

## Endeavor 2017 Participants



**Minako Arakawa** Ueda High School, Nagano Prefecture

Minako entered a foster care group home when she was seven years old. She joined BEYOND Tomorrow as a high school sophomore, and it turned out to be the richest year of her life. Though her time at the program has been short, she knows she has changed for the better, having had the opportunity build friendships with peers who can discuss important topics that normally do not surface in every day life. Having benefited from many adults who have supported her and helped her grow into her own skin, she hopes to be an empowering force for others. Her goal is to work not just in Japan but also abroad, reaching out to those struggling with poverty or in need of social supports. To realize this dream, she is hoping to study international relations or social development in university.



**Meia Iida** Nagano Nishi High School, Nagano Prefecture

Meia lost her mother to suicide at a young age and entered the foster care system. Because of this experience, she feels that she has a unique ability to connect with children who are victims of abuse or domestic conflicts, offering realistic strategies to ease some of their concerns. Meia is involved in her high school's international education department, giving English presentations about the realities of the foster care system, and she is passionate about international exchanges as well, visiting Taiwan and Australia. She wants to dedicate her life to creating a "home" for children. To do so, she will pursue psychology in university.



**Reina Sadohira** Honjo High School, Miyazaki Prefecture

Reina's experiences of taking care of her younger siblings growing up spawned her love for children, and she is now hoping to become a childcare worker. After graduating from high school, she aims to get a certificate in childcare so that she can work in a foster care group home or nursery. She hopes to be someone who can connect with children by listening to their stories and nurture their growth. When she heard about the BEYOND Tomorrow Endeavour program, she applied because she wanted to challenge herself to become a better version of herself, able to speak her mind and communicate her opinions. She hopes that her year with the program will be filled with laughter and growth.



**Jerome Takizawa** Nagoya Commercial High School, Nagoya City

When Jerome was in grade school, he was suddenly separated from his parents, and in the midst of confusion, was placed into a foster care group home. But now, he has a better grasp of what happened, and through his admiration for the group home staff who always listened with a sincere heart and encouraged him to develop his own opinions, Jerome also hopes work in a foster care group home in the future. Though child abuse and neglect is increasing every year, this reality is not publicized widely. The administration must place more of an effort in tackling this critical issue. After graduating from high school, Jerome wants to study social welfare in university so that he can get certified as a social worker or a childcare worker.



**Naoki Nishida** Kyoto Shoei High School

Naoki was placed into a foster care group home when he was in fourth grade. While living here, he was moved by the various and tragic situations that the other children had witnessed, and he developed an interest in politics and public administration so that he can play a role in solving these issues. But he wants to work in an actionable way, where he can concretely do something for other people, and as such, he hopes to pursue studies in law while in university. He is working part-time to pay for the entrance fees whilst studying, always keeping his dream in sight.



**Mayuko Hase** Hiratsuka Gakuen High School

Mayuko lost her beloved mother in middle school, and she was placed into a foster care group home with her siblings. The pain of her mother's death was brutal, but it forced Mayuko and her siblings to grow stronger, and they realized their mother's philosophy of "self care." Inspired by her mother who was fluent in English, Mayuko hopes to become an interpreter so that she can connect people from different cultures and languages. She also has an interest in tackling child poverty in developing countries. Through BEYOND Tomorrow, she is looking forward to engaging in discussions with others who have similarly suffered great losses, helping her gain a larger perspective of the world and become a more agile thinker.



Takaharu Fukuzawa Aoyama High School, Tokyo

Due to financial difficulties at home, Takaharu moved to Southeast Asia during middle school and spent two years unable to go to school. But driven by a strong desire to keep going to school, he came back to Japan on his own, lived in a foster care group home and attended night classes to finish middle school, eventually graduating into high school. He eventually wants to be a theoretical astrophysicist, seeking to unmask hitherto unknown truths. He also wants to be involved in building educational opportunities in developing countries. He joined BEYOND Tomorrow when he entered high school, and it has become a crucial, nuclear existence in his life. Moving forward, he hopes to be a strong support for other program participants, spreading the word of its extraordinary opportunities.



Sho Fujimoto Kuki Hokuyo High School, Saimata Prefecture

As a victim of bullying during his time in a foster care group home, Sho decided that, when he grows up, he will serve as a support for other children who suffer similar experiences. It is because he experienced bullying, he realized that the answer is not to inflict that pain on others, but to stop bullying altogether. His dream is to eventually work in a foster care group home, after getting a license in education during university. Driven by his additional interests in social welfare, Sho volunteered in elder care during middle school. His hobbies include soccer, which he has played since middle school. Through BEYOND Tomorrow, he is looking forward to meeting different types of people, hearing about their experiences, and building a deep connection with them.