

# Short Stay in Singapore

## Report

November 2025



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## Preface

In August 2025, following the program in December 2023, we invited two participants—a third-year junior high school student and a first-year high school student—from the children's foster home, Misono Kodomo-no-le (Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture), to participate in a short-term stay program in Singapore. Considering feedback from the 2023 program, we adjusted the timing and made some changes to the program content.

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to 10 Square, the Singaporean cultural and educational institution that has supported and hosted this program since its inception, and to our host families: Ms. Mary Loh and her family, and Mr. Chew Yang Hai and his family. During their stay, they wholeheartedly welcomed, hosted, and guided the two participants. We also extend our gratitude to Mr. Nogiwa, Ms. Sugihara, and all the staff members of Misono Kodomo-no-le who kindly sent the participants off.

Although this was the participants' first experience, was there any complacency on our part because it was the second time we held the program? Did we become overly reliant on the Singapore side simply because it was the second time? As I compile this report, we are reflecting on these points. Nevertheless, as long as there are children (under 18 years old) who wish to participate in this program, we intend to continue striving to make it happen. May the relationship with Singapore, and with the next generation, continue to grow in peace.

Little Creators

Around the world, it seems more people are proclaiming "my country first," prioritizing their own needs and their own nation. Indeed, if one's own life lacks stability and leeway, it might not be easy to stand alongside others or help them. Even so, human society functions precisely because communities and people support one another. Moreover, as the term "international society" itself proves, life can no longer be sustained by oneself alone or by one's own country alone.

We, non-profit organization Little Creators, continue our activities, constantly asking how we can support children in a children's foster home during their preparatory period. Our goal is to help them develop the broad perspective and flexibility needed to adapt to societal changes and live successfully after they are discharged from the home.

## Background

Little Creators aims to help children (aged 18 and under) in disadvantaged circumstances express themselves, meet and interact with others, and cultivate the dreams, wisdom, and strength needed to overcome invisible barriers and thrive in society. Collaborating with like-minded organizations across Asia, including Singapore, we have run various programs using art (expression and creation) as a tool.

Based on this experience and its outcomes, Little Creators became convinced that even short stays abroad can broaden young people's horizons, helping them transform hope for the future into personal goals. Consequently, the organization launched this short-stay program in Singapore in 2023. While we apologize to the participants, the significant growth they demonstrated in this first iteration—held somewhat as a pilot experiment—provided strong encouragement. It led to the decision to have a second session in 2025.

## Overview

Participants: junior high school student (15 years old, male) and high school student (16 years old, female) from a children's foster home, Misono Kodomo-no-*ie*

Destination: Singapore

Travel Period: August 12, 2025 from Haneda, Japan to Singapore  
August 18, 2025 from Singapore to Narita, Japan 6 nights 7 days

Host Families: Mary Loh's family. Chew Yang Hai's family

Co-organizer: 10 Square (Singapore) Organizer: Little Creators

## Preparation Overview

2024	August	participants decided by Misono
	September	"Art Camp 2024" Both participants in 2023 and those this time served as core members responsible for hosting youth visitors from Singapore and other Asian countries.
2025	February	two new participants introduced to the 10 Square staff.
	May 24	preparation started between Singapore and Japan
	July	online MTG between participants and Art Camp participants from Singapore
		JAL maintenance Facility visit with all Misono children (to learn how to ride airplane)
	July 29	MTG 1 with participants (about organizers, purposes, Singapore etc)
	August 8	MTG 2 with participants (airplane, immigration, itinerary etc)
	August 12	participants depart with JAL
	August 18	participants arrive with JAL
	October 19	post-trip presentation by participants



## Tasks given to participants

### ■ To keep a diary during their stay in Singapore, keeping in mind the followings:

- Attach a bag of candy or a plane ticket to the diary so that it would not only be writing about what happened that day but also a memory for the participants.
- Ask people they met to write down comments and names.
- Be aware of what you want to convey to the younger participants who may be able to go to Singapore next at the debriefing session when they return home.

### ■ Not to be patient during the trip

"If there is anything that you feel uncomfortable or painful, such as food, lifestyle, physical condition, etc., insist on it by using gestures and translation apps."

## Program Contents / Trip Itinerary

August 12      Arrival

13      Sightseeing with 10 Square staff  
      - Merlion Park  
      - Garden by the Bay  
      Greet and meet by 10 Square youth

14      Sightseeing with 10 Square staff  
      - Battle Box  
      - China Town etc

15      with host families  
      - (female) Balloon Museum  
      - (male) Universal Studio Singapore  
      \*She had the misfortune of losing her cell phone. He joined her and together they became engrossed in searching for it.

16      Participating in art classes (dance, visual arts, music) at 10 Square

17      Sightseeing with 10 Square youth  
      - Orchard road  
      - Bugis etc

18      Departure

The participants were accommodated at host families' home: Ms. Mary Loh and her family, and Mr. Chew Yang Hai and his family.

## Participants' Feedback and Post-trip Presentation

On August 18th, a text message arrived on the staff cell phone waiting for the two at the airport: "We've arrived in Japan, but we're not sure about some of the items on the customs form." After several exchanges, when they safely exited the gate, there was a sigh of relief: "Thank goodness~." Their request for dinner was "sushi."



