

Purpose Statement:

The purposes of the Wakakusa English Program are:

- 1) To serve the people of Tamura City by teaching English and promoting cross-cultural understanding.
- 2) To advance the gospel by being a blessing of love, friendship, and service to the Japanese community.

First, Wakakusa English teachers and Assistant English Teachers serve the people of Tamura by being effective teachers of English. Teachers do not necessarily have degrees in teaching, but they work hard to develop their teaching skills so they can be as effective as possible.

Second and more importantly, as Christians, Wakakusa English teachers seek to be a blessing to the Japanese people by living lives of love, friendship, and service. This is contrasted with a more direct approach of evangelism that takes place elsewhere.

Why is English so important in Japan?

Due to its widespread international use, English has become an integral part of the Japanese educational system. By teaching English, Wakakusa English teachers are not only helping Japanese students to succeed in school, but are also equipping them with skills that will give them a competitive edge and better enable them to succeed in the future. Wakakusa English teachers and assistant teachers also offer unique opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and communication to a community that otherwise has few opportunities for such contact.

How can teaching English advance the Gospel?

The Wakakusa English Program seeks to advance the kingdom by gently and gradually gaining the respect and friendship of the people of Tamura. In Mr. Maki's view, many Western missionaries in Japan lack the patience required to build long-standing relationships of mutual trust and respect, and thus, they are sometimes too forward in their attempts to share the gospel. This inadvertently creates tension and nervousness in the hearts of people they interact with, and can place a stumbling block in the way of them hearing the Gospel.

By way of contrast, the work of a Wakakusa English teacher can best be described as cultivating work or a "ministry of presence." Just as soil must be patiently prepared before any seed can be effectively sown, much gentle work must be done in peoples' hearts before the work of evangelism can begin to take root. Mr. Maki's hope for the Wakakusa English Program is that, through years of interaction and relationships with genuine, loving Christians, people's hearts will gradually become open to hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, and Christianity will finally begin to take hold and flourish in Japan. Currently, the percentage of Christians in Japan is only around 1-2% of the population, so we consider this a special opportunity and a chance to make a long-term impact.