



October 31, 2013

Hino Academy, MSCC Tech Center Students Enjoy Cultural Exchange

Forty students and staff members of the Hino Technical Skills Academy of Tokyo, Japan, visited Mid-South Community College recently for what has become an annual highlight of the fall semester.

“It was an amazing event, and I’m already looking forward to next year,” said Robin Allen, MSCC Workforce Success Counselor who helped organize and coordinate the visit. “It was a great opportunity for our students and our college, and everyone really enjoyed it. A lot of people worked very hard to make this a wonderful success.”

MSCC students greeted the visitors with “dog tags” made by MSCC machining students and staff, and they presented other gifts later in the afternoon. The visitors also received MSCC logo shirts, student-made origami picture frames, and a variety of other gifts and goodies.

The Hino Technical Skills Academy officials received a plaque and picture commemorating the event, with Kentarou Yamagishi, HTSA General Manager, accepting the gift. Allen presented gifts to the other HTSA representatives as well. Hino students and staff honored MSCC with a special gift also.





Soon after their arrival, Hino students performed a detailed and entertaining march in front of the Workforce Technology Center.

Following the performance, the visitors participated in brief tours of the WTC and Marion Berry Renewable Energy Center before gathering in that building's meeting room for snacks, presentations, gift exchanges, and cultural exchange/socialization.

MSCC students said they enjoyed meeting with their counterparts from Japan.

"It was great," wrote Jonathan Bailey of Marion, a second-year Machining student in post-event survey. "Thanks for letting them come to MSCC, and thanks for letting me participate."

Denipher Killingbeck of West Memphis, another second-year Machining student, said she enjoyed getting to know the HSTA students and learning about their culture. "Even though we're from completely different places and our culture is so different, we're so much alike. I loved being a part of this."

Josie Parker of Hughes, a first-year student in the Medical Professions program, said she enjoyed "learning how to communicate with somebody of a different language by speaking, gesturing, and writing."

Alexis Griggs of Marion, a first-year Computer Engineering student, described the visitors as “very precious people. I am so grateful for this amazing experience, and I thank my teachers for allowing me this opportunity. I want to do it again!”

Gary Henderson of West Memphis, a first-year machining student, summed up his positive experience by writing, “Let’s go to Japan!”

Each school selected 34 students to participate in the event. MSCC Technical Center students from West Memphis, Marion, and Earle high schools were recommended by their instructors based on their overall attitude toward their education, work ethics in class, and attendance.



Hikari Toba and Kynivieya Donnerson enjoy the event

In addition to Bailey, Killingbeck, Parker, Griggs, and Henderson, Technical Center participants included Chris Rowland, Earle High School; Euri Aldridge, Dequan Andrews, Jarred Barksdale, Joshua Key, Quantavious McKenzie, Wesley Nabors, and Desany Perry, Marion School; and Paige Busby, Breona Carter, Darla Clem, Kynvieya Donnerson, Maleek Dotson, Kaitlyn Hinson, John Holloway, Allison King, Aaliyah Lemons, Jaylen Moore, Chloe Pennington, Destinee Razor, Areba Ross, Ashley Smith, Tyissha Stanton, Keona Stinson, Kenny Suggs, Kayla Valentine, Ashleigh Wallace, Lawton Warren, and Mason Zhao, West Memphis High School.

Allen and others met with the MSCC students several times during September to help prepare them for the Hino visit.

For the first meeting, Japanese interpreters from the Hino Motors Manufacturing facility in West Memphis came to the MSCC campus to familiarize students with their country. Masako K. Mayes, Human Resources and General Affairs Manager; Miho Ponnath, Human Resources Specialist; Junko Hatashita, Human Resources Specialist;

and Tres' Goodman helped students learn about Japanese culture, language, and traditions.

“They even showed our students a cool Japanese dance which was so fun and exciting.” Allen said. “We also had the chance to make origami craft which helped the students make picture frames for their partners from Japan.”

Interpreter Janitha Robinson came the second week to reinforce the language and culture while relating some her experiences while living in Japan.

At another meeting, students received additional information about their guests and downloaded a Japanese translator on their phones. They polished their presentation and made final preparations at the last gathering.

Mid-South and the Hino Technical Skills Academy have collaborated on students visits for several years. MSCC officials toured HTSA in September 2005, and Japanese students have made almost yearly visits to the MSCC campus since that time. Mid-South sent student and staff representatives to Japan in 2009.

The Skills Academy, established in 1951, builds on the spirit, tradition and passion of Japanese craftsmen. Trainees who complete the three-year course are allocated to various plants and manufacturing sites.

In addition to the HTSA collaboration, Hino Motors Manufacturing has been a generous contributor to MSCC workforce development efforts since locating in Crittenden County.

To find out about cultural exchange and technical education and training opportunities at MSCC, visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway, West Memphis, call (870) 733-6722, email admissions@midsouthcc.edu, or see the website at www.midsouthcc.edu.

