

**Seward, Alaska and Obihiro, Japan**  
**Sister City Cooking Exchange March 2023**

Report by Deputy City Clerk Kris Peck

Over the course of February 2023, I helped facilitate a cooking Zoom exchange between Seward High School students and Japanese students in our sister city of Obihiro. The premise was that our students would attempt the traditional Japanese recipes of Butadon and Chan-Chan Yaki while the Japanese students would tackle macaroni & cheese and salmon burgers.

The cooking itself was to be completed ahead of time and documented with photos and videos. During the Zoom meeting the students would discuss their experience and share the multimedia content within the meeting. In Seward, the culinary arts class of 16 students were all interested in participating. Meanwhile, over in Japan were two students Soichiro and Naoki who signed up for the cooking challenge.

My Sister City contact in Japan is Chris and he is the Coordinator for International Relations. The 18-hour time difference was certainly a challenge to coordinate a Zoom meeting because there was no overlap when our students and their students would be in school at the same time. We agreed on Wednesday, March 1st at 3:30 pm Alaska Time which would be 9:30 a.m. the following day in Japan.

The Seward culinary arts teacher Mr. Williams anticipated that only a couple students would be able to stay late after school to participate in the exchange. When I arrived at the high school, I was surprised to see around 10 students gathered in the class and the whole room was bustling with excitement. The classroom featured a large TV monitor mounted to the wall which was perfect for the Zoom meeting. Chris was the master of ceremonies and also helped with translating. Not every Seward student was able to stay the full hour and a few respectfully excused themselves at 4 p.m.

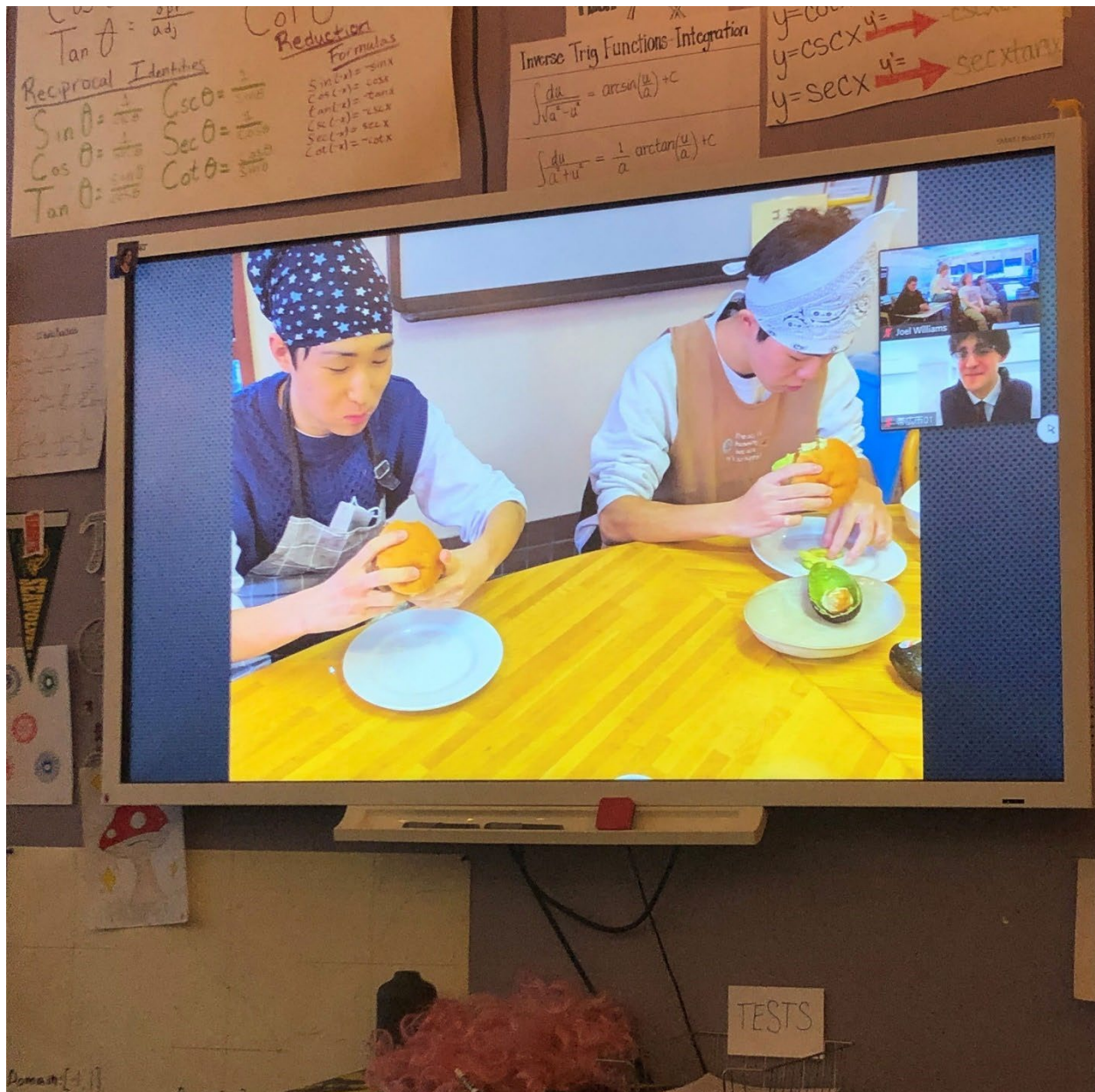
For the cooking exchange, Seward volunteered to go first and share their experience of making Butadon. According to the Obihiro handout this pork bowl is, *“one of the most popular local specialty foods in Obihiro. It’s usually served with well-grilled sliced pork on a bowl of rice. The slices of pork are grilled with lots of sauce that has rich flavor with a slight sweetness.”*

