

**President: Alicia Smith**

Hello, I'm Alicia Smith. I was on the JET Program in Iwamizawa-shi, Hokkaido from 2008-2013. I am running for President.

I have been serving as President of Great Lakes JETAA since 2021. Prior to that, I held several other positions since 2016, such as Vice President and Webmaster.

As President, I use my knowledge of the JETAA structure and our local Japanese community to guide the chapter toward growth and success. I have focused on expanding the number of cities in which we hold regular events, increasing organization and efficiency, and strengthening our ties with other Japan-related groups to host collaborative events.

If I am elected for 2 more years as President, I wish to increase collaborations with Japan America Societies and Sister State (Shiga and Saitama) programs. I intend to continue providing opportunities for past, present, and future participants to meet in person and online, so that everyone throughout Ohio and Michigan can build their professional and personal networks and feel a continued connection to Japan. I also plan to further structure and document GLJETAA processes to ensure the continued survival and usefulness of the chapter.

I always welcome feedback on how to improve and best serve our JETAA community! The JET Program had a profound impact on my life, and I find purpose in continuing to support cultural exchange, knowledge, and friendships within our community.

Thank you.

## **Michigan Vice-President: Kily Buta**

My name is Kily Buta, and I am running for the position of Vice President of Michigan. Since returning from Japan, I have attended various GLJETAA events and assisted the Detroit Consulate in hosting online Q&As, but I would like to become more active in the organization by participating as the VP of Michigan. The skills I have learned holding various positions and my experiences over the years make me an excellent candidate for this position.

Prior to leaving for my position as an ALT in Shiga-ken, I was already serving as an ambassador to bridge the connections between Japan and America. During high school I participated in the Michigan Shiga High School exchange program where I traveled to Japan staying with a host family and learning about the culture, I then hosted an exchange student in my house sharing my culture. I learned so much during this experience that I wanted to share the culture with others, so I decided to incorporate it into my Girl Scout Gold Award. I orchestrated a local art and cultural fair at my local library where we hosted artwork from students in Japan and shared cultural aspects such as origami, calligraphy, food, language and more to the public. In addition, I also reached out to local schools to teach mini-Japanese lessons and set up pen pal programs with Japan. I also founded and served as the president of my high school Japanese Club (which is still successfully carrying on today) and served as a council member for the Michigan Shiga Goodwill Mission Committee (DeWitt Branch). I continued this leadership and ambassador role while I served as an ALT on JET as a member of the local JETAA organization, playing various roles within the organization to help connect and serve Shiga JETs.

Serving in these positions have helped me learn key skills to serve as an effective VP of Michigan. I have learned communication, problem solving, and organizational skills that will help me orchestrate or serve as a liaison/representative at various functions and events held by CLAIR, the national JETAA association, the Japanese Consulate of Detroit, or any other organization should the need arise. I also have experience organizing and hosting large scale events, especially around the promotion of Japanese Culture. Additionally, I have gained key leadership skills such as decision making and delegation and have prior experience leading committees and committee meetings, so I will be able to confidently run the GLJETAA meetings should the president be unable to. Furthermore, I am a flexible, personable, dedicated person who loves Japan and wants to help promote the mutual understanding and friendship between the people of Michigan and Ohio and the local Japanese community through the organization of social events and volunteer activities. I also happen to live in Michigan 😊.

In conclusion I am an excellent candidate for this position, please vote for me for Vice President of Michigan.

**Ohio Vice-President: Jennifer Sherman**

I am your current Great Lakes JETAA Ohio Vice President Jennifer Sherman, and I would love the opportunity to continue serving our community. My JET hometown was Mihama, Mie from 2012 to 2016. I now edit manga, light novels, and game books for Square Enix Manga & Books. With northeast Ohio as my home base, I'm excited to work with all of you to engage with JET alums in Ohio. Participating in JETAA USA's National Conference and other national events has helped me build connections to improve our chapter. I want to continue to collaborate with other JET community leaders to develop and host more events throughout Ohio. I look forward to hearing your ideas for the coming year. Thank you for being an active member of our chapter!

