

## Jennifer Butler

platform for JETAA USA Country Representative 2012-2013



- JET Program, ALT, 2001-2004 & ALT Coordinator, 2003-2004
- JETAA Southeast, Education Coordinator, 2005-2008
- JETAA Music City, Treasurer, 2010-Present
- JETAA USA National Conference Delegate: 2011 (Washington DC); 2010 (New York); 2008 (Seattle); 2007 (Atlanta–hosted by chapter)
- Program Coordinator, Cultural Affairs Division, Consulate-General of Japan, 2010 – Present
- Founder of Japan-America Society of TN- Young Professionals, 2011

The JET Program and the JET Alumni Association are vital to the US-Japan relationship and I believe strongly in the goals and missions set out for these organizations.

I want to build a strong team with the other Country Representatives that JETAA officers and members can turn to for advice, support and help communicating their views and ideas. I will do this by utilizing not only on my years of experience being involved with JETAA but also using my personal and professional background working behind the scenes with a variety of Japan-related organizations.

Working together with the other Country Representatives and the newly created JETAA USA Advisory Board, as Country Representative I will strive to learn best practices for JETAA USA and initiate new ideas for our organization both in the short and long term.

### **Short & Long Term Goals**

For instance, in the short-term we must:

- Support a vigorous continuation of the relief activities started last year in response to the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. This in some ways will be even more of a challenge considering how easily the focus of the public shifts to the next crisis in the world. However it's crucial that we not lose our momentum and each chapter should be encouraged to independently and collectively continue to raise awareness of the difficulties still faced by the people of Japan using the strength of our cooperation under JETAA USA.
- Also, the promotion of good work being done by our chapters and individual JET alumni must continue as this so effectively demonstrates the "Return on Investment" that is the key to keeping JETAA relevant to the powers that be.

Using the expertise and experience of the Advisory Board, the Country Representatives should all also work towards achieving long-term goals such as:

- Working more effectively with local Japan-related organizations to further mutual goals of supporting US-Japan relations. This is where national initiatives such as the Sister-Cities Initiative come into play and has great potential to benefit both the JET Program and JETAA. An area we are sorely lacking in is exposure to the average Japanese citizen. Programs like the Sister-Cities Initiative have the potential to reach the people in small towns across Japan and demonstrate to them that their investment in JET continues to benefit their community.
- I also recognize the need to “widen our net” into the professional world which is why I founded the Young Professionals group of the Japan-America Society of Tennessee last year. Our Young Professionals group’s affiliation with the local Japan-America Society has been attracting a variety of individuals with Japan-related experience that don’t necessarily have a direct JET connection. This in turn strengthens and broadens the opportunities that the Music City JETAA chapter has had for outreach across a variety of fields, businesses and industries.

Of course, all of these aspirations cannot take place in a year, but I believe that we must build on the excellent groundwork that’s been established and continue to put the pieces in place for the present and the future of JETAA.

## **Background & Skill Set**

I’ve had a longtime connection to Japan and enjoyed my time on JET immensely as an ALT and ALT Coordinator in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka. Since returning to the US in 2004, I’ve had a wealth of experience in JETAA activities. I was an officer for JETAA Southeast from 2005 to 2008 in charge of organizing our extensive JET Pre-Departure Question & Answer Seminar with the Consulate and other education/volunteer related activities. During this time the Southeast chapter also hosted the 2007 JETAA USA National Conference where I performed similar duties on a larger scale before representing our chapter the following year at the 2008 JETAA USA National Conference in Seattle. These experiences and more have helped hone my organizational skills while navigating the many requirements of working with CLAIR, MOFA & the Consulates.

After I began working in Nashville at the Consulate-General in 2010, I was elected Treasurer for Music City JETAA, the newest JETAA chapter in the United States. I’m proud to say that even though we are the youngest JETAA chapter, we have continued to strengthen our presence in the local area and increased not only our membership and activities for JETs and the local community, but strengthened the working relationship our chapter has with the Consulate as well.

I have also served as an active delegate to the two most recent National Conferences which I feel are the two most important conferences in the history of JETAA USA. At these conferences, I directly observed the shared passion, dedication and commitment of so many officers and officials at both CLAIR and MOFA towards envisioning what JETAA could become as we weathered the storms of the “JET Threat” in 2010 and coordinating the response to the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami by managing the JETAA USA Relief Fund in 2011.

I will try my best, using the connections forged over years in the JET community, drawing on past experiences in various fields, and pledging my ongoing commitment to help carry JETAA USA into our next phase of development.