

Yamanouchi Municipal Higashi Elementary School, Grade 6

Yamanouchi-Only Stamp Rally: Discovering and Sharing Our Hometown

The sixth graders at Yamanouchi Higashi Elementary School have participated in many local learning experiences over the years – from growing apples and cultivating Yukishiro-Mai rice to performing music on the kokarina, a local wooden instrument. As the culmination of their learning, they took on an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project under the theme “For Yamanouchi Town.” Their shared goal was to let more people know about the wonderful things Yamanouchi has to offer. This led to the planning and creation of a special project: a local stamp rally that highlights the charm of Yamanouchi.

Fieldwork and Shifting Perspectives

The project began with students heading into town on foot, visiting tourist attractions, natural areas, and local shops. They mapped out what they saw and rediscovered the appeal of their hometown. However, they soon hit a big question: “Who are we making this stamp rally for?”

After watching video messages from alumni and hearing from tourists, they realized that many visitors come seeking healing, hot springs, and nature. This helped them see that they needed to consider the needs and interests of others, not just their own ideas. That shift in perspective became the driving force behind their improved design.

Teamwork and Creative Planning

The students divided into six groups, each with a specific role:

- **Tourism Group**
Selected stamp locations and made promotional posters. With help from translation software and an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT), they also created English-language versions for international visitors.
- **Gourmet Group**
Focused on local restaurants and introduced popular dishes in both Japanese and English. They used illustrations and colorful designs to make the content user-friendly for both kids and foreign tourists.
- **Nature Group**

Highlighted the beauty of Shiga Kogen and other natural areas using photo-based posters. With help from a classmate fluent in Chinese, they even added information in Chinese.

- Stamp Group

Created handmade rubber stamps with designs representing each location. For the handles, they used locally sourced wood from the school. They also added chains to prevent the stamps from getting lost and tested ink quality and durability.

- Prize Group

Designed wooden keychains as prizes, burning decorative patterns into them and carefully sanding the corners for a smooth feel. The goal was to let visitors take home a memory of the town.

- Layout Group

Designed the stamp rally cards and maps, incorporating local landscapes into the background. They coordinated with the Tourism and Gourmet groups to include multilingual text and QR codes.



From Planning to Real-World Impact

Each group shared progress and exchanged ideas while receiving advice from the local tourism office. Their final product, the Yamanouchi-Only Memory Stamp Rally, was launched on December 1, 2023 and was actually put into use in town and enjoyed by both locals and tourists alike.



Looking to the Future

Through this project, students experienced the joy and responsibility of researching, expressing, and sharing their hometown's appeal. They learned the importance of communicating with empathy and considering their audience's perspective. As they continue to grow, they carry with them a strong sense of pride in Yamanouchi and a desire to take initiative, fostering the skills and mindset needed to help build a more sustainable society.