)

Later in life, she branched out to study Chinese (which eventually became her minor in college) and studied abroad in Taipei, Taiwan for a lovely six months. Asides from

Chinese, she also ventured into Korean, and now is excited to tackle the Japanese language as well! (Her goal is to become fluent in all these languages, please wish her good luck).

Rachel is very excited to be a part of this program and to help the kids in Himeji on their journey in learning English. Languages and culture are a big passion for her, and she can't wait to see how much she will learn along on this journey as well!



**Lisa Kling** was born and raised in San Francisco and moved to Phoenix to attend Arizona State University. GO DEVILS! While at ASU she earned a Bachelors and a Masters Degree in Education. After graduation she began teaching in the Washington Elementary School District, where she has spent the majority of her career. Lisa has been teaching English Language Learners for 25 years and has been lucky to have 11 different languages in her classrooms over the years. In addition to teaching, Lisa has also worked for the Phoenix Suns, the then Phoenix Coyotes, and the Arizona Diamondbacks. She was lucky to have been employed there when the Diamondbacks won the World Series. She is currently a part-time Barista for Starbucks. In her spare

time, she loves visiting Disneyland, with her daughter and family.



**Madeline LeBarron** was born in Tucson, Arizona where she grew up with her sister, mother and father. Madeline has a bachelor's degree in Art Education and a bachelors in painting from Arizona State University. While at ASU she completed three semesters of intern teaching at two different schools. Madeline is now certified to teach Art, K-8 in the state of Arizona. She currently works for the Gilbert Public School District, where she teaches fifty-two sections at eight different schools.

Madeline is super excited to travel and live in Himeji, Japan because she is eager to experience a brand-new culture and explore a place she has never been before. She grew up in the desert, so she is also looking forward to living in a place where it rains more frequently. She is excited to teach English to new students especially those who struggle with learning like she did while she was in school.

Some of her favorite hobbies include drawing, painting, hiking, gardening and watching birds. Every summer she loves working with the Girl Scouts of southern Arizona as a camp counselor. She also loves combining my passions for teaching and the great outdoors.