

**Denise Olivieri
(1989~92, 00)**

I'm always happy to reminisce about my years at LIOJ. I will never forget my first taxi ride up to Asia Center: that first glimpse of the ocean as we pulled into the drive... the beating of my heart. I knew as soon as I walked through those doors that I wanted to work at LIOJ more than anything else I ever wanted. Happily for me, Bob Ruud decided to hire me!

That was in 1989 and I was to stay for another three years. I am not absolutely sure about this, but I may have been the first LIOJ teacher to work in all three programs: Community, Team Teaching, and Business. I believe I was hired for the Community Program mainly because of my experience as an AET (Assistant English Teacher) in Akita prefecture. What I came to love about my new job at LIOJ though, was teaching young children. I don't care what anyone says; if you're a teacher and you haven't taught kids, you're missing out on an important part of the whole experience.

After a year and a half in the Community/Team Teaching Programs, I transferred into the BCP. I really appreciated being part of a team working in a unique, carefully-conceived, and stimulating program with wonderful, motivated students. I also loved the Summer Workshops and meeting so many dedicated professionals. The next year and a half flew by before I knew it.

Though I stayed in a business setting for some years after leaving LIOJ, that experience had somehow whetted my appetite for more exotic lands. I spent two years in Nepal with the American Peace Corps from 1996-98. Upon finishing my service, I returned to Japan where I now teach at a private girls' school in Tokyo. I love my job and my students, and feel that I am finally home.

LIOJ is where I really grew as a teacher, explored the depths of my creativity, learned to listen, learned to be a member of a team, developed split-second timing. It will always hold a special place in my heart.