Local Students Excel at the 2020 High School Japanese Speech Contest

PITTSBURGH, PA – The Japan-America Society of Pennsylvania (JASP) and the University of Pittsburgh’s Asian Studies Center jointly hosted the 23rd Annual High School Japanese Speech Contest. The contest was held on Friday, March 6th at the William Pitt Union on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh.

This year, 54 students from Western PA competed in this daylong competition. Japanese language students of all levels and students who are involved in Japan-related cultural activities participated in one of four speech levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced, and advanced plus) or the poster contest. Participating schools were Pittsburgh Allderdice High School, Shaler Area High School, Upper St. Clair High School and City Charter High School. The contest included Japanese activities and games for student contestants and observers.

Carley Soley from Upper St. Clair High School won the grand prize in Advanced Plus level. Carley received an electronic Japanese-English dictionary as the grand prize donated by the Consulate General of Japan in New York. First place in the Advanced category went to Zoe Babbit from Shaler Area High School. First place in the Intermediate category went to Caroline Knizner from Upper St. Clair High School. The first place in the Beginner category went to Stephane Lu from Upper St. Clair High School. Finally, first place in the Poster competition went to Alexis Wright from Upper St. Clair High School.

This event is made possible through the generous support of the Elliott Group, Perryman Company, Temple University Japan Campus, Japan Foundation Los Angeles, the Japanese Consulate General of New York, University of Pittsburgh Asian Studies Center, the Japan Iron & Steel Federation and Mitsubishi Endowments at the University of Pittsburgh, and all participating schools, students, and volunteers.

Final Results:

**Beginner**
1. Stephanie Lu – Upper St. Clair
2. Alex Edkins – Upper St. Clair
3. Tyerin Perry - Allderdice

**Intermediate**
1. Caroline Knizer – Upper St. Clair
2. Mai Swendsen - Shaler
3. Hunter Bench – Upper St. Clair

**Advanced**
1. Zoe Babbit - Shaler
2. Roman Kurz (Tie) - Shaler
2. Ian Squire (Tie) – Allderdice

**Advanced Plus**
1. Carley Soley - Shaler
2. Nathan Hayward - Shaler
3. Evan Baldwin - Shaler

**Poster**
1. Alexis Wright – Upper St. Clair
2. Roehl Benedicto – Upper St. Clair
3. Christian Farmerie – Upper St. Clair