The Japan News

# Presentation Contest

# Art for unmanned stations wins top prize

By Ayako Ishiguro Japan News Staff Writer

plan for showing artwork at unmanned train stations to increase ridership won the top prize at the 9th Annual All Japan Student English Presentation Contest

Presenters Nao Otsubo and Hanna Oku, Sophia University seniors who were high school classmates, won the nationwide contest for the second time Aiming to surpass their winning 2018 performance, the pair chose the theme: "Make use of unmanned stations! Present a creative plan to attract many

people."

In the final round on Nov. 28 in Chiba City, the pair started their presentation with the sound of a bell and an announcement of a train's departure, instantly capturing the attention of the audience. They spoke cheerfully throughout the presentation, adding gestures and at one point speak-

adding gestures and at one point speak-ing a key phrase in unison. They proposed a project called "Nishikigawa Gallery" for the Nishikigawa Seiryu Line in Yamaguchi Prefecture, which has 11 unmanned stations. Under their plan, each of these stations, surrounded by beautiful nature, would be decorated with a variety of artworks. They suggested that visitors spend one night and two days in the area, enjoying the artworks and natural scenery while riding the special





From left, Hinako Endo, Nanako Asai and



From left, Natasha Agustin Ikhsan, Sumayya and Hanae Ziani



Photos by The Yomiuri Shimbun Grand prize winners Hanna Oku, left, and Nao Otsubo deliver their presentation on Nov. 28.

train, the Gallery Express.

"We want to contribute to society through our project," said Otsubo. The pair think the project can also provide art students with a much-needed opportunity to showcase their artworks and

gain recognition to launch their careers. Chief judge Sadaaki Numata, chair-Chief Judge Sadaaki Numata, chairman of the English-Speaking Union of Japan, said the pair attracted the audience's attention with their charming and fluent delivery. He also said they researched the issue very well.

"Since we were inspired by other

participants in the 2018 contest who were very entertaining, we wanted to make our presentation interesting enough to entertain the audience," Oku

Otsubo added, "I am proud that our idea itself was also appreciated."

For this year's competition, there were two other themes to choose from: "Present on the future of education for the next generation!" and "Propose a plan to combat global climate change at the individual level!"

The final round was held at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba City, with participants giving presentations up to 10 minutes long in English, using slides and other visual aids. They also answered questions from judges and the audience. This year, a live audience was not allowed into the auditorium because of the spread of the novel coronavirus. Instead, the finalists' presentations

#### Impressive ideas, delivery

Kaho Miyata, a senior at International Christian University, captured second prize by proposing a future education system that combines traditional classroom learning and online learning to tailor education to each student's personal needs in the post-



Second prize winner Kaho Miyata

coronavirus world. "We are now able to see alternative possibilities because of the coronavirus pandemic," said Miyata, who will start work as a teacher next spring.

Honorable mention awards were giv-

en to three presentations, one on each

Hanae Ziani, Natasha Agustin Ikhsan and Sumayya, a trio of second-year students at the graduate school of the Tokyo Institute of Technology, won as the top group on the climate change theme. They proposed a new online "Green Tomatoes," providing eco-oriented restaurant ratings and in-formation, enabling users to contribute to the fight against global warming by choosing eco-friendly restaurants.

A team of three students — Nanako Asai, a junior at Doshisha University; Narumi Higashiyama, a senior at Kyoto University; and Hinako Endo, a firstyear student at the graduate school of Kyoto University — suggested a project named "Ohen Rail," referring to Ohenro, the famous 88-temple pilgrimage in Shikoku. Wearing white pilgrim robes, they proposed using unmanned sta-

### Nishikigawa Gallery to revitalize the region

The following are excerpts from the presentation given by Nao Otsubo and Hanna Oku, who won the Grand Prize at the 9th Annual All Japan Student English

Oku: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for riding the Nishikigawa Seiryu Line. This is the Nishikigawa Gallery Express bound for Nishikicho. We will be stopping at five unmanned stations that have been transformed into art exhibitions. Please enjoy our specially curated artwork as we pass through the beautiful nature of Nishikigawa.

