ASHINAGA
Interning Abroad in Japan

Monica Magalhaes ‘17
My Role

- At Ashinaga, my role was to offer educational and emotional support to the orphans whom I prefer to refer to as my students/friends.

- I taught English in private lessons and in group lessons. The private lessons were more individualized to what the student specifically wanted to practice. The group lessons were themed into music, theatre, etc. in which they practiced English through song, role plays, games, and more. They were all university level students with different levels of fluency: beginner, intermediate, advanced.
The organization had interns from all around the world: Europe, North America, Africa, Asia. So we decided to also give lessons on the different cultures we live in. We wanted our students to see beyond Japan, to *broaden their horizons*.

We also helped high school students during “tsudois” (summer camps) which Ashinaga holds during the summertime. We worked alongside our university students during these camps and you truly witnessed the beauty of Ashinaga’s goal of *orphans helping orphans*. 
Cultural Day
Iwate Tsudoi

MORE THAN FRIENDS
WE ARE FAMILY!
Most Rewarding Aspect

- The *Iwate Tsudoi* was the most rewarding aspect of the internship for me. The high school students were a lot shyer than my university students. Their English also wasn’t very strong. But, through gestures and with an energetic attitude, I was able to share laughs and tears with my students, offering comforting hugs which they seemed to open up to quickly. **Breaking that language barrier** was very rewarding!
Another Rewarding Aspect

- I would also have to say that visiting Tohoku, the area where the earthquake/tsunami hit in Japan was very impactful. Hearing stories from survivors and seeing the Miracle Pine tree was very memorable.
Miracle Pine Tree
The Impact of My Experience

- I really enjoyed the *mentor* position I held and I enjoyed creating strong friendships with my students. I still Skype them! I know I want to pursue a career in which I am working with individuals daily. I also know that I want to pursue a career that allows me to be creative. I enjoyed creating personalized lesson plans this summer.
Cultural Awareness

- Through this internship, I was also able to indulge in Japanese culture. I attended a traditional Japanese tea ceremony where David Beckham attended previously. I spent an overnight trip at a temple practicing zazen with Buddhist monks. I watched a traditional Noh Theatre performance. I practiced kendo. I visited the ancient capital of Japan, Kyoto for a while.

- I truly saw how respectful the culture is and how beautiful the traditions are. The way of life was so different. I loved everything about Japan!