

## Second Generation Fulbrighter Rediscovered Life in Japan with His Family Blaine Brownell, 2006 Senior Researcher Professional

Mr. Brownell is currently conducting his research at Tokyo University of Science on Innovation in Japanese Architecture and Urban Planning.

Ever since my experience as a second-grader living in Hiroshima for a year when my father was a Fulbrighter, I have dreamed of sharing a similar experience with my own family. Now that my dream has become a reality, my wife and two sons, ages 5 and 8, have adapted remarkably well to our new life in Japan. I feel very fortunate to be able to say that our first two months in Japan have been wonderfully fulfilling.

I believe we made the right decision in focusing our living situation around our children's school. When we first assessed the list of international schools in the Tokyo area, the Tokyo New International School topped our list, because it seeks to provide a truly international experience and educates its students to be bi- or tri-lingual. We were not only considerably lucky to gain admittance to this school, but also to find a wonderful apartment within walking distance (or easy commute via the Toden [tram]), thanks entirely to lwata-san's generous efforts.

Our landlord is a wonderful couple who have welcomed us graciously and ensured the fulfillment of our needs, even coordinating all our utilities (even mobile phones!), providing extra bedding for our guests, and bringing us gifts on special occasions. They also took us out to dinner with their family at a restaurant on the 59th floor of the Sunshine 60 building, which was a magical experience. Since our landlord has housed a Fulbrighter family before us, it is especially nice to be continuing this Fulbright tradition.

Our family is lucky to have a strong support network comprised by parents and teachers connected with Tokyo New International School, and our sons have made good friends with whom they occasionally partake in activities outside school. My wife Heather has also befriended a Japanese lady (through a school connection), whom she meets once a week to trade English and Japanese conversation, cooking techniques, etc.

Our family has made a point of sightseeing as much as reasonably possible, and we have traveled to many parts of Tokyo together, including Ikebukuro, Akihabara, Asakusa, Sugamo, Arakawa, Ueno, Shinjuku, Shibuya, Omotesando / Harajuku, Marunouchi, Ginza, Kasai Rinkai, Yoyogi, and so on. We also traveled to Kamakura, and will plan a few more trips to other parts of Japan in the coming months. I also often take the kids on architectural excursions, which they usually seem to like (my son Blaine is particularly enthralled

with the Tokyo International Forum).



We made a trek towards Harajuku station through the neighborhood many people consider to be the fashion capital of the world. If you're looking for something outlandishly trendy, turn it up a few notches and you'll find it here.