

The Letaw Family in Japan

Sept 5, 2019



## The Summer Rush Ends

Dear John & Elaine,

When we last wrote, we were about to kick off the busy summer season, during which our cabins are set aside for missionary families to take a break from their hectic lives and enjoy some family time together. For the past seven weeks, the camp has been packed, hosting these hard-working missionary families from all over Japan.

That all came to an end on Sunday when the summer season concluded. Now we are focused on getting the cabins, meeting rooms, and grounds cleaned & ready to host churches and retreats once again.



*A high point in our summer was a visit from Pen's best friend Megumi and her two daughters. We knew this wonderful family from our time as missionaries in Iwakuni, Japan, 7 years ago.*

## God's Provision



Just days before the big rush, the drains backed up in two of our cabins. Not knowing who to call, we found the number of the last plumber from 2 years ago. A missionary with a Japanese wife was staying with us that day; she was able to call but learned that the plumber had retired last year.

The answering service suggested a different plumber; we called, and five minutes later the company owner was onsite. Miraculously, he was working on a large project at the guest house right next door and he just walked over!

In minutes, he brought a team to start digging around and eventually they determined we had a broken pipe about 3 feet underground. After a quick break for lunch, they came back with repair parts, dug out the busted pipe, and put a new one in its place. All this was done with no discussion of money; the owner brought us a bill the next day which was far cheaper than we would ever have imagined. Later that day, a missionary family moved into one of the cabins, never knowing it had been uninhabitable just 24 hours earlier.

God's provision in the most unexpected circumstances is never-ending and always a source of inspiration. In my finite faith, I confess my anxiety was rising throughout the episode, as we had inbound families and nowhere to put them. We are constantly reminded of God's great power in all things.

## Looking Ahead

As we have so many times before, in a few months we will uproot and establish a new home overseas. Our service in Yamanaka comes to an end in January 2020.

The last guest checks out of Yamanaka Chalet on January 3, and then the camp shuts down for the winter. We will leave on January 5 after winterizing the cabins, then fly to Thailand where we will settle and refocus on Mele's schooling. For those of you who have blessed us with monthly support, please continue giving through January and then our ministry needs will come to an end. We will give further instruction on this later.



*Above: Pen and her friend Megumi and all the girls.*

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## Community Outreach

As she did last year in Karuizawa, Pen has scheduled a variety of youth events so that we can meet local families and continue our outreach. Many long-time residents of Yamanaka are unaware of this retreat center or why it is here. This gives us a chance to explain our role as Christian missionaries and how we support building God's kingdom in Japan.

We did not enroll Mele in preschool this year as we had hoped because the nearest schools are full, and others are too far away. What we did instead was to sign her up for after school programs including gymnastics, music, and Japanese lessons. This little dynamo continues to charm all those she meets, both in camp and in town.



*Saying farewell to our last visitors of the summer, a New Zealand*



While we continue to host a fall schedule of church retreats and missionary groups, we are beginning to do detailed planning of our exit from Japan and figure out what exactly comes next. There are many complicated questions about life in Thailand including schools, cost-of-living, proximity to Pen's family, etc. We will be sure to keep you updated on our future plans. We thank you for your prayers as we seek God's guidance on the road ahead.

Blessings in Christ,

John & Pen

*family who hopes to return next year on a ministry assignment.*



*Above: Making gyoza (Japanese dumplings) with her new friends.  
Below: All ready for gymnastics.*



*Ready to catch noodles on the "noodle slide", an annual event at schools throughout Japan.*



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