The post-trip presentation held on October 19th followed a format where Little Creators provided a PowerPoint template in advance. The participants inserted their photos and comments into this template and presented while projecting it. We had wanted to hold the report meeting soon after they returned home, but it was delayed because she lost a cell phone with many photos she had taken, and we had to consider whether it would be returned. In addition to staff, children from elementary and high schools from Misono attended the session. After the presentation, the children asked many questions to the participants. Several children also raised their hands, expressing interest in participating in this program in the future.



Regarding the presentation content, the PowerPoint materials compiled by the participants are attached to the report.

### Feedback from the Host Families

1. Preparation: Should we have more ZOOM sessions before the children go to Singapore? What other information about children should we have provided?
  - A) Thank you so much for the honor of hosting her. She is a very sweet girl and very cheerful. Perhaps more information about the youth would have been helpful eg age, school level and interests and maybe food preferences or allergies as these are hard to communicate. I felt I could not help much if she were to fall ill and I might be better prepared if I had known to prepare for car - sickness etc.
  - B) It is a worthy endeavour and a pleasure to be part of the programme to support these youths. To make it more engaging, yes, more information about the youth's interests (and perhaps non-confidential background) to allow host family to understand how to interact and plan the day outings. As he is, such younger than us, it may be difficult to understand their preferences. For instance, he shared that one of his favourite moments was spending time with other youths (at Ten Square), which is understandable. This would be an opportunity to curate an inter-generational activity to help develop a bond/engagement/appreciation.
2. Duration & timing of the program: Is it too long? Too short?
  - A) It was just enough time as far as hosting was concerned. They enjoyed being out and came back very tired but were so excited that they wanted to tell their friends back home so there was a lot of texting and she didn't sleep till 2 – 3 pm. Any longer that they are away from their friends might not be so good for them.
  - B) Just about right.
3. 10 Square program: Any suggestion or comment?
  - A) N/A
  - B) An inter-generational exchange (between the older folks (hosts) and the youth).
4. Short Stay in Singapore: Any suggestion or comment to NPO Little Creators?
  - A) N/A
  - B) As above. This would help broaden the perspectives of the youth without the older folk struggling to understand and engage.

### Feedback from 10 Square

1. Preparation: Should we have more ZOOM sessions before the children go to Singapore? What other information about children should we have provided?

Yes, one zoom session for the students to meet online would be good so that the Singapore (Sg) and Japan students recognize each other before they meet face to face.

2. Duration & timing of the program: Is it too long? Too short?

The duration was just right. However, as it was the school period in Singapore and the Singapore students could not bring their Japanese friends aside from weekdays, it was a bit of a pity. If it were the holiday period and the Singapore students could spend more time with the Japanese students, the duration would be just right.

3. Host families: We do understand it is not easy to find host families. Should we consider letting them stay in a hotel?

Staying with a host family would give the Japanese students the experience of staying in the heartlands of Singapore, hence we would recommend looking for a host family first. However, a cut off period can be put into place, where hotels would be Plan B, in the event host families cannot be located.

4. Please share your impression: Could children from Singapore and Japan get involved much?

Based on our experience and seeing the children interact throughout their stay in Singapore and Japan, there is potential for the children to interact and learn from each other. With the demographics of students that TRCL (The RICE: the managing company of 10 Square) and Little Creators work with, we definitely feel that there is an opportunity for these students to widen their horizon and think internationally.

5. How can we improve or change this program? If we have the same program in the future, is there anything you would like to suggest?

For the future, perhaps we can think about defining or narrowing down the learning experiences we wish for the students to have, for example, if it is a trip about culture, the planning can involve more cultural aspects. We might suggest involving more students for each exchange so that the reach of the program is wider, if our budget and program allow for this. It

might also be possible to involve more countries in this exchange so that there is more potential in the exchange of information and learning between all participating countries.

Among the 10 Square students, Rey, Syukrina, and Inani—who also participated in “Art Camp 2024”—were looked after the participants during their stay, following the preliminary online exchange meeting. Also, new friends, Syareen and Alvin, warmly greeted them in Singapore. We are deeply grateful for their friendship. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the 10 Square staff. Thank you for your constant patience and support.

### **Feedback from Misono Kodomo-no-jo**

1. What was the most challenging part of the preparation? Also, is there anything you'd like Little Creators to do?
  - The process was quite demanding, requiring various documents and preparations, such as parental consent and paperwork for bringing medications currently being taken.
  - It was necessary to understand that we ourselves needed to allocate a certain amount of time for advance preparation.
  - Regarding parental consent, what had been acceptable before could change due to shifts in laws or practices, so it was essential to fully understand these aspects and proceed accordingly.
2. Whether it's better to have a host family.
  - It would be nice to have a host family to take care of the participants. Staying alone in a hotel might be a bit lonely.
  - I hope the connection with the host family continues. It would be good to have a meeting beforehand and confirm how they are. Knowing the household lifestyle in advance (like not being able to use the washing machine) would have made preparation easier.
  - Having a host family would be reassuring for the participants. Staying in a hotel likely brings many worries, like not knowing who to turn to. However, experiencing some inconvenience is also valuable for their growth. I think it's acceptable to base the decision on whether parents feel comfortable entrusting their children to the program. If finding a host family proves difficult in a given year, even a new type of accommodation could be a good experience for the children that year.