Otsubo: Good afternoon everyone, I'm Nao

Oku: I'm Hanna.

Otusbo: Today we are going to present our new project called Nishikigawa Gallery. It is a project that utilizes unmanned stations as exhibition space to help revitalize the Nishikigawa community. So where are we launching this project?
Oku: This project will use the Nishikigawa Seiryu Line

which is located in Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. The line follows the Nishikigawa River, one of the most beautiful rivers in Japan, and takes only one hour to run from the starting station to the end.

Due to a small number of users, this line has 11 unmanned stations out of 14. So we came up with a project which utilizes the whole line to produce an art exhibition.

Currently, the Nishikigawa Railway Company and Iwakuni City are running a promotional campaign fo-cusing on the nature of the Nishikigawa area by reima-gining the area as the Nishikigawa Nature Museum. We envision our plan, Nishikigawa Gallery, as a fusion of art and nature. This project aligns with the spirit of the currently running campaign, turning the Nishikigawa Nature Museum into a wonderful gallery.

Otsubo: Let's take a closer look at the details of this project. Each unmanned station will be a canvas and this whole line will be turned into a massive museum. There will be different art exhibitions at each of the 11 stations. Every year, more original artwork provided by newly se-lected artists will be used to renew displays.

Oku: So, how can we enjoy these art exhibitions? Otsubo: Let me explain that. To enjoy these exhibitions, our plan is to take one existing train and turn it into a special train called the Gallery Express. On Saturdays, the Express will start at Kawanishi Station and travel north to Nishikicho, the terminus. It will stop at five unmanned stations for about 20 minutes on the way to Nishikicho. So, passengers can get off the train and take their time to marvel at the creative artwork. We have created a perfect timetable for the special Express train that fits the current train schedule. In other words, the Gallery Express will not impede the travels of regular train users.
Visitors will be encouraged to stay at the lovely rustic

hot spring hotel in Nishikicho overnight. Relaxing in a hot spring will be the perfect end of the day. If they do so, on the return trip to Kawanishi on Sunday, passengers

will be able to visit the other five unmanned station galleries on an alternate return tour.

Oku: You may be wondering who will create the art-work for this project. We have decided to recruit art students all over Japan and the winner of the Yamaguchi Artist Award.

According to Tsubaki Noboru, professor of Kyoto University of Art and Design, gaining recognition is the key to becoming a professional artist. However, there are not enough opportunities for art students to reach wider

Therefore, we would love to give them the opportunity to showcase their artwork and their potential to others by making use of the Nishikigawa Gallery. Additionally, the winner of the Yamaguchi Artist

Award will be given a whole station to showcase their tal-ents. Furthermore, this will strengthen the connection with the local community, as it awards up-and-coming artists living in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Otsubo: I'm sure you're wondering what the exhibitions will look like. These images will help you visualize our plan. These are good examples of artwork which stirs the imagination. Our stations will be decorated with a

wider range of designs and art styles.
In addition to wonderful artwork, the magnificent scenery of Iwakuni, which changes dramatically from season to season, is nature's palette, the perfect complement to the artwork on the Gallery Express tour. For those who use Instagram, beautiful wooden frames installed around train windows will ensure that every shot is ...

Otsubo and Oku: Picture-perfect! Otsubo: Now let's look at the year-round schedule. In

May we will start recruiting art students. And in September, selected artists will be announced. From January to March, participants will be working hard on their creations at unmanned stations. And finally from April, Nishikigawa Gallery will open and the Gallery

Express will run every Saturday.
Oku: Who will benefit from this project? Nishikigaw Railway Company, local businesses and art students will greatly benefit: greater recognition and increased revenue.

