

## Japan Future Scholarship Program 2018 Participants



**Sayaka Arata** College of Policy Science, Ritsumeikan University (Graduate of Osaka Gakugei High School)

Sayaka lost her mother at a young age, and she grew up in a foster care group home since elementary school. When she was in middle school, she vowed to go to college, and since that time, she threw herself into her studies, night and day. As her goal is to work in international development, she is hoping to volunteer abroad while during her undergraduate years. Sayaka thought for a long time that her challenging childhood would prevent her from realizing her dreams. But after participating in BEYOND Tomorrow for a year, she realized that she does indeed hold the power to overcome obstacles and achieve her dreams. BEYOND Tomorrow is not just a home for Sayaka, but is also an educational haven, where she knows she will never stop learning. With BEYOND Tomorrow, Sayaka has gained the confidence to pursue her dreams fearlessly.



**Honoka Inamura** Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University (Graduate of Miyagi Gakuin High School)

Honoka lost her childhood home in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Not having a place to go home to, she felt lost and alone in the world. Honoka still keenly feels the loss of her home, memories, and childhood, but she sees all that she has gained from these painful experiences: friends, courage, strength, and compassion for those less privileged. During high school, she spent a year in Bolivia, and she was struck by the abject poverty she witnessed there. She then went to New York with BEYOND Tomorrow, which inspired her to dedicate herself to tackling poverty. With BEYOND Tomorrow, she is able to put her true self forward – one that includes both her powerless and inspired sides. Honoka hopes to gain the ability to approach problems in a multifaceted fashion.



**Shinichi Utsunomiya** Faculty of Business Administration, Nanzan University (Graduate of Kure Mitsuta High School, Hiroshima Prefecture)

The challenging experience of being raised in a single mother household and never having known his father weighed heavily on Shinichi, often preventing him from pursuing his goals and causing him to give up on his dreams. To break free from the shackles of his fatherless childhood, he decided to throw himself into his studies. During his junior year of high school, he joined BEYOND Tomorrow, where he learned how to express his feelings to others with sincerity, and it became a life-transforming experience for him. In the future, Shinichi hopes to be an entrepreneur. Besides running a company, he hopes to run an organization like BEYOND Tomorrow that helps children who are growing up in challenging family situations like he did.



**Ran Ota** DNA Course, Tokyo College of Biotechnology (Graduate of Agricultural High School, Hyogo Prefecture)

Ran spent her childhood years as a victim of abuse, but eventually she was protected and transitioned to a foster care group home as a high schooler. When she left her family, she resolved to blaze her own path and follow it with determination. Until that point, she had never proactively done anything, but this was the time when she would choose her own path and forge forward. Ran lost her beloved grandmother to diabetes when she was in middle school. Through this experience, she decided to enter a vocational school to study genetic engineering so that she can engage in the pharmaceutical development of medications to treat genetic disorders. Ran is excited to participate in BEYOND Tomorrow because she sees it as a place where she will grow and shine.



**Yuriko Okabayashi** Faculty of Economics, Kagawa University (Graduate of Tosa High School)

Yuriko grew up in a single mother household because her father passed away when she was still a child. Watching her mother work tirelessly while supporting her younger brother, who became rebellious and violent, was extremely painful. Yuriko thought that she may be the only one who is struggling through circumstances like this. But when she read about the experiences of the students in BEYOND Tomorrow, how they were forging forward despite challenging situations, tears came to her eyes. Their spark of life almost hid the painful pasts they carried; Yuriko saw how they supported each other and pursued their dreams, and was motivated to change her own way of thinking. She wanted to show her brother a new self, the joy of learning, and the value in growing by working with others. She is pursuing a degree in economics at university, and in the future, her dream is to one day contribute to her home prefecture of Kochi through regional revitalization.



**Takafumi Oyama** Faculty of Economics, Yamaguchi University (Graduate of Matsuyama Kita High School Nakajima Branch, Ehime Prefecture)

Takafumi was born into an orange farming family on a remote island in Ehime prefecture. Ever since his father committed suicide when Takafumi was still in elementary school, he grew up supporting his mother, who had a limited command of Japanese language, and his own education by delivering newspapers. He felt that island life was too small for him; he yearned to see more of the world. He thus joined BEYOND Tomorrow as a high schooler, and the new encounters and experiences there opened his eyes. In 2017, Takafumi took a year off university to be in his mother's home country, the Philippines, doing an internship to help administer English language programs. Having witnessed Asian countries' vitality, Takafumi now hopes to engage in business and help boost the status of Japan in the world.



