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ALT | Mihama, Mie | 2012-2016

## **JETAA USA Country Representative (2025–Present)**

### **Great Lakes JETAA (Ohio, Michigan)**

- Member (2016–2018)
- Ohio Vice President (2018–2025)

### **National JETAA Activity**

- 2017: JET30 Reunion All-Alumni Celebration Attendee (Washington, D.C.)
- 2018: JETAA USA National Conference Delegate (Denver, Colorado)
- 2020: JETAA USA National Conference Attendee (virtual)
- 2022: JET35 Alumni Reunion Attendee (Seattle, Washington)
- 2024: JETAA USA National Conference Delegate (St. Paul, Minnesota)
  - 501(c)(3) Panel Presenter
- 2025: JETAA USA National Conference Organizer (Washington, D.C.)

### **International JET Alumni Activity**

- 2022 After JET Conference Speaker (virtual)
- 2025 CanCon Delegate (Halifax, Nova Scotia)
- 2025 JETAA-I International Meeting Delegate and Presenter (Tokyo)

### **JET Recruitment Activity**

- 2017–2018: JET Program Recruiter at Oberlin College (Oberlin, Ohio)
- 2019: Ohayocon JASCO/GLJETAA Table (Columbus, Ohio)
- 2023: Cleveland Asian Festival GLJETAA Booth (Cleveland, Ohio)

The focus of my 2026–2027 Country Representative candidate platform is **connecting** JETAA Chapter Leaders nationally and **empowering** the JET alumni community in our shared mission.

In my first year as a **JETAA USA Country Representative**, I've learned the unique strengths and challenges of our nineteen national Chapters. I'm grateful to all the Chapters Leaders I've gotten to meet, connect, and **share** with in my capacity as CR. Progressing from a NatCon delegate to an organizer for last year's conference in Washington, D.C. was rewarding, and I'm excited to **build on** that experience this year. I also can't wait to expand upon the togetherness series of online meetups for Chapter Leaders that I began as my initiative in 2025.

Many JETAA USA Chapters Leaders function while under a sense of isolation from their peers. By ensuring Chapters never feel alone, we can **strengthen** our national network and rise to **meet challenges** more confidently. I carry that philosophy into this year as I brainstorm ways to iterate on the **togetherness** series. In addition to meetups for all Chapter Leaders, hosting gatherings for specific roles like President and Treasurer will enable participants to face the unique dilemmas of each role as a united national group. Chapter Leaders should never feel strained for resources or ill-equipped to respond to emergent issues. By emphasizing an open-door policy, I also believe CRs can **build bridges** to **empower** Chapter Leaders.

**Coordination** efforts must also extend to and operate in harmony with the JETAA USA Board of Advisors, USJETAA, CLAIR, MOFA, and myriad supporting organizations. By anchoring our position as **core resources**, CRs can facilitate communication and lead initiatives for all affiliates. Combining our joint efforts to streamline focus is key for the sustainability of the future for our collective missions.

Fostering connections to "promote the **mission** and future direction of JETAA USA," as the CR job description states, does not end at our national borders. For me, serving as a delegate at the 2025 JETAA-I International Meeting drove home the need to reinforce our global links as CRs. This coming year, I want to encourage **international collaborations** for events and global unification among JET alumni.

As we enter 2026, the tumultuous national and international climate gives JETAA Chapters a unique **opportunity**. We can **foster community** among our members, as well as support mutual understanding between Japan and the United States. The **cooperation** among our local JETAA Chapters and over 40,000 JET alumni may be more important than ever in building ties among the greater U.S.-Japan network.

This year marks the tenth since I've returned from Japan and the JET Program. If there is one thing I've learned in a decade as a JET alumni, it's that we are a truly awe-inspiring collection of global citizens. And if there's any group that can **realize change** and create a better future, it's you, the leaders among JET alumni. I wholeheartedly believe in the power and potential of this community.

As someone who has benefited from this network on many personal levels, I can't adequately describe how thankful I am to be among you all. I look forward to working as one of your JETAA USA Country Representatives and fostering **unity** in 2026–2027.