

**MISS KELOWNA LADY OF THE LAKE & PRINCESS 2009
PRESENTATION TO THE CITY OF KELOWNA MAYOR
AND COUNCIL MARCH 22, 2010.**

Miss Kelowna Pooja Anand:

**Good Afternoon Your Worship, Mayor Sharon Shepherd,
Honourable Councillors, City of Kelowna, Ladies &
Gentlemen –**

**My name is Pooja Anand and I am Miss Kelowna
Lady of the Lake 2009/2010.**

Kelowna's Princess Caitlin Hansum:

**And, I am Caitlin Hansum, Kelowna's Princess for
2009/2010. We are pleased to present to you our
synopsis of our recent trip to Kelowna's Sister City - -
Kasugai, Japan. Konnichiwa!!**

Miss Kelowna Pooja:

**Having been given the opportunity to go across the world and
unite 2 countries together by every little touch was an
experience of a lifetime: 2 countries, 4 airports, and 3 cities!**

Japan was simply life changing.

**Arriving at the Kelowna Airport at the assigned time of 4:45 in
the morning, with luggage in tow that barely fit the weight
requirements, we all knew that this day was the start of a new
adventure of our lives.**

When the plane departed Kelowna Airport, it all began! We reached the Seattle Airport eager to get on the plane to Narita!

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After a long, but exciting plane ride, we had finally reached Narita. Narita was one step closer to Kasugai! From Narita, we flew to Chubu International Airport located in Nagoya. Upon our arrival, we were warmly greeted by Yohei, representing the Kuwahara Family; along with two City of Kasugai officials. In just short of an hour's drive from the Nagoya Airport, we reached the Kuwahara's home and stepped inside the front door to a very pleasant Japanese welcome.

The Kuwahara family quickly became our second family. Shortly after our arrival, we found ourselves visiting with the Kuwahara Family in the "Kelowna Room" and we presented our official photo to Mr. Kuwahara. After a few snacks, and a warm welcome, Caitlin, Denise, and I went to bed in our rooms for the next morning would come early and the next day was jam-packed with loads of fun!

Princess Caitlin:

The first morning in the Kuwahara's home we woke up at 6:30 am after deep, travel-exhausted sleeps! With a little apprehension Pooja and I walked downstairs to our first Japanese breakfast. However, the instant we saw the table full of chocolate pastries, exotic fruit, yogurt, egg sandwiches, and delicious, pure juice we knew that breakfasts would always be a great comfort early in the morning. That morning, the City Officials arrived at 8 o'clock and our busy day began immediately by going to one of the Shinto Shrines in Kasugai. We traveled

through the middle of busy Kasugai and then suddenly we arrived at a beautiful, serene and almost magical

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shrine. We were able to make a wish at the shrine and then walk behind to a beautiful garden and Koi pond.

We then had the opportunity to select a fortune from a stand by the shrine. Later, Reina translated our selected fortunes and it turned out that Pooja has a very good fortune, Denise has a good fortune, and my fortune was a...not so good fortune.

We then departed to the Recycling plant of Kasugai where we first sat down to watch a video describing the production of the plant. After this, we received soft slippers in exchange for our shoes and were given a guided tour of the plant. In the video, I was amazed by their efficiency and dedication to recycling. However, when we were given the tour it was even more incredible to watch the plant in action! There was not a single recycling possibility or by-product that was overlooked! We learned that everything had a purpose in the plant and everything could be used.

For example, when they used the incinerator to burn garbage the ash produced was used or disposed of in a natural way in order to protect the environment. As well, metals found in products would be melted together and hardened to form slag, which they use on their sidewalks in Kasugai. All in all, after touring the plant it was obvious to us that the citizens of Kasugai were devoted to recycling and its benefits, which was inspiring to all of us!

Following the recycling plant we traveled back into the city to visit the Police Station. We were able to enjoy some tea with the Kasugai Police Chief and ask him a few questions about their police force. After several

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minutes we were escorted upstairs to enjoy a demonstration of Kendo, which is considered a Japanese form of fencing.

The policemen must train in either Kendo or Judo during the week for their entire career. It was a little shocking at first when they began batting at each other's heads and yelling but then we started to understand what the targets were and routines.

When they had finished they allowed Pooja and I to try hitting the targets on two of the men, which must have looked quite humorous as we were dressed in our official pink ambassador suits and heels!

After, we drove to the meeting place of the Kasugai Rotary Club for a luncheon. We enjoyed a delicious vegetarian meal and then Pooja presented a speech written by Wayne Evans of the Kelowna Sunrise Rotary Club. After this, I was able to present to them the Kelowna Sunrise Rotary banner and thank them for lunch.

