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### ***Origami***

Last year, at the end of June, my family volunteered to be a host family for Chris, an American boy. We spent eight fun days together, visiting Chinatown, bowling and going out shopping.

One day, Chris's friend Andy came over with his host family for a party at my home. Since Chris and Andy both liked *origami* (Japanese paper folding) so much, I made all sorts of *origami* figures for them, such as cranes, helmets and swords. When seeing my *origami* sea lion, Andy's eyes were twinkling, and he called out "Oh, Cute!" Even though we were from different countries, we were helping each other, and each time we finished another *origami* piece, we expressed our joy in the same way, by holding our thumbs up. We didn't feel anything like a border.

Chris and Andy listened very patiently to me when I tried to explain something to them in my poor English, and they also told me lots of things by using body language. The tension we felt when we first met each other was all gone! Time passed by really quickly, and we were able to talk about a lot of things. I think the first step to cross-cultural understanding is to meet others and try to understand each other.

About a year has passed since Chris and Andy went back to the US. Chris told me so many things: that he likes to play basketball, that he goes to school by car, that it is possible to become good friends with people whose skin colour is different from your own, and more. To me, all that was very interesting. Chris also showed a lot of interest in Japanese culture and the Japanese way of life. I can still vividly remember him taking so many pictures of a three-storied pagoda, *tatami* mats, *fusuma* (Japanese sliding doors), and other things. He also did his best to use chopsticks during our meals, and kept on saying "*oishii~*" (delicious). He really tried to submerge himself in Japanese culture, and now, I also feel proud of our rich Japanese culture.

Because I was able to meet Chris and Andy, I have realized there is no such thing as a border between people. That is why I want to keep on being a host family. I also want to go abroad myself to meet many people and deepen my friendship with them.