**Wataru Kanno** Faculty of Science and Technology, Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology (Graduate of Katoh Gakuen High School)

Wataru was placed into the foster care system immediately after birth and grew up in a foster care group home. There were many days when he wondered why he was not able to live with his biological parents, but he soon realized that he was able to pursue his goals thanks to the staff at the group home, who always cared for him with kindness, even though sometimes with strict discipline. Wataru nearly gave up on going to university because of financial constraints. But he followed through because he wanted to chase his dreams of designing and building rescue robots that can play a role during natural disasters. Since joining BEYOND Tomorrow, Wataru has been continually inspired by his peers who continue to move forward despite their struggles. He also feels that he has grown since joining the program; people around him tell him that he carries a new spark in his eyes.



**Naruka Kioi** Department of English Studies for Careers, Kyoto Junior College of Foreign Languages (Graduate of Edogawa High School, Tokyo)

Naruka grew up in a single father family, where her father showered her with love. But in sixth grade, her father passed away. Her older brother was in high school at the time, but fearing that the siblings would be separated, he dropped out of school to care for the small, young family. Naruka is deeply grateful for his sacrifice. Though she was not able to live life with abandon like her friends, which was tough at times, now she recognizes that she had some wonderful experiences. She decided to enter university because she dreams to some day tackle issues of poverty and education in developing countries. She wants to be someone who can inspire children living in challenging circumstances to believe that anything is truly possible if we just take that first step forward.



**Masumi Koiwa** Faculty of Administration and Social Sciences, Fukushima University (Graduate of Toryo High School, Iwate Prefecture)

Masumi grew up in a single father household. After the Great East Japan Earthquake, she visited her mother's home country, the Philippines, while worrying about the financial difficulties her family was facing. She was deeply moved by the sight of young children working on the streets, and when she came back to Japan, she left her high school and transferred into a distance-learning school. She worked a part-time job every day to save up money to go to university, and finally enrolled into a night class university program. In the future, she wants to work to help the underprivileged find educational opportunities outside of the traditional school system. BEYOND Tomorrow holds an extremely special place in Masumi's heart. It is a place where she discovered friends who continually inspire her, a place where she learned about others' experiences, and a place where she is encouraged to dream big and discover herself.



**Ayano Goto** Morioka Junior College, Iwate Prefectural University (Graduate of Fukuoka High School, Iwate Prefecture)

Ayano's parents divorced due to her father's violent tendencies. In a single mother household, they struggled financially, at times unable to put food on the table. But because she had these experiences, Ayano feels that she has learned the resilience to blaze her own path even when faced with a challenge, the strength to keep standing, and the kindness to embrace others. Learning that many children are unable to pursue their dreams because of the circumstances they were born into in a country like the Philippines, Ayano aspires to be a source of support for children like them. By participating in BEYOND Tomorrow, she wants to learn practical skills of working abroad, understand what the unmet needs are in developing countries, and explore how she can play a role in combatting poverty.



**Ryuki Sasaki** Faculty of Liberal Arts, Tohoku Gakuin University (Graduate of Ofunato High School, Iwate Prefecture)

Ryuki lost his father, grandparents, and house in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. The tsunami also swept away his friends and so many things he had cherished. But he realized that what he can do as a survivor was to live life to its fullest, and not just his own, but also the lives that were lost. Driven by this realization, he continued to pursue his passion for baseball and even entered the national tournament. In the future, Ryuki hopes to work in disaster prevention, continuing to speak with others about his own disaster experience and the importance of disaster preparedness. Through participating in BEYOND Tomorrow, Ryuki realized that his disaster experience is not a demerit, but in fact a great asset in furthering efforts to increase disaster preparedness. He believes that he has been able to discover his own potential through discussions with his peers and reflecting on how he can contribute to the world.



