



 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

 NAME

MAYUKO ABE

 FROM

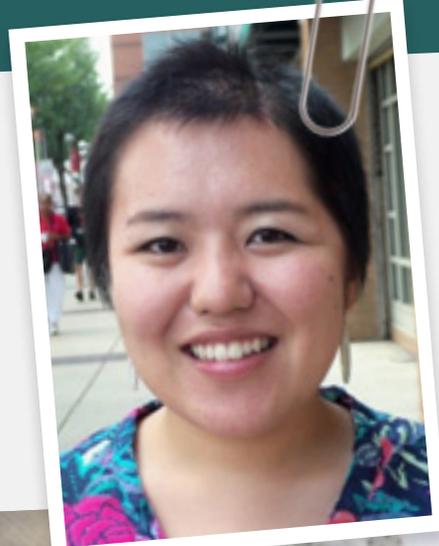
JAPAN

 TO

PHILADELPHIA, PA

 PROGRAM

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY – NEUROSCIENCE
AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES



Succeeding at Your Own Pace

Arriving to Temple University in Philadelphia confused and excited like many other international students, Mayuko Abe attended the orientations, walked across the large campus, got lost many times, but easily asked for help to get from one building to the next. She came to the United States (U.S.) from Japan to pursue her studies in Neuroscience and African American Studies. It wasn't until the following spring, however, that she would discover the disability services office, after a car accident caused her to have a traumatic brain injury as well as fractures to her ribs and pelvis. What did this mean for Mayuko?

As challenging as it could be, Mayuko decided to shift her priorities to ensure she had the proper support to still achieve her goals for coming to the United States. And through this process, she gained tremendous skills, personal development, and self-worth.

“Talk to staff at the International Office and Disability Services Office. They will provide you with great advice and support. Also join student organizations to meet new people and feel more integrated on campus.”

Immediately after her accident, Mayuko received one month of inpatient treatment and a full year of outpatient therapy, including art therapy. She found that art therapy helped her with expressing herself and reflecting on her

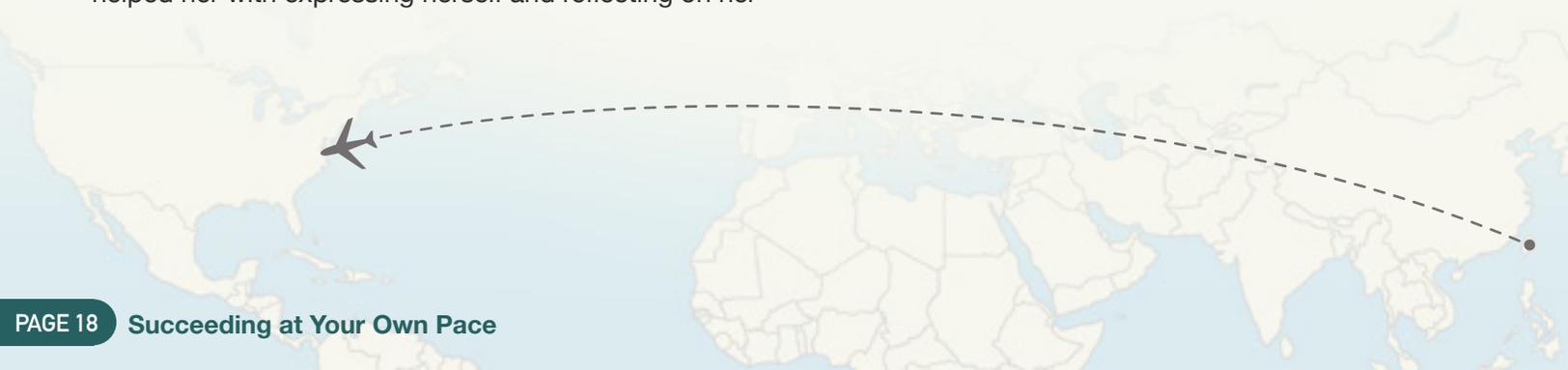
own thoughts and feelings. Many art programs involve individuals coming together and drawing, painting, and doing other non-rule oriented art work. This allows people who have sustained a traumatic brain injury to explore art at their own pace. The class was in a quiet setting, which provided the individuals time for self-reflection as they comfortably returned back to their routine.

