



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INTRODUCING THE 2016 GOODWILL AMBASSADORS

Washington, DC [March 2, 2016] – The National Cherry Blossom Festival is proud to announce the 2016 Goodwill Ambassadors, a group of bright and driven young adults who promote cross-cultural exchange. Since 1994, more than 100 men and women have represented the Festival. Many of the hardworking students either study or have studied Japanese language and culture. As official Festival representatives, they educate youth and engage visitors. The Goodwill Ambassador program is supported by Macy's.

James Bruniany is a junior at George Mason University, majoring in Global Affairs and minoring in Japanese. He lived and studied in Japan for four months, gaining a deep appreciation for the country's language, culture and history. He hopes to attain fluency and either pursue a career in Japan or continue his studies as a graduate student there.

Kari Cominsky is a sophomore at American University, majoring in Political Science and minoring in Japanese. Originally from Houston, Texas, she has been interested in Japan since she visited in high school. Cominsky hopes to study abroad in Tokyo during her junior year.

Misato Horiike is a sophomore at American University, majoring in International Relations and pursuing a dual degree program with Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. She was raised in Osaka and came to Washington in the summer of 2014. Horiike aspires to enhance strong U.S.-Japan relations and to contribute to the D.C. community as a Goodwill Ambassador.

Emily Howard is a sophomore at The George Washington University, majoring in International Affairs with a minor in Japanese. Originally from Dallas, Texas, she has been interested in Japanese language and culture ever since she studied abroad in Okinawa, the summer of her junior year in high school. In the future, she hopes to pursue a career in international relations.

Kanako Matsuda graduated from the College of William and Mary in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Neuroscience and a minor in Public Health. She was heavily involved with the Japanese club and took classes to learn more about her native culture and language. The summer after graduation, she worked as a counselor and taught Japanese at Concordia Language Villages, where she discovered a passion for cross-cultural learning. Matsuda hopes to become an assistant English language teacher in Japan next year through the JET program.

Kevin Yuan is a sophomore at Georgetown University, majoring in Economics and Japanese and minoring in Mathematics. He was born in Wuhu, China, and grew up in Glen Allen, Virginia. He has visited Japan through the U.S. High School Diplomats program and will study abroad at Waseda University in Tokyo during his junior year. Yuan hopes to continue expanding and sharing his interest for Japanese culture and U.S.-Japan relations.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is the nation's greatest springtime celebration. The 2016 Festival, March 20 – April 17, includes three spectacular weeks and four weekends of events featuring diverse and creative programming promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit. Visit nationalcherryblossomfestival.org or call 877.44.BLOOM for more information and find us on [Facebook](#) (CherryBlossomFestival), [Twitter](#) (@CherryBlossFest), and [Instagram](#) (@CherryBlossFest).

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