Miss Kelowna Pooja:

Proceeding on our busy but very efficient schedule we traveled to the Tofu Memorial Museum of Japanese Calligraphy! We looked at all the different types of calligraphy and the historical background on Ono Ono Tofu, who was one of the most famous Japanese Calligraphers. After gazing at all the beautiful and exquisite calligraphy and artwork, the fun part began! Caitlin,

Denise, and I tried our hands at Japanese Calligraphy. We learned that it was most definitely more difficult than it looks. We were taught how to write the symbols for love, hope, flower, peace, and many more inspirational words!

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Leaving with our pieces of art, we continued on to meet with the President of the Kasugai Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We enjoyed our meeting and at this time presented a gift and letter on behalf of the President of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce.

We then traveled to City Hall and were very excited to meet with Mayor Ito, who is highly regarded and treated very much like an emperor! Caitlin, Denise, and I were so very privileged to meet with the Mayor of Kasugai. Awaiting the Mayor's entry was suspenseful and when he made his entrance, the room lit up! I presented a speech of my own and read the greeting that Mayor Shepherd wrote to Mayor Ito. He was delighted! I presented the gift from Mayor Sharon Shepherd, which he grew ecstatic about! Shortly after, we were presented our Happy Coats! Our last event for our first day was to meet with the Branch Chief of the Chunichi Newspaper Company! We chatted, and our photo was taken for print in the newspaper the very next day.

Princess Caitlin:

After a long first day, we sat down to eat our first evening meal at regular Japan dinnertime, which happens to be at 9PM or later! It was during this time and all the dinner meals to follow that we really bonded with the Kuwahara family. Each night was filled with

different tastes and experiences of Japanese food. Each night was also filled with lots of laughter! We would discuss the day and laugh about previous Miss Kelowna's and Princess' experiences! It was very relaxing and allowed us to feel more comfortable in their home. In the end, by the time we left to go home we had

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favorites for breakfast and favorites for dinner and Mrs. Kuwahara was always so kind to make sure they were there.

The following morning we arrived at the Kelowna booth to meet Reina and the other city officials for the opening ceremony of the Kasugai Festival. We were introduced to members of council and a beautiful lady who is the Sports Ambassador of Japan. Then we were announced and each walked on stage to formally bow and wave to the crowd. After a speech by Mayor Ito, Pooja gave the speech written by Mayor Shepherd to the citizens of Kasugai and Mayor Ito. We then were escorted off the stage to enjoy a performance by the high school band and drummers! I especially enjoyed the drumming as all ages were represented on the stage beating away with big smiles on their faces!

At this point, the day was ours to enjoy the festival and so we began by walking down a red carpet lined with booths of international food. We saw traditional foods of Hawaii, India, Mexico, Korea, Italy and much more and were able to enjoy a meal we each personally selected! Later, Pooja and I were able to try on an official Kimono, try to juggle with beanbags, and watch people paint with wax to make beautiful art. After this, we walked to a garden full of flowers and bonsai trees. Finally the city officials returned us to the Kelowna booth where we met

the Kuwaharas and then went home. That evening, were able to enjoy a very special past time of Mr. Kuwahara, PACHINKO! We were both very excited after several days hearing about the infamous pachinko and were not disappointed in the least!

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Miss Kelowna Pooja:

Our last day at festival, was a very memorable one. We had a delicious breakfast, departed from the Kuwahara's home early once again, and off we were!

We arrived at City Hall and walked with the officials to Chuo Park to see all the booths and then watched a very amusing arts show full of dancing, and archery! We all enjoyed the show very much and looked around the festival area where we had lunch and mingled. After relaxing for lunch, we were off to the parade! Caitlin and I were given white special white gloves for the cutting of the red ribbon to begin the parade. We cut the ribbon and accompanied the city officials and Mayor Ito in a walking parade. The spectators of our walking parade were thrilled to see us!

We walked to a designated area and sat with the Mayor Ito and city officials to watch the remainder of the Kasugai Festival Parade. This Parade was a definite highlight in the trip, seeing all the different types of floats, energy, and dance. So many people were involved! When the parade came to an end, Caitlin, Denise, and I were rushed back home to get ready for our Welcoming Party that evening.

Arriving in tiaras, matching gowns, with speeches prepared and ready for translation, we were seated in a private waiting room away from the banquet room. Eagerly waiting with butterflies filling our stomachs, we were finally called in to the beautiful ballroom. With our hearts pounding, the door to the ballroom opened: I walked in, then Caitlin, followed by Denise.

