

BEYOND Tomorrow Japan Future Scholarship Program 2019



Takuya Akamatsu School of Human Sciences, Waseda University (Graduate of Okayama Senior High school, Okayama Prefecture)

Takuya's father passed away when Takuya was a senior in high school. His father was detached and harassed Takuya, causing turmoil in his heart, but saying goodbye to his father at the funeral was nonetheless the hardest thing he has ever done. Poverty and hardship meant that Takuya often couldn't afford his school uniform or backpack. But through various support systems, he was able to successfully attend his dream university. Takuya believes that the true goal of informatization is to allow people to live fulfilling, happy lives. This is why he wants to develop an app that promotes meaningful living in an information society and conduct research on these effects.



Kotomi Arai Department of Foreign Languages, Dokkyo University (Graduate of Shibukawa Girl's High School, Gunma Prefecture)

Kotomi's parents were divorced when she was in junior high school, and consequently her mother became ill, and her father and uncle passed away. Despair hit Kotomi one after another, and she felt lost. However, she met others who were suffering similarly, and learned that she was not the only one suffering. Gaining a positive outlook, Kotomi decided to study a foreign language at university. At BEYOND Tomorrow, Kotomi hopes to learn global leadership and get a chance for personal growth. To this end, she would like to try to interact with many people and open a new avenue for herself.



Seri Arakaki School of Language and Culture Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies(Graduate of Naha Kokusai Senior High School, Okinawa prefecture)

Coming to terms with her gender dysphoria was a difficult journey for Seri. Not only did she struggle with the discord between the gender of her body and her mind, she experienced severe loneliness and uncertainty about her future. But when she went to Singapore on a high school program, the kindness of the locals and her classmates allowed her to gain confidence and embrace her transgender identity. Seri hopes to eventually work in an area where she can communicate information to others, such as journalism, with a particular emphasis on reporting on the news in the Middle East to Japanese listeners. Through BEYOND Tomorrow, Seri is excited to interact with peers who share her enthusiasm, and she wants to feel more confident in expressing her opinions, thus strengthening her skills as a communicator.



Meia Iida School of Social Sciences, Waseda University (Graduate of Nagano Nishi High School, Nagano Prefecture)

Meia lost her mother to a suicide in her childhood, and after that, suffered abuse by her step father. Later, she was protected and transitioned to a foster care group home. Though it remains as a painful memory, at the same time, it is an experience that gave her a dream to create a space for children. Throughout Meia's high school days, BEYOND Tomorrow was always a place where she felt home and could find a source of inspiration though there were also times when she did not feel motivated. This year, as a university student, Meia would like to receive new inspiration and think about her roles.



Karen Uto Theatrical Arts Department, Osaka University of Arts (Graduate of Tokyo Gakugei University Senior High School)

Karen grew up experiencing violence by her parents and their divorce. Struck by hardships one after another, Karen sometimes lost motivation for academics with an excuse that she was going through a tough time unlike her classmates. However, when Karen joined a theater group to escape from the reality, she felt her heart lift after feeling abandoned and being self-enclosed for long. Because drama supported her at the time of despair, Karen hopes to promote drama among people suffering in pain by organizing shows and workshops in schools and foster care group homes.



Asumi Sugimoto Yokohama Rousai Nursing School (Graduate of Suzugamine Girls High School)

Asumi was protected from abuse and spent time in a foster care group home in her childhood. After that, Asumi's grandmother raised her for Asumi's mother who was serving time in prison but she passed away to leukemia caused by the effect of Atomic Bomb during WWII. Asumi felt a great loss for her beloved grandmother's death but decided to keep her chin up not to disappoint her grandmother. Strongly impressed by medical professionals she had met at her grandmother's hospital, Asumi decided to become a nurse that can stand by others suffering in pain.