**Secretary: Anna Burbo**

My name is Anna Burbo, and I have been serving as secretary of GLJETAA for the past 8 months. I began as interim secretary in July 2023, and was later officially voted into the position by my fellow officers. However, this will be my first time participating in officer elections.

Upon returning from my time on JET, where I lived in the beautiful Minamiizu in Shizuoka Prefecture from April-December 2022, GLJETAA accepted me with open arms and helped me feel more at home. Having returned early from Japan due to a family emergency, it was a difficult time in my life. I love how kind, caring, open and willing to help this group is, and I would love the opportunity to continue serving the GLJETAA community as secretary— in hopes that I can help the group continue to grow and make other JETAA alumni feel just as at home here as I do.

Thank you so much for your time, and for being a part of this great community!

## **Treasurer: Megan Doi**

When Megan moved to Detroit in 2021, one of the first things she sought out was the local JET Alumni group. Since then, she has been an active member of the GLJETAA community, as well as involved in various US-Japan related organizations in Michigan. At times, she has even made the trek to Ohio to meet JET Alumni and take part in events throughout the Chapter. Building community is a goal Megan would like to explore during her second term as the Great Lakes JETAA Treasurer. The treasurer position can be so much more than just crunching the numbers. Over the next 2 years, Megan hopes to reach the wider GLJETAA membership, allowing their ideas to come to fruition and helping secure funds for events that are impactful for both our Chapter and the communities members live in. In the past 2 years during Megan's time as treasurer, she has advocated to hold events outside the Greater Metro Detroit area, making events more accessible to members who live across the state. Now currently living in East Lansing, Megan hopes to host more events in Mid and West Michigan. With these goals in mind, Megan is looking forward to serving you as GLJETAA Treasurer once more.

**Webmaster: Lily Sun**

Hello, my name is Lily Sun. I was a JET ALT from 2015 to 2017 in Ishikawa Prefecture. I'm hoping to continue my volunteer efforts as Webmaster for Great Lakes JETAA.

Some of my contributions this term have included giving my fellow officers and directors technical support, making promotional materials for the Job Fair, editing, maintaining and updating the website, as well as researching software and technology resources that would benefit our goal of bridging the Japanese community with the JET alumni in Michigan and Ohio. I would be honored to continue to serve the Great Lakes JETAA community in the position of Webmaster. I have three years of experience making websites for myself and other freelance clients with Wordpress. I have experience making websites using HTML and CSS.

As a webmaster, I will re-design the website using an award-winning Wordpress theme. I will make timely updates to the website, and make it more accessible to members and create a hub of information.

I will host and facilitate events as an Officer to support the community.

Please vote for me for the Webmaster position.

Thank you!

## **Event Coordinator: Emily Rich**

My name is Emily Rich and I'm running for Event Coordinator in this upcoming Great Lakes JET Alumni Association election. I participated in the JET Program in Yamagata Prefecture in Sakata City, from 2017 until 2020. Similar to all those reading this, JET was a life-changing experience for me, and I want to continue growing my connection with JET and with Japan through GLJETAA. I am an active member of GLJETAA and established the ongoing quarterly GLJETAA book club, which I continue to facilitate. In my local community, I volunteer with the ShoJoJi Japanese Dancers. In my professional career, I'm currently active in a conference steering committee where I am the acting Vice-Chair of Programming. I also plan and host events at the university where I work, including monthly game nights and a zine-making event in collaboration with the campus LGBT Center.

I believe that bringing people together through common interests and goals is an invaluable way to build belonging and foster community. As Event Coordinator, my focus would be on ensuring that all members of GLJETAA have access to community-focused events, regardless of where they live throughout Ohio and Michigan. Of course, this can be achieved through online events, but also through providing the resources and support that empower our members to take initiative and host events in their communities and local areas. I would also like to increase our event visibility and marketing on our social media platforms, to reach more members and encourage them to join us. I would like to see a wide range of events in GLJETAA including educational, networking, cross-cultural, and (of course) fun events.

GLJETAA is a resource to JET alumni in Ohio and Michigan, and I want to be an active participant in continuing that mission.