The Seward teacher shared his computer screen on Zoom and selected highlights from their Butadon photo collection while the students narrated the experience. There was much laughter among the Seward students as they reviewed their own photos. The general consensus was the students enjoyed the pork bowl and would likely make Butadon again at home. Due to issues finding ingredients, the Chan-Chan Yaki (Miso flavored steamed salmon with veggies) was not attempted.

Next, the Obihiro students presented their photos of the salmon burgers as well as the macaroni & cheese. The Seward students were impressed by their level of cooking professionalism, the restaurant grade kitchen, and the tiny oven used to cook the macaroni.

After the Obihiro presentation had concluded to a round of applause, the meeting was opened up to questions and comments. The Seward students gave them high praise for their efforts of crafting the salmon patties from scratch as well attention to detail on the macaroni & cheese. The Obihiro students said they preferred the salmon burgers by a wide margin compared to the macaroni & cheese. Next the Obihiro students were encouraged to give an honest opinion of Seward’s Butadon attempt, and the Seward class erupted in cheers when they received a perfect “10 out of 10.” Overall, it was a fun and memorable event for all the students and everyone hoped to do another cooking exchange again in the near future.

Seward, Alaska and Obihiro, Japan  
Sister City Cooking Exchange March 2023



Main Zoom window: The two Obihiro students Soichiro and Naoki taste their salmon burgers.  
Upper thumbnail window: The Seward students watching the presentation.  
Lower thumbnail window: Chris in Obihiro.

**Seward, Alaska and Obihiro, Japan  
Sister City Cooking Exchange March 2023**

2023 Sister City High School Student Exchange: Cooking Event Online Schedule

Date/Time: [Alaska Time] March 1, 2023 3:30 p.m.

[Japan Time] March 2, 2023 9:30 a.m.

Participants: Seward High School Culinary Class students (1-4)

Obihiro Volunteer Students (2)

Staff from both cities

Location: Online (Zoom)

Time	Activity	Explanation/Notes
3:30	Opening words Organizer introductions Student self introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The organizers for the event (Chris A. and Aki S. from Obihiro, the teachers/supervisors from Seward) will say hello to everyone and introduce themselves.</li> <li>● Chris A. will be the MC throughout the event.</li> <li>● Students will give their name, age, their favorite class, food, and animal. They can add any info they would like.</li> </ul>
3:40	Ice breaker game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will play a simple game of Cats vs. Dogs.</li> <li>● Rules: The game starts with 2 items: cats and dogs. The first player will chose which they like better. Then they will say an item (thing, animal, person, anything) to replace the one they didn't chose. They can also give a reason why if they would like to. The next player choses between those two and the game continues until everyone has gone once.</li> <li>● The game can be played 2 or 3 times</li> </ul>
3:50	Cooking explanation – Seward Cooking explanation - Obihiro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The organizers/students will use Zoom to share the pictures/videos they took of the food they made. While showing the pictures, the students will talk about what they did. For example, the cooking process, the scents, comments on the ingredients, things that surprised them, the flavor, mistakes, things the food reminded them of, etc.</li> <li>● After the presentation, the students from the other city will give comments and ask questions and they can have a small conversation.</li> <li>● First Seward will present, then Obihiro will present.</li> </ul>
4:15	General QA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students can ask each other any questions they'd like about each other, each other's countries, cultures, etc.</li> <li>●</li> </ul>
4:30	Finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The MC will wrap up the event and the students can say goodbye to each other. The students are encouraged to share email addresses to keep in contact</li> </ul>