**Miku Shishido** School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University (Graduate of Waseda University Honjo Senior High School)

Miku lost her beloved mother when she was in middle school. In the throes of adolescence, she was unable to appreciate her mother's kindness, for which she felt tremendous guilt. Before she could emotionally catch up with her mother's accelerating illness, her mother passed away. This was the hardest experience of her life. Thinking about how hard her mother fought to stay alive, Miku threw herself to her studies to make her mother proud. This was when she discovered that she can create her own ambitions and pursue them. The experience of losing her mother has taught her compassion, allowing her to understand others' pain. She believes that by joining BEYOND Tomorrow, she will not only be able to talk about her own past and reflect on it, but also be able to hear her peers' painful experiences that are different from hers. Through these discussions, Miku hopes to become a stronger person.



**Hirobumi Suzuki** Radiological Course, Chuoh College of Medical Technology (Graduate of Fuji High School, Tokyo)

Hirobumi entered a foster care group home as a high school junior. It was a very painful experience, but he believes that because of this struggle, he now appreciates the importance of family and human connection. His life experiences cultivated his interest in medicine, and he decided to pursue a career as a radiology technician. Joining BEYOND Tomorrow as a high school senior was a turning point in his life, and he has since been inspired to see more of and do more in the world. BEYOND Tomorrow is his second family, where he can exchange ideas with friends and where he can have his thoughts heard. Moving forward, he wants to help future participants grow, just as he was able to.



**Mizuki Takahashi** Miyako Higher Institute of Nursing, Iwate Prefecture (Graduate of Kuji Higashi High School, Iwate Prefecture)

Mizuki's parents divorced when Mizuki was still young, and her father passed away afterwards. Living with financial constraints, she learned to give up things she wanted to do. In sophomore year of high school, as she was trying to decide between going to university or finding a job, she joined BEYOND Tomorrow. She encountered friends who were shining brightly despite challenges they had encountered, and she felt ashamed of her moping self and felt very small. Inspired by her peers, she resolved to pursue her dreams. She now wants to become a midwife and solve issues surrounding childbirth in her hometown. She strongly feels that BEYOND Tomorrow is a beautiful place that welcomes those who have overcome obstacles and are interested in listening to the feelings and struggles of others. She also hopes to be someone who can lend a hand to others.



**Raku Tsubouchi** School of Foreign Studies, Osaka University (Graduate of Imabari Nishi High School, Ehime Prefecture)

Raku was born and spent her childhood in Canada. Her Canadian father and Japanese mother divorced, and Raku returned to Japan with her mother and siblings. It was a very tough transition, holding many warm memories of Canada, but she always planned to go back to Canada someday and see her father. Wanting to pursue a career in international development in developing countries, she hopes to study international cooperation in university. She also hopes to learn Spanish in addition to English so that she can work to directly address the needs of the local people in need. Through BEYOND Tomorrow, she hopes to participate in activities both domestically and abroad to continue pursuing her dreams.



Naoki Nishida Faculty of Law, Osaka Gakuin University (Graduate of Kyoto Shoei High School)

Naoki was placed into a foster care group home after losing his mother in grade school. It was a very difficult experience, but because he knew what it meant to be in pain, he was able to be kind to others and grew to have a positive outlook. Living in foster care, he didn't know of anyone who had graduated from a four-year university, so he was prepared to forego university and start working. But he was inspired to learn about politics and the government, so he decided to pursue university. He delved into entrance examination preparations whilst working a part-time job to save money. In the future, he wants to realize a society that is formed from the bottom up: one that reflects social changes stemming from the concerns raised from the vulnerable.



Mirai Hagiwara Faculty of Human Development and Culture, Fukushima University (Graduate of Shibukawa Girl's High School, Gunma Prefecture)

Mirai's father committed suicide when she was a high school senior. When she was forced to face her father's death and life, she gained a perspective that she never had before. Though her childhood dream was to be a civil servant to secure a stable life, she decided that she would like her career to be something she likes to do. In that vein, she is now pursuing a career in singing and music education. Mirai applied to join BEYOND Tomorrow when she was inspired by the idea of interacting with peers who bring a rich history of experiences, working together to find their role in society and pursue their passions. After joining BEYOND Tomorrow, she was able to talk about her background to other people for the first time, and thanks to this experience, she feels that she now has a more positive outlook than before.



