

Hello everyone! March has ended and I cannot believe that I will already be going to leave here in 2 months. I am half excited to go back, but at the same time, half depressed to not be able to see my friends anymore. This month, there was a big celebration called St. Patrick's Day. St. Patrick's Day is a day to celebrate the heritage and culture of Ireland. In effect, the state of Massachusetts is known as the most Irish-dense state in the United States and, 18%-20% claims Irish ancestry. My host father is one of them, too. It is common here for girls who have Irish blood to wear a ring called claddagh rings, an historic ring that has been made in Ireland since the 1600s. It symbolizes love, loyalty, and friendships. From this, St. Patrick's Day is an extremely popular celebration here. Every year, a big parade called St. Patrick's Day Parade is held in Boston. My friend asked me to go, so I decided to go on a little trip to Boston by taking the commuter lines again!

Real St. Patrick Day is on March 17th, but the parade itself was held on Sunday, March 15th. The train was really crowded in the morning, and I really felt a similar atmosphere like a Japanese firework festival, where people were packed in one place trying to head to the same destination. Most of the people wear green on St. Patrick's Day, but there is a various background and reasonings for this. Some people say that people wear green, because green represents the shamrock, Ireland's national flower. Some explain that we wear green, because green symbolizes national pride of Ireland since Ireland's nickname is known as "Emerald Isle" from its rich and vibrant nature. Still, if you wear at least some kind of green that day, you will be fine and you can enjoy yourself with vigor. In the parade, I saw people wearing a costume of leprechaun; one of the supernatural beings in Irish folklore. I got green sunglasses and green bracelets that were passing out. Me and my friends also enjoyed eating bagels at the store we randomly walked in. My friend got grilled cheese, egg and crispy bacon sandwiched with cheddar cheese bagels. It looked so good that 5-6 people asked desperately where we got it! I experienced a unique event that I can't really experience in Japan!

Besides the St. Patrick's Day, I also want to mention about something that left a big impression this month. There is one good friend of mine since I came to my current school. She speaks English frequently, but she is originally from Salvador and speaks Spanish. She is really into music, and she has taught me a lot of songs that she likes, and her music tastes are really good. In one of the songs, she shared the lyrics like this: "Man out of city, not the city out of man" from a song called "End of Beginning" by Djo. Djo is a popular singer-songwriter, but an actor at the same time. He is on one of the popular shows called Stranger Things as a character called Steven. She told me that whenever she listens to this song, all those beautiful things that she saw, felt, listened to, and experienced in her homeland would flashback. First, I did not really understand what the lyrics meant, so I asked her. What she

did was that she tapped where her heart was and said, “Salvador is right here in my heart.”

Right now, the city that came to my mind was Tokyo and all those precious memories with my family and friends from Hakuo. However, in few months, the city I imagined will be here, where I am drafting this report right now. When that happens, she will be in it. She would definitely be the one that would remain as a part of me forever. That is how much she meant to me, and I am extremely glad to be part of the study abroad program, because I got to meet a person that made me feel like this.

I will continue to be grateful to my parents and my teachers who made this study program come true. See you guys' next month!

白鷗高校 18 期生 次世代リーダー育成道場 13 期生 M・I