### 3. Was there anything you wished you had known more about beforehand?

- Having multiple Zoom meetings beforehand was very helpful.
- If we could have been told more about the host families themselves – the differences between households (like whether a washing machine is available or not) – it might have helped us plan more concretely.
- I think it was good that we received various information beforehand via Zoom and could study it. However, it might depend on the participating children, but I felt it wasn't ideal that staff were almost never present on Zoom this year. It seemed the children understood less of the conversation than expected, and since there were various issues right after arriving at the airport, I reflected that it would have been better if staff had listened to the explanations together and facilitated more back-and-forth communication.

### 4. Should staff from Misono or Little Creators accompany the trip?

- It was challenging, but it was a necessary experience. If we can communicate with the participants as we did this time, and if we can prepare in advance, I think it's fine without an accompanying staff member.
- Hearing the two of them talk, I felt that even their hesitation became a valuable experience for their first time overseas. It's fine without an accompanying staff member.
- Although considerable time was spent at the airport both departing and arriving, it was a valuable experience. As mentioned above, I felt it was necessary for staff to study together and share information beforehand.

### 5. What do you think about the program?

- Nothing in particular.
- It was great to experience both sightseeing and cultural activities. They also seemed happy to interact with people their own age.
- I have no concerns about the program itself. However, if possible, it might be helpful to have some communication via Zoom or similar platforms beforehand regarding the activities planned with the host families. This would make it easier to anticipate what to expect. While children might not readily suggest, "I'd like to try this," having the opportunity to discuss with the host families beforehand—such as, "We're thinking of doing this together,

what do you think about this kind of experience?"—could make it more enjoyable for the children and reduce their anxiety.

#### 6. Regarding attitudes toward English learning

- I'd like to think they've changed, but I suspect it will take a little more time for that to take an action.
- I remember them saying, "It would have been more fun if I could speak more."
- Like the two students from 2 years ago, I wonder if going to Singapore actually changed their attitude toward English. However, they gained confidence from the experience of going and coming back, realized their own English skills are lacking, and also came to feel that even without speaking English well, they can somehow understand what's being said and communicate. I hope that their desire to go again will gradually push their attitude forward.

#### 7. Did the participants experience any changes through the short-stay program?

- They were able to prepare for the trip by considering what preparations were needed and what luggage was required, handling what they could themselves, asking adults for help with what they needed assistance with. While only a limited number of children get this first-time experience, being chosen as members was, above all, a source of strength for both of them. Immediately after departure and upon returning home, they often spoke of how difficult and tough it was. Yet, as days passed, it was striking how they increasingly mentioned how much fun it was and how they wanted to go again. Even when things didn't always go smoothly, the experience of somehow making it through the entire week will be a source of support for both of them going forward.
- From what I've heard, everything was positive. They had heard stories from children who went last time and were able to experience most of what they were looking forward to. I think it was good for them to have the experience of living for a week in an unfamiliar environment without staff and where Japanese wasn't understood.
- Being selected for this special program has brought positive changes and boosted their confidence. As mentioned earlier, navigating an environment where Japanese isn't understood, yet discovering they could surprisingly understand English and communicate, has also built their confidence. However, I think they also experienced the frustration of subtle nuances not getting across, which likely made them realize the importance of conveying meaning through words.

## 8. Did they keep their diaries?

- She wrote every day and showed me hers after returning home, but he said he hadn't written. It seems sleep deprivation and fatigue made it hard for him to focus at times. I wish he could have written even a little.
- When I saw it after returning, it appeared he was writing a little bit each day.
- She was writing diligently, while he hardly wrote anything. While individual strengths and weaknesses play a role, I think it's important to record overseas memories while they're still vivid. For children who struggle, having a basic framework (like what they ate each day, fun things, places visited, etc.) might lower the hurdle a bit.

## 9. How was their presentation?

- She carefully chose her words, sounding anxious yet weaving them together—it felt like a presentation true to her character. Despite her nervousness, her effort to articulate her experiences and gratitude came through clearly. He made us worried until the last minute about whether his slides would be ready, but on the day, his presentation was surprisingly solid, exceeding expectations. He didn't just read text; he added his own words, and I realized he possessed this level of ability. I hope they continue giving presentations like this going forward. I believe successfully delivering a presentation builds confidence. They seemed to struggle a bit with uploading photos.
- I helped her prepare, but she ended up creating it differently from the reference materials provided beforehand, and I apologize for that. Both of them didn't just have fun; they talked about specific things, and I think they delivered presentations that were enjoyable for the audience too.
- Creating the slides was a nail-biter right up until the last minute, but she worked hard to get them done. She prepared everything from the slides to the script of what she wanted to convey beforehand, and I believe she delivered a solid presentation. I was genuinely worried whether he could pull it off, but I think he managed to properly convey his fun memories, studies, and things he experienced, even adding some ad-libs along the way.

## 10. Should we continue this program in the future?

- I sincerely hope this program continues. Even though we know traveling abroad is a valuable experience, it's difficult to make it happen solely through the home. Watching the process of preparation, travel, and presentation unfold, I strongly felt their growth and the

immense potential they already possess. I truly wish other children could experience this too. Also, I hope the two who participated this time can be involved in this program again in some capacity. Thank you very much.

