

## Beyond language

“I don’t want to go to school.” This is what I had been thinking for a couple of months after moving to Michigan, each time the sun showed up in the east horizon. I had just moved from Japan to an English speaking country, and I was scared and sad because I could understand none of what people were saying and they could not understand me either. Day by day, my self-esteem was lowering, contrary to my anxiety. But one day in September, the gears started turning inside of me; it was this one day in band class that lubricated my rusty pistons and rotors. The tact has been brought down on beat one of my fulfilling life in the United States.

While I was in Japan, I used to play the alto horn in the school marching band. However, because they did not have an alto horn in Michigan, I chose to play the baritone, an instrument slightly bigger in size but looks similar to alto horn, instead. When the new music was passed out, I was not yet familiar with the instrument, but I did my best to blow the horn. After I finished playing, not only the band director but all of my classmates were amazed at my musical talents, which I did not know I had. In the barrage of applause, I could not help myself but to smile. This was the first time that I came to think that I could survive in this unfamiliar environment only with a talent that gains other people’s respect and attention, even without a communication tool. As a result of this, I have made a ton of new friends and even got a chance

to talk with many people who we did not know well. Moreover, this made me work harder to become a better baritone player, and in 2014 I got accepted to the Michigan All-State Middle School Band at last.

Furthermore, running made me pick up the pace to get along with my friends and make more friends simultaneously. I used to compete with my friends in Japan who the fastest runner is, therefore leaving everybody in my gym class behind and finishing first in the time trial was not that hard for me. In eighth grade, I broke the school record of the one mile run; every one started talking to me as if I were a hero, and it was the best feeling I have ever had in my entire running career so far. I still cannot explain how I felt when I saw my name on the school records board. It was very interesting to find out that the things which I had been building up in Japan by working hard steadily come in handy at unexpected times.

Through these two big events during the life in Michigan, I have learned that an ability to speak fluent English is always welcomed and preferred, but not required to have. Though I only had two weapons to break down the language barrier, I was able to blossom my talents even more beautifully and lifefully with the support and kind words of my friends as well as my teachers and my parents. I truly think that I could not have done it without them. I regained my confidence and that is when my English started to climb a waterfall and eventually skyrocket.

Now that I am back in Japan, I want to try my hardest to improve my English even further.

Though it is hard to do so without a source of English available twenty-four hours a day, I know

it is possible to accomplish by taking a different approach that people would not usually take. I

want to be able to speak, listen, read and write English so I can do researches in science in a

school or an institute in the United States in the future. I will keep running towards my dream

under any circumstances. Ready, set, GO! [666 words]