

# Alumni Spotlight



JOHN SADDEKNI  
PREVIOUS ENGLISH TEACHER IN JAPAN

Hey UAB! My name is John Saddekni, I went to UAB from 2012 to 2016 majoring in International Studies and minoring in Japanese and Sociology. I took a wide range of classes, but Japanese is what really peaked my interest and guided my career-path, especially after an awesome year of study abroad at Ibaraki University. While you may recognize me as the current Japanese tutor at UAB, I actually used to be an English teacher in middle schools in Japan.

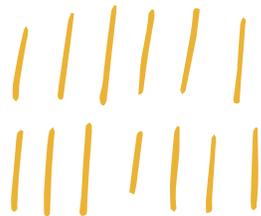


In 2018, Tuscaloosa Sister Cities shipped me out to a bed-town of Tokyo called Narashino, Chiba, where I was an Assistant Language Teacher at all seven Narashino Junior High Schools.

Teaching gave me a lot of public speaking experience, and learning how to control a room in an as organic setting as a middle school classroom is truly an invaluable experience.



Narashino, being a suburban area, mainly makes a name for itself out on the field. Narashino High School's baseball team making it to the national championships is a common occurrence, and their marching band often does the same. Seeing how hard the middle schoolers practiced for their extracurriculars was really eye-opening as a lesson on Japanese culture and collectivism and even had me thinking about if I could've done things different during my marching band days. Yeah, cultural exchange will give you all sorts of existential crises. But, you know, the good kind.



Narashino is a great town, but to be honest the greatest thing about it is how close it is to Tokyo. Living a few train stops from Tokyo has a lot of benefits that I miss quite a lot since being back home. I bought tons of fresh clothes, went to big video game tournaments, and saw my favorite J-Rock bands all in the same 10-mile radius. Once I finish my Master's here at UAB I'm hoping to work in Tokyo again and pick-up where I left off. It's a great city and if you study Japanese before you visit I'm sure you can have just a good a time as I did!

-John