

## Soto (Male from Japan)

<b>Service Ref.:</b>	10-01264		
<b>Age:</b>	16 years old		
<b>Program:</b>	Year Program for North Hemisphere( August 2011 through June 2012)		
<b>Status:</b>	Family Placement Confirm / Georgia AFS Unaffiliated Chapter		
<b>English:</b>	Fair	<b>Religion:</b>	None
<b>GPA/Quartile:</b>	B/1	<b>Graduate:</b>	N
<b>Smoke:</b>	No	<b>Diploma/Graduate:</b>	March 2013
<b>Parent:</b>	Self-employed engineer	<b>SLEP/ELRF:</b>	46/ 232
<b>Family Member:</b>	Hidenori (Father) Sachiko (Mother) Miyuu (Daughter:'92) Soto (Son:'94) Kei (Son:'96)		
<b>Pets:</b>	Allergic to cats		
<b>Biographical Summary:</b>	<p>Soto has a good sense of humor and is well liked by classmates and teachers. He's a diligent and polite student who is open-minded and adapts quickly to new surroundings. Soto has one older sister and one younger brother. He's the listener among his siblings and plays the go between when the other two disagree. He has a great relationship with his parents and says he's lucky to have such wonderful parents who he truly respects. He and his family are big baseball fans and love to watch games together on TV. Soto and his mother also share a passion for tennis and sometimes play together. At school Soto belongs to the tennis team. His teammates say that he has a gentle nature but can be competitive when it comes to playing. In his spare time he likes to read and his favorite author is a contemporary female Japanese novelist by the name of Miyuki Miyabe. In the future Soto would like to become an English teacher. He'd like to use his own AFS experiences to help his students build a bridge between Japan and other countries via educational activities.</p> <p>Soto is a scholarship student.</p>		

Following is Soto's letter to his future host family:

October 22, 2010

Dear Host Family,

First, I'm going to introduce myself. My name is Souto. I was born on November 29, 1994. I will be 16 years old in a month.

I live in Osaka in Japan. Osaka is the second largest city of Japan. Many cheerful, funny people live in this city. Humor will just about get us through anything, don't you think? I hope my sense of humor have been developed, too.

Osaka is famous for many unique foods like Takoyaki. It is a round-shaped snack made of flour, which contains tiny pieces of octopus. I'm afraid western people can't think of eating octopus. Have you ever tried some? I'm not a very cook but I'm planning to cook something for you during my stay; for example Okonomiyaki, which is also typical Osaka's food, a certain kind of Japanese thin and flat pancake cooked on a hot plate, including chopped cabbages and sometimes seafood, with sliced pork on a top of it. We usually eat it topped with special thick sauce. I would like you to tell me how to make something delicious from your recipe.

Speaking of Osaka, Koshien Stadium, the home ground of the Hanshin Tigers is located in Kansai Region, including the city. The baseball team has enthusiastic fans, and that includes my family and me. We often have dinner watching a game on TV. We get so excited to talk about the team, though this year the Tigers' season ended disappointingly. I know baseball is part of American culture. Do you often enjoy watching baseball games?

Now, I'd like to tell you a little more about my family. My father is a self-employed engineer, and he can repair various things by himself. I think he is a person of an inquiring turn of mind. Also, he remains calm under pressure and makes fair judgements, which I respect him for. My mother likes tennis just as I do. We sometimes play together. I think she is an optimist and that is one of her greatest personality traits.

When I run into a problem, basically I try to overcome the situation by myself (I'm quite sure I can cope with any difficulty I might come up against in your country during my year.); first I ascertain the cause, and then I think how I can overcome it. Solving problems can be satisfying. However, sometimes there are things even basically an easygoing person like me can feel pressed. What with everyday hard work and tennis practice, I sometimes feel exhausted. I find myself just struggling with the fact that I don't have much time no matter what I do, and as a result, even more time goes by. Even under such circumstances I'm okay because I know my parents are always there to say, "If nothing seems to be going right, you're lucky, because good things are just around the corner." I think I'm very lucky to have such wonderful parents.

I have one sister and one brother. My sister is 18, and my brother is 13 now. Sometimes brothers and sisters just don't get along with each other, but basically I think I'm a good listener, and so, often become the go-between for my sister and brother, or sometimes for my parents and brother, because my brother is now at a

difficult age. When he is going through something difficult, or feeling sad, I try to stand by and listen to him if he needs my help.

At school, I belong to the tennis club. I play with my teammates after school and even on weekends. We have tried hard together so we can be good tennis players. My teammates say I have a gentle nature but that I can be competitive when I try to beat my opponents. That would be part of my character. I might not be the type of person who takes charge as captain, but I'm passionate enough to light a fire under the other members, to borrow my closest teammate's phrase.

Besides playing tennis, I like reading books. I especially enjoy detective stories written by Miyuki Miyabe, a Japanese female novelist. She is one of the most popular contemporary authors of Japan.

I'm planning to be a schoolteacher in the future. I dream of myself teaching English to my students. If the dream comes true, I want to teach them something I learned from my own experience, not depend solely on what we can know from textbooks. Language is the cultural backbone, and so, just sitting in class reading textbooks or learning the grammar is not enough. I hope someday I can be another reason why children like me become interested in learning a foreign language to cross the bridge between some country and Japan. I'd like to be a help to make the relationship between countries much better, through educational activities.

American movies first encouraged me to participate in this AFS program. Someone said in some movie that the United States is big enough that you think that it is the world and there is no need to look outside. I've long wanted to witness with my own eyes whether it is quite so. Now I feel the world is a wide place, and curiosity, I'll close the distance.

I'm really really looking forward to seeing you soon.