- I sincerely hope this program continues. Seeing older children go overseas seemed to spark excitement in the younger ones, making them feel that someday, they too could go.
- I sincerely hope this program continues. Children in the home are accustomed to adult-supervised environments and, while receiving various forms of support, have few opportunities to accomplish things entirely on their own. To do so overseas, in a place where Japanese isn't understood, experiencing both safety and inconvenience, and encountering things unavailable in Japan, is truly a wonderful experience. Including next participants, the experience of interacting and communicating with people from diverse backgrounds is incredibly valuable.

## Postscript

Little Creators held the second iteration of this program believing that children who must enter society from a vulnerable position can gain the courage and confidence to take on challenges by experiencing an “away” environment. We hoped they would tangibly feel the possibilities of a world different from their own and gain the impetus to forge their own paths toward the future.

Now, as Little Creators, we deeply regret our lack of thoroughness. We assumed what worked in the first iteration would work again, leading to complacency in preparation. We were not thorough enough. First, regarding the timing of homestay placement and communication with host families: While The RICE conducted interviews and selected homestays, we should have sought placements much earlier and arranged for the children to meet their hosts online beforehand. Furthermore, if a full 7-day homestay is unfeasible, we may need to be more flexible, such as allowing stays of just a few days. We also need to increase the number of online exchanges between Japanese and Singaporean children.

The list of lessons learned is endless. Still, it was heartening to see the two participants smile and tell us they had fun. To bring smiles to many more children, we will approach this project, other initiatives, and our daily activities with greater care.

Little Creators

**To support the activities of Little Creators, please donate. All donations will be used to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds. (International exchange programs, and or art workshops)**



Press



and select English from the globe



# Short Stay in Singapore

August 12, 2025～August 18, 2025



Misono Kodomo-no-le, NPO Little Creators, The RICE



Little Creators

# Host Family

My host is Mary-san.

She is very kind to me, and I had so much fun talking to her about the common interests (K-POP, Music etc)

I enjoyed very much when she took me to an exhibition, dinner, and drive.

I regret it very that I lost my cell phone. I had many photos with her.



My room in  
Singapore

# Food & Drink



Mary-san cooked bacons and eggs for me.

The Chinese bread (whose name I do not remember) in the picture on your right was delicious.

Rice is long and dry, so I did not like it much. But Chicken Rice which I ate with friends from 10 Square was very tasty.



## City

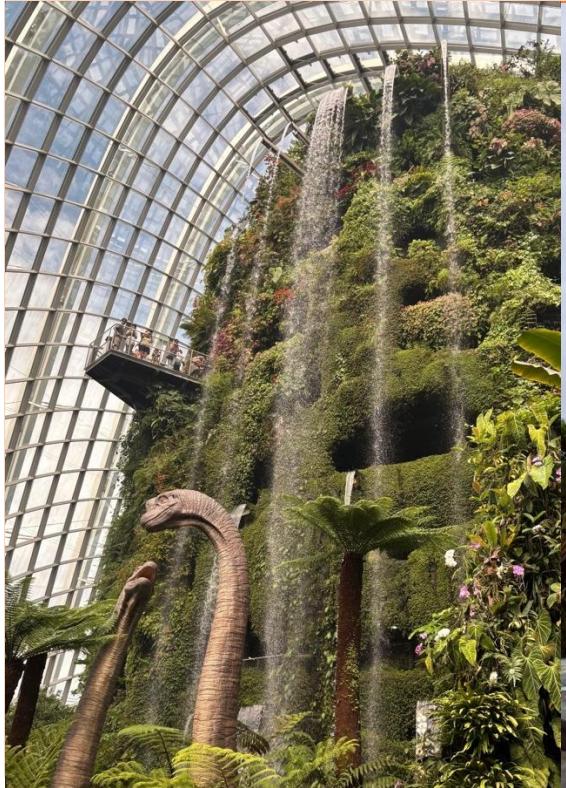
The most impressive thing is colorfulness. And everything, from a big building to its details, was so beautiful.

Singapore is “metropolis” where many tall buildings are like Tokyo.

Buildings in a residential area are also tall, and there are much traffic. There are not only main roads, but many small complex roads.

I thought Singapore would be beautiful and no trash before the travel, but there were some trash which I could feel people's living.

# Memories – People & Landscape



- The 1<sup>st</sup> place I enjoyed is
- Jurassic Park.
- It is a huge space,
- and dinosaurs are moving lively.
- Incredibly impressive!

The 2<sup>nd</sup> is  
Garden by the Bay

Many plants are exhibited in the large area.

There are some plants I have never seen before.  
I was really moved!

The 3<sup>rd</sup> is Battle Box.

This place was actually used as an underground command center during the war.

It's now a museum, and I was able to learn a little about the hardships of war.

The 4<sup>th</sup> is Chinatown.

I visited the Sri Mariamman Temple, a Hindu temple, and learned how to pray.

It was very complex and difficult, but I managed to learn by imitating others.

There were also places to shop, which was enjoyable.