The three parties will gain more recognition, as this art project will be a platform for promoting their services and the local region. This will lead to an increase in revenue, as there will be more visitors who will bring in more busi-ness for the local community. Moreover, art students can sell their artwork at the last stop, the Nishikicho Station. Therefore, this project will help revitalize the Nishikigawa community and provide opportunity for future artists in

Depopulation is a serious issue in rural areas and the Nishikigawa community is no different. Our project provides the Nishikigawa region with an opportunity to showcase its unique features that could only be found here, in Nishikigawa. Without disturbing the beautiful local nature and rekindling interest in the history of the area, the Nishikigawa Gallery project will revitalize Nishikigawa region in a fun and exciting manner.

tions as hostels and information centers.
Akari Uejo, a senior at Rikkyo

University, suggested introducing emo-tional intelligence, the ability to identify

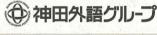
school curriculums to prevent bullying. This year, a record 1,077 students from 237 universities, graduate schools,

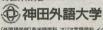
junior colleges, technical colleges and vocational schools took part in the con-

Gaigo Group and The Yomiuri Shimbun. It was also supported by entities including the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry, the Foreign Ministry and the U.S.

### ENGLISH PRESENTATION CONTEST 第9回全国学生英語プレゼンテーションコンテスト (神田外語グループ×読売新聞社 共催) Presented by Kanda Caigo Group & The Yomituri Shinbus

学校法人 佐野学園





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大坪さん、奥さんの2人がテーマに選んだのは「無人駅の活用。山口県岩国市を走る錦川鉄道を舞台に、一年で無人駅の活用。山口県岩国市を走る錦川鉄道を開かる。 鉄道会社の協力を得て、フィールドワークを行い、活用のアイデアを練らに、一既存の施設を使いながら、満年でデータを行い、活用のアイデアを練った。「既存の施設を使いながら、満たなアイデアを出していくことに苦労した」と美術を専攻する学生たちのアート展がが融合し、人々が出会い、無人駅が活性化する内容に仕上げた。「言い方ひとつで伝わり方が変わる」(大坪さん)ことを意識しながら、楽しさにあふれるプレゼンテーら、楽しさにあふれるプレゼンテーションでトップの座に輝いた。



プレゼンテーションでは日本の教育 で知り、迷うことなく応募した。

人々が環境にもっと関心を持ってくん。ナターシャさんも「いかに人々を引き付けられるかを大切にした」と話る。スマイヤさんは「このプレゼンである。スマイヤさんは「このプレゼンである。

えるようプレゼンテーションに落と「新しい発想を聴衆に理解しても



◇インプレッシブ賞(テーマ1) 上條茜里さん 大学で教育を学び、英語のプレゼン

し、環境に配慮した消費行動を促すした。ユーザーが飲食店の温室効果した。ユーザーが飲食店の温室効果した。ユーザーが飲食店の温室効果した。ユーザーが飲食店の温室効果がス排出防止への取り組みを評価

◇インブレッシブ賞(テーマ3) ジアニ・ハナさん、イクサン・アグスティン・ナターシャさん、スマイヤさん 3人は共に東京工業大学大学院 で環境工学を学ぶ留学生。プレゼン

と思いを語る。本大会の経験をとを多くの人に知ってもらいたかっ

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3人は京都の大学に通う友だち同士だ。浅井さんの留学をきっかけに、本大会への挑戦を決意。自分たちのオリジナリティを発揮できると思い無人駅の活用のテーマを選択した。本番はハッピ姿で四国の無人駅をお遍路の巡礼者が活用できる宿泊施設や情報センターとすることを提案。アジアを中心にインバンド客の利用増加を促すアイデアを披露して、無人駅やた。「発表に挑戦して、無人駅やお遍路について深く学べたことが大きな収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった」という3人は、本大会で収穫だった。

◇インブレッシブ賞(テーマ2)
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浅井さん、東山で、、遠藤さんの
浅井さんの留学をきっかけに、

大 臣 賞 坪 直 央 さん 奥 は h な 3

部 科 学

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