

Madeleine Kraatz (USA)

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My name is Madeleine Kraatz. I am 15 years old and will be going into 10th grade in high school. I go to Zama American High School, which is on the Camp Zama American army base located just outside of Tokyo, Japan. We live there because my parents are teachers at the schools for the military children. After going to school in Texas until the 3rd grade, we moved to Japan and I started going to Japanese school. I went to Japanese school for six years and became fluent in Japanese.

While in Japan I experienced the Great Tohoku Earthquake. My Girl Scout troop at the time started a project to fill backpacks with necessities and comfort items for children in the affected areas. We were able to send thousands of backpacks. Other projects developed from the original idea, so we were able to help many children and families.

I have been interested in charitable causes for my whole life. Recently, I participated in an online event called Project for Awesome, where participants can upload videos to raise money and awareness for various causes. My video explained the problem of shark finning and the WildAid organization. I am still learning how to make informative and entertaining videos, but it is something that I really enjoy doing.

My goal for this conference is to learn about current issues and work with others to bring about social change. I'm also looking forward to the cultural exchange with other attendees, as well as experiencing Native American culture since I've been away from America for some time. This is my first time at a conference like this so I plan on listening and learning a lot.