# Cultural Event

I enjoyed everything, but what I remember most fondly was shopping and taking hands-on classes with everyone at 10 Square.

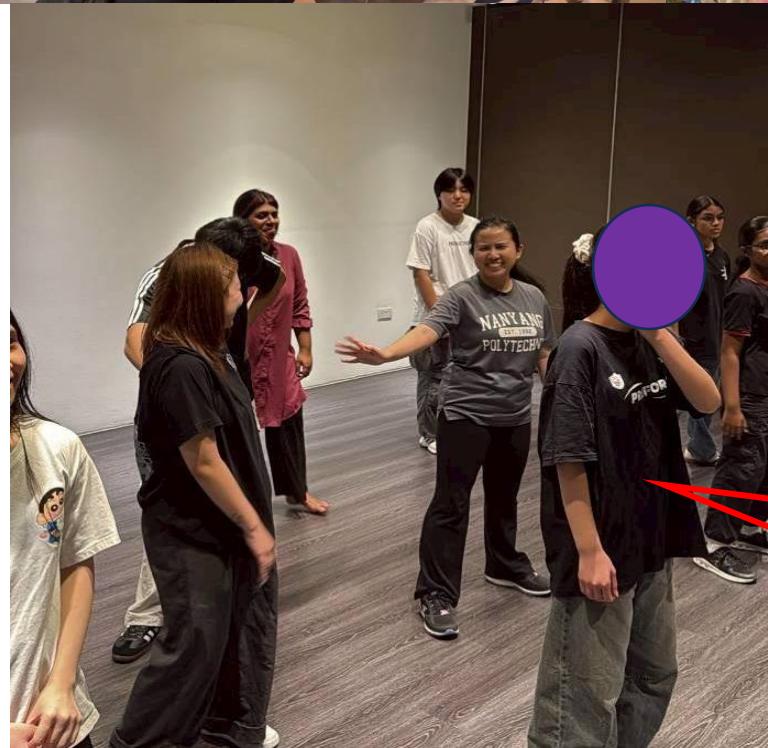
There were so many first-time experiences, and it was fun!

Everyone was kind and spoke to me casually in Japanese or simple English, and it was fun being with people my age.

I was happy they kindly taught me things I asked about, like the roads, buildings, and words.



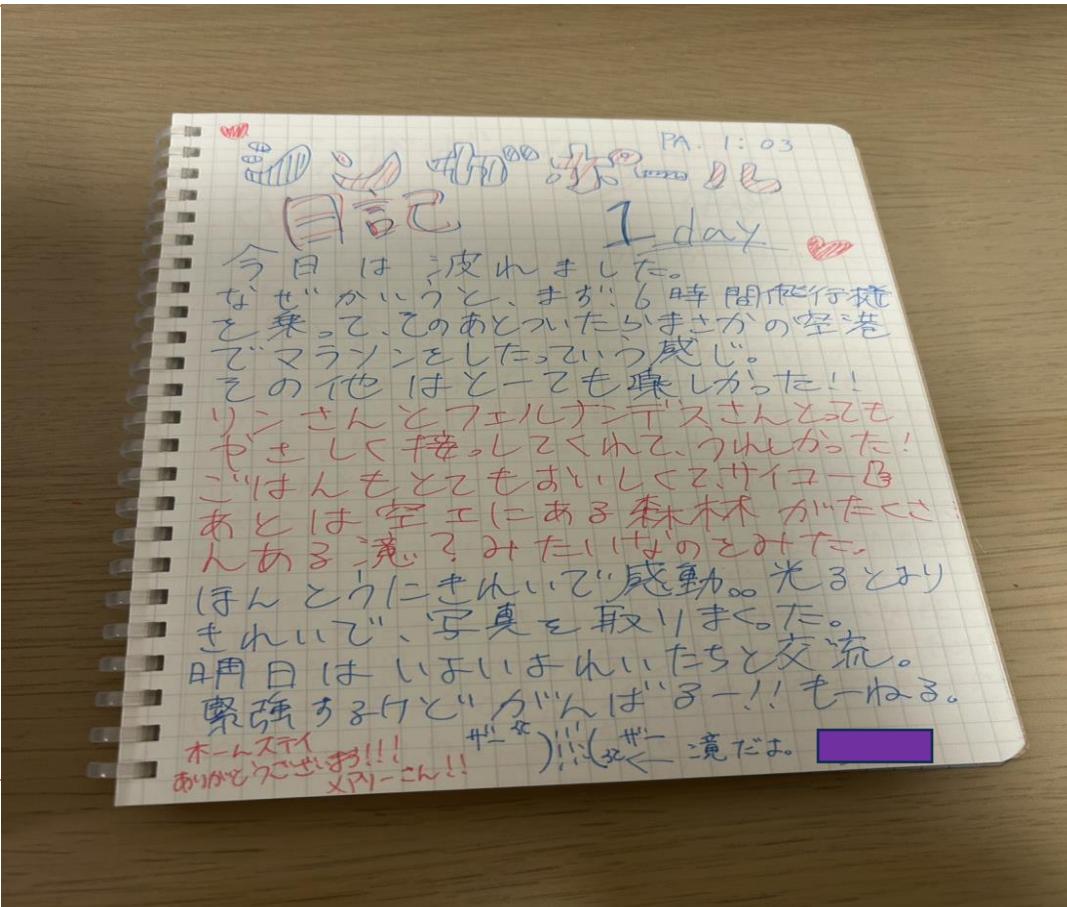
With everyone at 10 Square helping out, we came up with the color scheme



