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**My curricular goals prior to participating in the Japan-U.S. Teacher Exchange Program for ESD:**

- Create an International School Peace Garden at Junction City School.
- Learn new approaches to teaching sustainable development
- Expose myself and my students to a larger worldview through the lens of Japanese culture.

**Where I am at now in attaining those goals:**

Junction City School has designed and is implementing an International School Peace Garden (ISPG) involving students and local community members in its creation. Through our garden, we are creating a hands-on integrated approach to teaching peace education, environmental studies and inter-cultural understandings.

Our new International School Peace Garden serves as the centerpiece of Junction City School's ESD curriculum. Our garden incorporates all the best practices of organic, sustainable gardening such as; optimal sun exposure, timed drip irrigation systems, composting, worm beds, cover crops, rain water harvesting and soil testing. Its beautiful raised beds provide seating for students, and an outdoor classroom that is shared by all of our student body. Our ISPG has become a symbol of our school's commitment to peace within ourselves, our community, and with nature. As I work with my students developing our garden, I bring my new awareness of Japanese aesthetics and sensibilities to its creation. This provides a meaningful opportunity to discuss how Japanese garden design encourages a contemplative and reflective state of mind, contrasted with the western "agribusiness" model.

While in Japan, I became aware of the "Tanabata" celebration. After having Japanese student "wishes" translated for me, I realized that they were of an altruistic nature. On Monday, October 24, 2011, as part of United Nations Day, I brought this idea back to my school. I challenged our student body to make their own wishes for our world. These wishes were then written on colorful strips and hung on the bamboo trees in our peace garden. They continue to blow in the breeze and remind our students of many great needs around the earth. In this way, I was able to help my students appreciate yet another rich aspect Japanese culture

I have established a sister-school partnership with [REDACTED] at Shima Elementary School in Gifu, Japan. He has also helped to create a Peace Garden at his school. We collaborated in Kobe on ways to teach peace to our students through a garden. He shared pictures from his school and told me about how his students had raised edamame in their peace garden. They sold their crop to

their community to raise funds to support two UNICEF Projects they had been learning about in school. I have shared these pictures and story with my classroom. My students were inspired and are challenged to find ways to promote world peace through their school garden. Mr. [REDACTED] and I have also created a "picture pal" partnership between our two school gardens. Through email, we have successfully shared updated images of our students as they experience a variety of activities in their respective school peace gardens. We have also exchanged gifts between classrooms. This cross-cultural relationship has greatly enhanced my student's worldview and appreciation of Japanese culture. I hope to continue this relationship with Mr. [REDACTED]'s classroom for as long as possible.

Upon my return from Japan, the Trinity County Office of Education offered me the opportunity to provide professional development to all interested educators. This opportunity stimulated dialogue between teachers from other schools in our county around the topic of ESD. Having worked closely with the American Indian Early Childhood Education Program, I was delighted to be able to tell the Native American Elders assembled about the reading of **Father Sky, Mother Earth** at the closing of the Joint Conference in Kobe. They were pleased to learn about the mutual understanding shared by both Japan and Native Americans regarding maintaining traditional culture and care for the earth.

Some other examples of how I am implementing the knowledge I acquired as a result of my participation in this program are as follows. I have read and discussed with my students Mr. Hiroshi's Garden, which teaches how gardens can help bridge cultural and generational gaps. I am taking my students through the process of researching potential UNICEF Projects our class may want to become involved with. I have introduced my students to Haiku using In the Eyes of the Cat: Japanese Poetry For All Seasons. Later this school year, I will read and discuss Only What We Could Carry, helping my students to become aware of Japanese-American internment during WWII. In mathematics, during our study of exponents, we have explored David Suzuki's movie "The Test Tube" and discussed the scientific reality of population growth and the consequences of mass consumerism. My students are also becoming more aware of the issue of global food security and are working to earn rice for people in need using freerice.com. In art, we have used sumi ink, bamboo brushes, and rice paper to write in calligraphy the "Wa" peace and harmony symbol of Japan. Through this integrated approach, my students are coming to better understand how the elements of sustainable development are deeply embedded in all aspects of daily living.

And finally, another very exciting ESD project is our school's involvement in a musical collaboration organized by 2011 participant [REDACTED]. Volunteers from our K-8 student body will be video recording the song "Rise Up" which will become a part of a musical collage. Mr. [REDACTED] will be editing together video clips of student voices from around the United States and Japan to create a

global message of hope and trust. We will be recording in December 2011 and anticipate the finished project by early 2012. Our "Rise Up Choir" will also be performing at our Annual Holiday Performance. In addition to participating in this inspiring video, each student will receive a DVD of his or her own.

I am extremely grateful for my opportunity to participate in the 2011 Japan Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program for ESD. Through this experience, I have learned new ways to teach my students valuable lessons about blending the best ideas of multiple cultures. They are learning that this method helps to create a more successful and gratifying approach to sustainable living.