

## Don Franklin

For the last two years, Don Franklin has been living in Chikuma City, Nagano Prefecture and using his increasingly fluent Japanese to assist with the planning and implementation of international events; interpreting for visitors from overseas; helping to compile and translate information for foreign residents living within the city and introducing NZ to residents of Chikuma City through presentations, school visits etc. How did he come to have such an exciting yet demanding job?



Don with the infamous snow monkeys enjoying an *Onsen* in Nagano Prefecture.

Don's journey with Japanese started in Form 6 (Year 12). After hosting Japanese students at his house for about 3 years, Don became curious about Japan and its unique culture. With an intention of one day travelling to Japan he decided to take Japanese in High School.

He was fortunate to enjoy a year of immersion in Japan at Ritsumeikan Uji High School in 2002. The highlight of this experience was being able to utilise what he had learned in lessons on a daily basis as well as experiencing Japanese culture and hospitality first hand. At the same time, Don also gained self-confidence in his spoken Japanese and the ability to convey his thoughts in an efficient manner.

That time in Japan fuelled his desire to further his study of Japanese. Upon returning to NZ, Don studied a Bachelor of Arts at Auckland University, majoring in Japanese. After completing this, he applied and was successfully selected to be a CIR (Coordinator for International Relations) on the JET programme from 2007. Don lived in Chikuma City in Nagano Prefecture for two years and being a CIR meant use of complex Japanese daily in unpredictable situations.

2009 is an exciting year in Don's life. Packing up his amazing time in Chikuma City is no easy feat but Don is looking forward to his next step. That is to find a position in either Japan or NZ where previous work experience in Japan and fluent Japanese would be of value, preferably within the fields of marketing, sales or trade. We wish Don the best of luck!