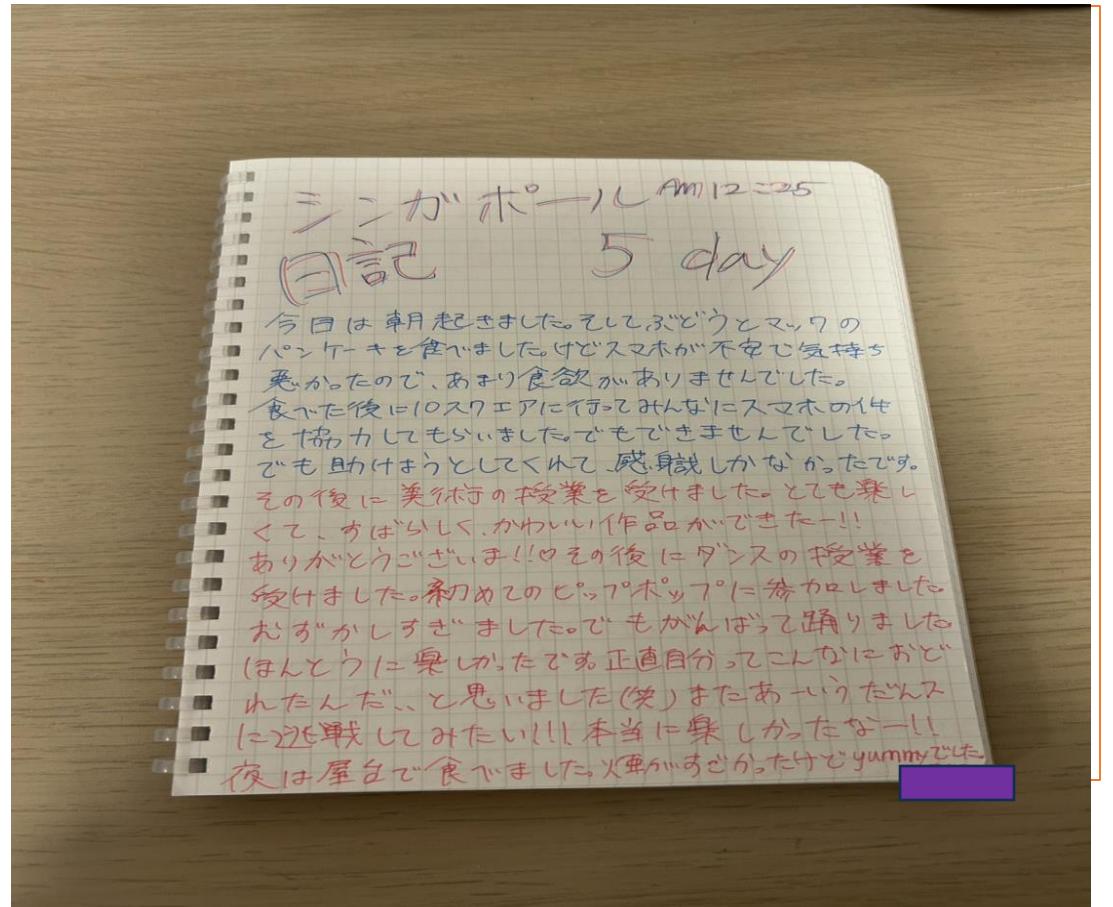
Dance class included kids from other youth too, and it was fun interacting with them.

# Diary

8月12日



8月16日



# About Myself

- Have you noticed any changes in yourself since going to Singapore? What kind of changes?  
→ Yes. I decided I wanted to study English more.
- After returning from Singapore, are there any new challenges you want to take on or things you want to work harder at? What are they?  
→ I want to work hard to be able to communicate more using English.
- Do you want to go to Singapore again? Why?  
→ Yes. Because the city is very clean, everyone is kind, and I want to see the famous tourist spots again at a more leisurely pace.
- Do you want to visit countries other than Singapore? Why?  
→ Yes. Visiting Singapore allowed me to experience the country's charm and culture, so I want to visit other countries to learn about their cultures and city atmospheres. Enjoying overseas travel is also one reason I want to go.

# For the Next Generation

- Do you think other children at Misono should also have the chance to go to Singapore? Why?  
→I think so. Flying overseas alone with just one other person made me anxious, but I learned many things and gained knowledge.  
So if other children get the chance to go to places like Singapore, I'm sure they'll have fun and learn a lot.
- If you could give advice to children who might go next, what would you say? Why?  
→I think it would be good to know some basic English. I could sort of understand what people were saying and listen, so I think being able to speak would make it even more fun.  
Also, there were lots of times I got lost because I didn't know how to get out of the airport or what to do, so I think it would be good to have a solid grasp of things you've studied beforehand.  
And make sure not to lose your cell phone—it's better not to put it in your pants.

# To the Host Family & Supporters

I had such a great time talking with Mary-san about music and all sorts of things. She took me to many places, and even when she thought I might prefer eating alone to relax, she kindly let me be by myself. I was truly touched by her kindness.

