**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND WELCOME THE CONTINGENT OF JAPANESE STUDENTS AND THEIR CHAPERONE VISITING SOUTH CAROLINA FROM MARCH 22, 2009, TO APRIL 1, 2009, AND TO COMMEND THE CULTURAL CONNECTIONS PROGRAM, OF BLYTHEWOOD, FOR ITS MISSION TO BRIDGE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OUR GREAT NATION AND THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN.

Whereas, the members of the House of Representatives are pleased to have students from Japan visiting our fine State and wish to express appreciation to Cultural Connections for their foresight in strengthening relations with the nation of Japan through their young people; and

Whereas, originally from Japan, Miyako Johnson, with her husband Allen, began an informal program in 1996 for Japanese students from her father, Nobuji Horikoshi’s church, to visit South Carolina; and

Whereas, in 2001, they launched Cultural Connections, which began the formidable task of inviting young students from Japan to South Carolina in order to experience American culture; and

Whereas, led by Miyako and Allen Johnson, of Richland County, almost one hundred fifty students have come from the region of Mie Prefecture in Japan over the past thirteen years; and

Whereas, the Johnsons arrange trips for students who spend days studying English and enjoying beautiful landscape and recreation that make our State a tourist haven, such as beach trips, canoeing, rafting, and fishing the state’s rivers; and

Whereas, students take historical tours and visit the State House and local businesses and farms. In turn, these students fill busy days presenting arts, crafts, and dance of Japanese culture to community schools, children’s hospitals, and other venues; and

Whereas, over one hundred fifty families, mostly from Richland County, have joined in supporting and hosting these Japanese students over the years; and

Whereas, Chisato Hatanaka of Soai Christ Church from Japan volunteers to coordinate the spring trips from Japan and has chaperoned this spring’s program; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn of the work of Cultural Connections in establishing a liaison between students of Japan and the State of South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and welcome the contingent of Japanese students and their chaperone visiting South Carolina from March 22, 2009, to April 1, 2009, and commend the Cultural Connections program, of Blythewood, for its mission to bridge communication between our great nation and the people of Japan.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Miyako and Allen Johnson and Chisato Hatanaka.

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