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Guests were lined up on either side of the room to see us. Their faces glowed as we walked down the isle, and the feeling of joy that filled our hearts was shown in our smiles!

We presented our speeches, received flowers, exchanged gifts, and had a toast (with orange juice off course). This was followed by an opportunity to socialize with all the lovely people! These moments are now recalled as a once in a lifetime experience. Connecting and feeling as one, was a great feeling.

The night followed with some great live Japanese music and we even joined in with some Maracas! As every occasion has an end, so did this one. Sadly leaving the people of Kasugai, we were escorted to the Kuwahara Home, tucking away the memories of the Welcoming Party forever in our hearts. What a night!

Princess Caitlin:

On our first “tourist” day we set off early in the morning with Hiro and Keiko to enjoy a full day of sight seeing in Kyoto! We rode on the subway to Nagoya where we stopped to have breakfast in a small little shop on the

platform. It was strange for Pooja and I because it was the first morning of a traditional Japanese breakfast – ramen – which is noodles! We quickly ate our breakfast, or at least tried to with chopsticks, and then waited for the bullet train. It was so exciting to step onto the bullet train knowing that you were about to travel at almost 300 kilometers per hour! It was barely noticeable when the train began traveling, as it was so smooth and soundless that it put us to sleep. However when we arrived in Kyoto we were ready for a day of tourist fun.

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We purchased bus passes for the day and then traveled to our first stop: The Golden Temple.

It was remarkable to see a temple made of real gold and the surrounding gardens were beautiful. We were able to enjoy a walk through the grounds and drink green tea in a small teahouse. We then hopped on another bus and rode all the way to one of the Emperor's Castle in the center of Kyoto. It was incredible to see this massive rock wall and immense gardens in the center of buildings and streets!

The castle itself was gorgeous and it was fascinating to read about the history of the building. Eventually, we wound our way out of the grounds and decided on some lunch! We ate what they consider Japanese Pizza and they said it was similar to ours! But it was entirely different and so it was interesting to see what they considered similar to Canadian pizza. After this, we walked down a cobble stone street full of shops and restaurants. We were able to look at stores and buy a few things as we walked towards our last stop, which

was another temple. This temple however, was high on a hill and had many different buildings spread all over the mountainside. From the top, we were able to watch a gorgeous sunset in Kyoto and take a picture with two women dressed in cultural kimonos. We then walked down the hill and through the street until we once again came back to a bus that would take us to the bullet train and then to home. That night for dinner we went to an Italian restaurant and enjoyed pizza that Pooja and I were more familiar with!

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Miss Kelowna Pooja:

The last day in Kasugai was a day full of shopping and family bonding! Yohei, Keiko, and Hiro took us shopping. Caitlin, and I were blown away with all the different sorts of treasures and great style! That evening, we bonded with family and friends. Dinner was delicious, or as they say "Oishi" as per usual. At about 1AM we watched the stars and sat down in the living room, where we exchanged gifts and had a memorable time, for the very last time. Going to sleep that night in our beds and in that home was an unusual feeling. We drifted off to sleep with the hope of one day seeing the Kuwahara's once again! The time we spent with the Kuwahara family will never be replaced.

Princess Caitlin:

The final morning of our trip in Japan was full of emotion. We were all tired and anxious to get another 13-hour flight over with but mostly we were sad. It was time for us to say goodbye to the Kuwaharas, a family that had become very special to us and are now held

with love in our hearts, and to Reina, a translator that brought much joy to comfort and us as we traveled throughout Kasugai. With a few tears and lots of smiles and hugs we parted ways and began our journey home which was full of sleep and cravings for McDonalds.

As each plane took us closer and closer to home, and the landscape changed from the dense forests of Japan to the red and yellow maple leaves of Kelowna, our hearts danced with excitement to see our families and share our memories!

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Miss Kelowna Pooja:

Stepping foot into the Kelowna Airport and seeing our parents and family made us remember our family in Japan across the globe. Now we have 2 families. One here, and one there. We will never forget the time we have spent and can never show enough appreciation for the privilege and honor we have received. Our time in Japan is not one of expressing in words, but it was a feeling, many feelings that Caitlin, Denise and I will never forget. Uniting these 2 countries, so faraway but now feeling so close, is a life-changing experience. Japan will be held closely in all of our hearts.

Once again, on behalf of Princess Caitlin, the Miss Kelowna Lady of the Lake Society and myself, thank you for this opportunity to share our memories of Japan with you. Arigatou gozaimasu!!!