The Little Creators team helped me so much, even when I got lost at the airport upon arrival before the trip even started.

At first, I was really anxious and worried about so many things, but once I boarded the plane, I felt relieved.

It was my first time overseas, my first time in a new place, and I learned so many things. I think I gained a little more knowledge too.

If I ever go overseas again, I'll use this experience to do my best!

Thank you so much for letting me experience six wonderful days!

ご清聴ありがとうございます。

Thank you !

# Short Stay in Singapore

August 12, 2025 ~ August 18., 2025



Misono Kodomo-no-le NPO Little Creators The RICE



Little Creators

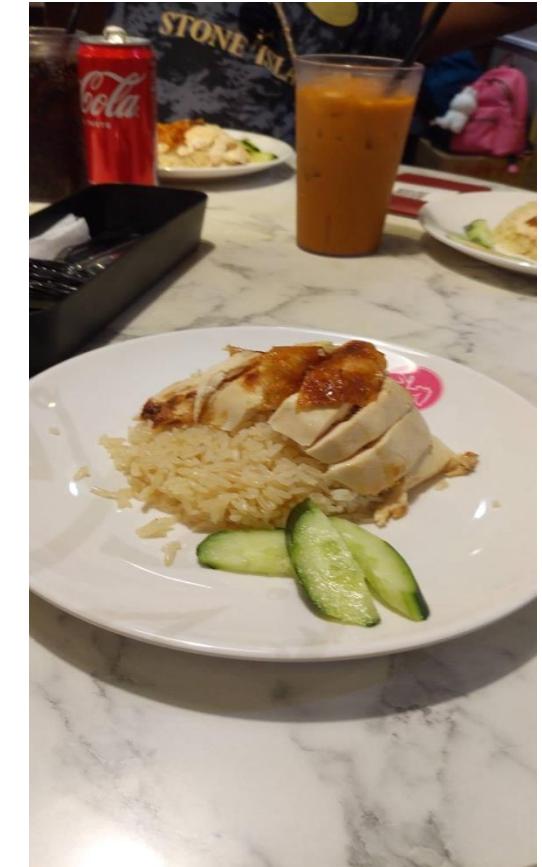
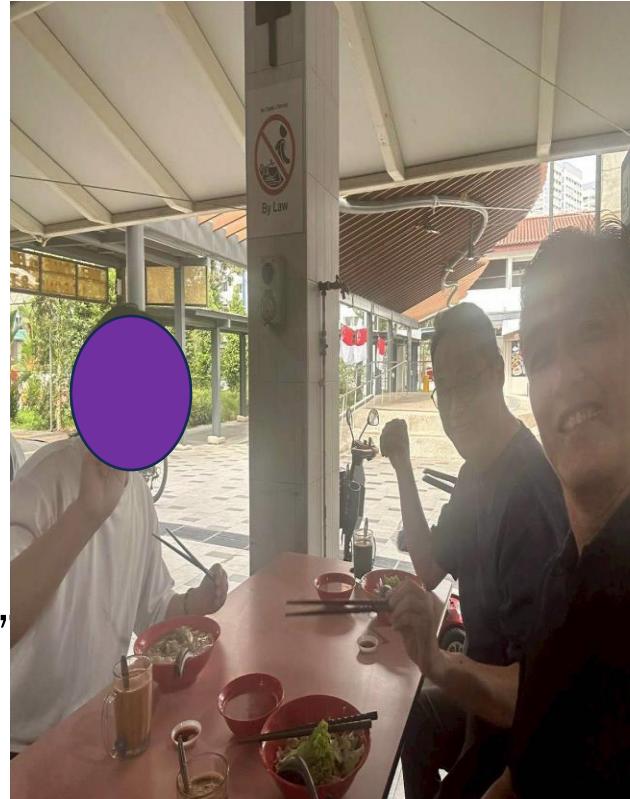
# Food & Drink

