

Oki High School Improvement Program Utilizing the Geopark

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In February 2015, five Oki High School students went to Saint Mary Mackillop College in Canberra, Australia. We studied English, helped in Japanese classes and as part of a cultural exchange presented on our home, the Oki Islands and the Geopark. We demonstrated the rich cultural heritage of the Oki Islands and its contrast to big city Osaka and Tokyo life. We showed the everyday life of Oki Islanders; their jobs, the food they eat and their relation to the environment. We also demonstrated the cultural history of Oki and how it was related to its unique location as an island in the Sea of Japan. For example, the fact that every village in Oki has its own festivals and traditions is due to Oki's mountainous interior and the historical isolation of the villages.

We also demonstrated the fascinating natural history of the Oki Islands. We showed the geological evolution of the Oki Islands from their formation and break from mainland Japan as well as the biological history of the islands. This is visible today in popular sightseeing places in Oki. Finally, we showed the importance of the Geopark in the Oki Islands and how it combines cultural and natural history to show the vibrant community that Oki is today.