

Report on the Introductory Meeting of the Liberia–Japan Pen Pal and Idea Exchange Program



Group Photo after the session

**Held on November 8, 2025 – Brewerville, Montserrado
County**

On Saturday, November 8, 2025, YDCA Liberia hosted a lively and inspiring introductory meeting for students and parents who will be part of the Liberia–Japan Pen Pal and Idea Exchange Program. Held in the Brewerville area near the Zone Police Station Road, the gathering brought together families from several schools, many of whom were eager to understand more about a program their children had shown interest in during the school recruitment exercise.

From the moment the session began with an opening prayer, a warm and hopeful atmosphere filled the room. Parents and students were invited to introduce themselves, creating an early sense of community and shared purpose. It was clear that both groups were excited—not only about the opportunity to meet the organizers, but also to learn about the cross-cultural journey that lies ahead. During the welcome remarks, YDCA Support staff expressed gratitude for the strong turnout and emphasized why this collaboration between YDCA Liberia and partners in Japan matters. The meeting’s purpose was then outlined: to prepare parents and students for how the Pen Pal program will operate, what activities to expect, and how YDCA will support the students every step of the way.

A brief moment was dedicated to sharing the story of YDCA Liberia, including its mission of youth development, women development, child education, cultural exchange, leadership training, and community building. This helped parents understand the values and commitment behind the Liberia-Japan Pen Pal initiative.



As the program overview began, the room became even more engaged. Parents listened attentively as the Founding and Executive Director Jeffrey Paye, described the Liberia–Japan Pen Pal and Idea Exchange Program as more than just writing letters. It is a platform for students to connect with peers across the world, learn about new cultures, build friendships, and grow academically and socially.

One of the major highlights of the session was the announcement that the pairing of pen pals will be carried out by the Japan-based partner team. The partners will match the children based on similarities such as age and interests. Once the pairings are completed, the full list will be shared with YDCA Liberia and then with families. This update was met with excitement, as many students appeared eager to know who their new international friends will be.

Questions naturally arose from parents, especially regarding how the communication process would work. In response, YDCA assured them that individual email accounts will be created for all students, dedicated solely to pen pal exchanges. These accounts will allow the students to write

letters electronically, learn to communicate respectfully across cultures, and even participate in occasional video calls supervised by YDCA. To ensure that students feel confident and guided, YDCA will offer continuous support to the students on how to engage meaningfully with their Japanese peers.

Another important update shared during the meeting was about the upcoming Giving Tuesday Day on December 2, where the Pen Pal Program will be officially launched as part of YDCA's Giving Day celebration. Parents learned that during this launch event, all participating students will be formally presented and unified under the program, marking the official start of their cross-cultural friendship journey.

Throughout the meeting, the parents' reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Many spoke about how grateful they were that their children were being introduced to opportunities that could broaden their worldview and help them develop strong communication skills. Others expressed appreciation for YDCA's careful planning and emphasis on safety, structure, and educational value.

By the time the session closed with a prayer, there was a shared sense of excitement and readiness among the students and their parents. The introductory meeting succeeded in providing clarity, building trust, and igniting anticipation for what is to come. As the families departed, conversations continued in small groups—students imagining what their Japanese pen pals might be like, and parents thanking the YDCA team for bringing this unique program to their community.