Mayuko Hase College of Literature, Aoyama Gakuin University (Graduate of Hiratsuka Gakuen High School)

When Mayuko lost her beloved mother in middle school, she and her siblings applied to and entered a foster care group home. Losing her mother was devastating, but she and her siblings grew up faster for it, and she also realized the importance of "caring for yourself," which is something her mother would have wanted her to learn. Though she initially did not consider going to university, she was inspired by her mother's English proficiency. Mayuko decided that she wanted to become an interpreter and applied to enter university. Through BEYOND Tomorrow, Mayuko hopes to meet a lot of people, gain a deeper understanding of society's problems, expand her perspective, and grow to become an interpreter who can connect people in a way that transcends culture or language.



Asami Hamakawa Faculty of Letter, Konan University (Graduate of Suita Higashi high school, Osaka)

Asami's mother committed suicide when Asami was in sixth grade. Guided by the words "God gives challenges only to those already determined to have the strength to overcome," Asami kept facing forward in the days after the tragedy. From this experience, she felt that she wants to impart joy to others through the power of words and plans to become a teacher of Japanese language and literature. While in university, she hopes to not only delve into her core studies, but also study abroad in an English-speaking country and learn more about cultures that differ from Japan's. Asami applied to BEYOND Tomorrow because she hoped to find friends who also understood the pain of losing family. She sees her participation in the program as her first step forward – after spending long years fearful of starting her journey.



Daigo Machinaka Faculty of Law, Tohoku Gakuin University (Graduate of Kurosawajiri Kita High School, Iwate Prefecture)

Daigo lost his mother when he was in elementary school and his younger sister in middle school. These were the most difficult experiences of his life. But when he sees them again, he wants to tell them that he not only has lived his own life to the fullest, but also that of his sister, who was able to live for only 13 short years. As such, he vowed to live life facing forward. After going to the United States with BEYOND Tomorrow, he was frustrated at his own inability to speak English. He thus devoted himself to learning English and studying international affairs. In the future, he wants to work as a reporter for a television or newspaper company so that he can tell the world about Tohoku, and conversely tell Tohoku about the world, serving as the connection between Tohoku and the world.



Emiri Matsufuji Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kochi University (Graduate of Kochi Commercial High School, Kochi City)

Emiri participated in a high school project to help build a school in Laos, thus engaging in a relationship between Kochi prefecture and Laos. From this experience, she was inspired to serve a role to bridge Japan with the world. Growing up in a single mother household, financial constraints forced Emiri to give up on academic and extracurricular activities a number of times. However, Emiri decided not to dash her own chances of pursuing her dreams; instead of using her family situation as an excuse, she wanted to stay true to herself, and applied to BEYOND Tomorrow's Japan Future Scholarship Program. For Emiri, BEYOND Tomorrow is a place where she is acknowledged and accepted for who she really is. She wants to work with a global perspective in the future, and with that in mind, she hopes to keep expanding her horizons through her participation in the program.



Yoichi Miyara Faculty of Agriculture, University of Miyazaki (Graduate of Nanryo High School, Kumamoto Prefecture)

As Yoichi's parents divorced when he was young, and his father passed away when he was in high school, Yoichi lived with his grandfather. When he joined BEYOND Tomorrow immediately following his father's death, Yoichi had the opportunity to engage in conversation with his peers, and he was able to convert his sadness into motivation for greater things. He feels grateful that he was able to evolve from being just a grieving son. His father's last words have been a guiding light for Yoichi: "Don't stop half way. Make sure you follow through on your dreams." He would like to eventually become an educator in agriculture, applying his knowledge in a global scale and supporting Japan through agriculture. Upon joining BEYOND Tomorrow, Yoichi realized how small his world was, inspiring him to learn more about the world so that he can help others.



Nanaka Yamauchi Faculty of Law, Kyushu University (Graduate of Seiseiko High School, Kumamoto Prefecture)

Nanaka lost her beloved mother when she was in sixth grade. There were certainly days where the frustration of not being able to do anything to prevent her mother's death was excruciating. But motivated by a desire to make her mother happy and a deep gratitude towards her mother, she became determined to live boldly. She was already giving up on attending university, but when she joined BEYOND Tomorrow as a high school junior, she was able to talk to others about her past experiences in a way she had never done before. Though she had been lost, thanks to the many people who encouraged her, she decided to pursue her dreams. She hopes to become a lawyer and work towards building a safer community by enriching the scholarship system and supporting children without parents.