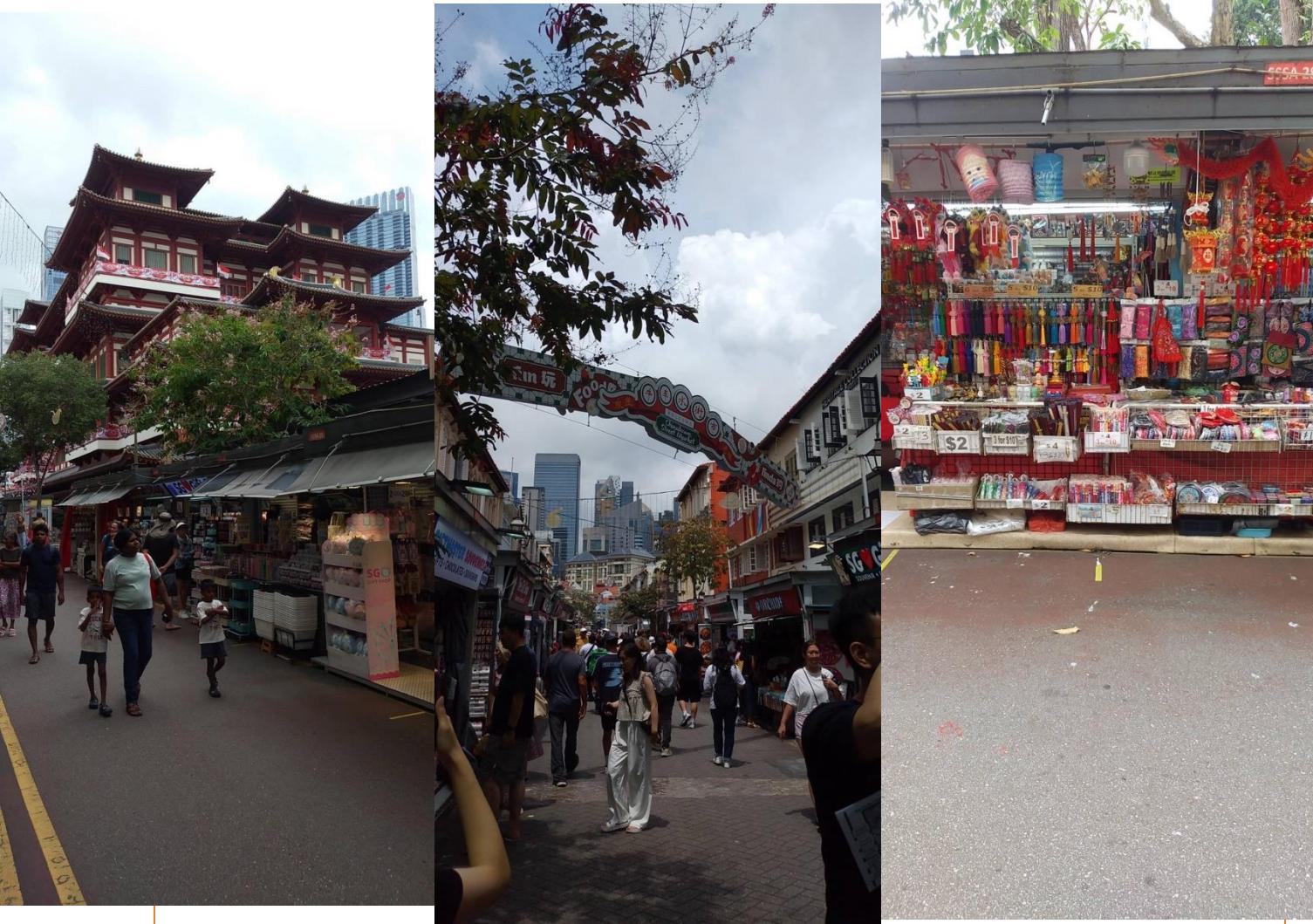
- Chicken Rice

I had Singapore's famous chicken rice. I chose Kaitong, which is apparently the most famous shop in Singapore. The flavor was different from what I'm used to in Japan; it felt like a completely different dish.

- Ramen

My host family's friend took me to a nearby food stall every morning. That friend referred to it as "Singapore Ramen." It had a richer, heartier flavor than the ramen I eat in Japan.





# City

Perhaps influenced by the cheerful nature of Singaporeans, the atmosphere throughout the city felt different from Japan. I'll share two particularly memorable impressions.

During my preparatory studies, I learned Singapore is strict about littering, but in reality, I felt there was more litter on the streets than in Japan.

Also, unlike Japan, buildings were often brightly colored in red, green, and other vivid hues, creating a sparkling contrast to Japan's subdued cityscapes.

# Cultural Event

As we discussed online, we relied on translation (app on a cell phone) because we couldn't communicate in the same language. However, we were able to become friends through non-verbal communication, like drawing pictures together.



(写真。何枚でも)



# About Myself

- Have you noticed any changes in yourself since going to Singapore? What kind of changes?

I don't think anything particularly unusual happened, but I decided I should study English a bit more before we meet again.

- After returning from Singapore, are there any new challenges you want to take on or things you want to work harder at? What are they?

I want to focus on studying English, especially the speaking part.

- Do you want to go to Singapore again? Why?

I want to go.

The reason is simply that I love traveling and I felt like I wanted to make new friends overseas again.

- Do you want to visit countries other than Singapore? Why?

I want to go.

Because some of the people who came to Japan last year (Art Camp 2024) to visit were from countries other than Singapore, I felt like I wanted to visit their countries too.

# For the Next Generation

- Do you think other children at Misono should also have the chance to go to Singapore? Why?

I think it's a good idea.

Because I felt reassured knowing I could make friends overseas and have someone to rely on across the sea.

- If you could give advice to children who might go next, what would you say? Why?

Since it wasn't just English speakers, I found the smartphone translation feature incredibly helpful and think you should use it.

I had to spend extra time on procedures at the airport on the way back, so I think it's better to do some prep work online beforehand.

# To the Host Family & Supporters

First, to my host family, the Chew, thank you for letting me stay in your home for about a week. I was truly happy that you welcomed me, a stranger. I hope to see you again if the opportunity arises.

And to everyone at Little Creators, thank you so much for giving me this chance to go to Singapore. It was an invaluable experience; one you might only get a few times in a lifetime. It was my first time abroad, and I made so many memories. Even after leaving Misono, I want to go overseas again on my own.

ご清聴ありがとうございます。

Thank you !