Miya Sekiguchi Nigata-kouseiren Chuo Nursing school(Graduate of Tookamachi Senior High School, Nigata Prefecture)

Miya's mother passed away when Miya was in grade school. After her passing, Miya parted ways with her foster father and lived with her grandmother, who served as her adoptive parent. For a long time, she felt frustrated that she was alone in her suffering, leading her to think about ending her own life at times. But it was thanks to the supportive people around her that Miya found the strength to keep living. Miya aspires to become a nurse in the future so that she can care for others who, like her past self, are giving up on life. She wants to help them find meaning to keep living. Due to financial constraints, Miya was resigned to not attend college. It was at this time, however, that she discovered BEYOND Tomorrow, where she saw how each participant overcame his or her own life obstacles and ventured forward. Inspired by her peers in this program, she applied to participate as well.



Shota Taniyama Ohara College of Accounting and Legal Studies (Graduate of Sakuyakonohana High School, Osaka Prefecture)

Shota's parents were divorced when he was in high school. Overwhelmed by hardships that kept happening to him, including his father's violence, trial, and relocation, Shota wondered why he had to go through such difficult times and found it difficult to forge forward. However, he decided never to cry again and move forward, and applied to BEYOND Tomorrow to become a stronger person by connecting with young people facing challenges. In the future, Shota wishes to contribute to solving issues in rural areas and revitalizing local communities.



Shion Nakano Department of Education, Kaichi International University (Graduate of Minamikatsushika High School, Tokyo)

Shion's parents were divorced in her childhood. Even when people gave Shion harsh words for her fatherless upbringing, her mother would give her absolute comfort just like the sunshine. However, when Shion was a high school junior, her beloved mother passed away. Her mother would never stop smiling even during the long struggle with illness. In the world without her dearest mother, Shion could not find meaning for life and went through a hard time accepting the reality for a while. However, she decided to stop looking down, thinking that her mother must have wanted her to be smiling. Shion decided to go to university and become a teacher that can give the kind of heartwarming comfort that Shion herself was longing for after the loss of her mother.



Ryosuke Maebashi School of Education, Hiroshima University (Graduate of Ehime University Senior High School)

Ryosuke's parents were divorced when he was in junior high school. The fact that he did not have a family that he had wished weighed heavily on him, and he struggled with mixed feelings of inferiority, frustration, sorrow, jealousy, etc., without being able to share his emotions with others. When Ryosuke was a high school junior, he participated in BEYOND Tomorrow for the first time and shared his family situation with the friends he met there. The conversation he had there helped him attain a positive outlook and motivated him to pursue his dream. In the future, Ryosuke hopes to become an English teacher that can help his students maximize their potential to the fullest.



Koko Minami School of Law, Tohoku University (Graduate of Uto High School, Kumamoto prefecture)

Koko participated in BEYOND Tomorrow for the first time when she was a high school junior, and shared her upbringing with others in such an honest way that she had never been able to before. It was an experience in which she faced her own pain and learned to accept herself thanks to the friends that had accepted her and understood her pain. In the future, Koko hopes to help create a society in which children can grow healthily regardless of their upbringing. Towards this dream, she plans to study law and politics and look for solutions for poverty.



Hazuki Murayama Faculty of Letters, Ryukoku University (Graduate of Tsuruokaminami High School, Yamagata prefecture)

Hazuki grew up in a foster care group home, and faced financial challenges for pursuing higher education. Therefore, she had not seriously thought about going to university, but she participated in BEYOND Tomorrow when she was a high school junior, and realized that she might be able to make a difference for issues like poverty and education precisely because of her disadvantaged upbringing. As Hazuki decided to go to university to study further, she realized how joyful it was to take action for her own future. Hazuki's dream is to play a role in connecting children and those with resources to support children.



Yuika Yasui Faculty of Agriculture, Tokyo University of Agricultural and Technology (Graduate of Ochanomizu University Senior High School)

Yuika grew up in a single mother household with a lot of financial struggles. For a long time, she was unable to talk about these domestic issues with anyone. But when she participated in BEYOND Tomorrow as a high school junior, she was greatly influenced by her newly-found peers in the program, and she found the strength to be able to finally talk about her difficulties at home. Yuika is interested in the development of renewable energy, and she wants to contribute to building sustainable communities. She decided to apply to BEYOND Tomorrow because she wants to become someone who can talk more openly about her past and also gain a global perspective.