“It helped me remember who I was before the deep coma caused by my brain injury. Since then, it still helps me avoid feelings of loneliness.”

Mayuko found so much value in her art therapy classes that she began taking art classes at Temple University. This supported her as she re-integrated into her program and to continue her self-reflection as she faced new challenges. After starting classes again, she remembers feeling like a perfectionist and that she had to work even harder after her brain injury. The stress and pressure caused her to have heightened medical issues.

“I'm a person with disabilities, so the most important thing is to stay healthy by eating and sleeping well, doing exercise, taking my medication, and not to look down on or discredit myself.”

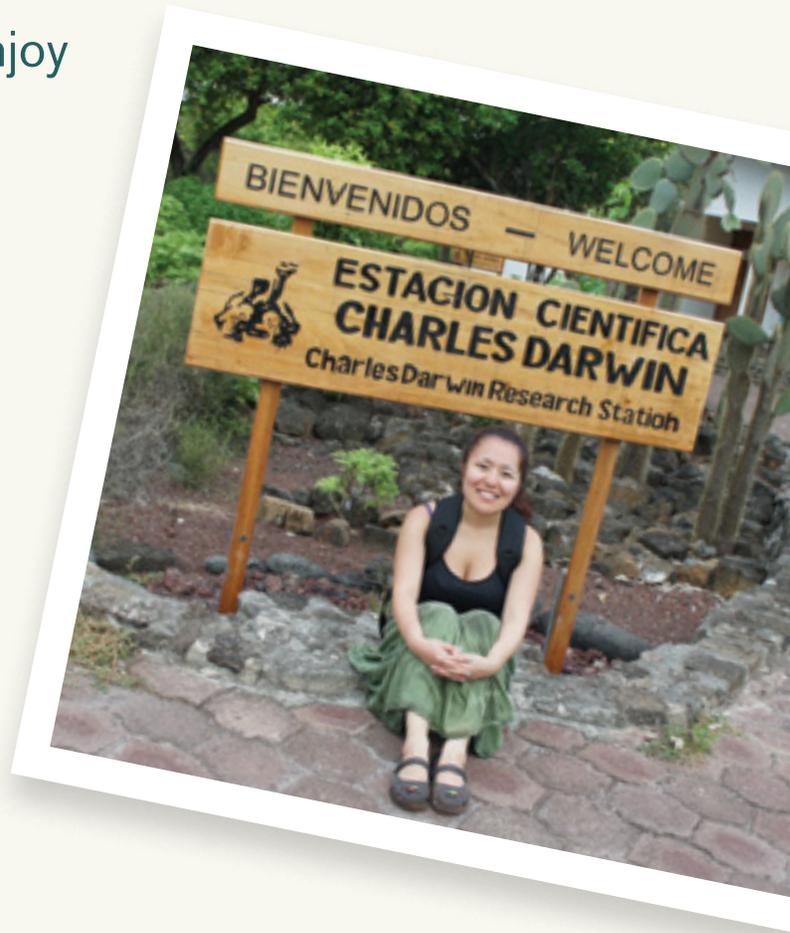
Along with Mayuko's art therapy, she also received a lot of support from the international office, disability services office, friends, family, medical professionals and student organizations. She joined the international student association and met many new friends. She also worked as a Japanese language class assistant on campus to meet people interested in her culture.





She spoke about her disability with friends and others she met, as she occasionally found it difficult having a non-apparent disability when people would make assumptions or make her feel uncomfortable if they didn't know about her disability.

“Not everyone is super rich. Not everyone is Miss Universe. Just enjoy your own life. Your life process is like a turtle, not a panther, but as long as you are healthy, have your own goals, and keep going forward, it's all good.”



**Read More About
Art Therapy**
arttherapy.org

Five Health Considerations

- 1 Health insurance can be complicated. Confirm you will have insurance coverage.**
- 2 Research what is covered by the health insurance, specifically for pre-existing conditions.**
- 3 Make sure to bring all of your health documentation with you and have it translated to English.**
- 4 Speak with your international office about reduced course load options for medical reasons.**
- 5 Stay healthy and learn about on and off campus support for students with disabilities.**