



Let Us Walk Together Project

NSKK Support for Victims of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake

News Letter

No. 13

1 September, 2012



▲ St Stephen's Church,
Fukushima



▲ Church of St Peter & St Paul,
Koriyama



▲ Misono Kindergarten,
Fukushima City



▲ St Paul's Kindergarten,
Koriyama City

Plans for Fukushima Base* (*Provisional name)



Rev. Hiromi Kageyama

Radiation pollution spread throughout the region following the explosion at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant last year. Even in Fukushima City and Koriyama City there are places with high figures for airborne pollution. In both cities there are churches and kindergartens belonging to the NSKK, but since both areas are outside the Danger Zone designated by the Government, the decision whether to evacuate and live elsewhere is left up to individuals. This causes a serious dilemma. The conflict in people's hearts is beyond imagining.

According to official figures of the Fukushima Prefecture Disaster Measures Headquarters, as of the end of December 2011, the number of people who had evacuated their homes in Fukushima to live outside the prefecture was 61,167, and the number who had evacuated to live in prefab and other temporary housing provided within the prefecture was 93,624. The number of children in the prefecture dropped

Anglican Church of Korea, Social Missions Team

Visit of Second Volunteer Group

Cookie Buying Support Ends

Regular Workplace "Workshop Himawari"

dramatically, and attendance at kindergartens dropped by half. One of our biggest concerns is how to protect the children who didn't evacuate.

Under the 'Let's Walk Together!' Project, we are bearing the cost of regular excursions for the children and of clean-up work to remove radiation pollution at Misono Kindergarten in Fukushima City, and at the Church of St Peter & St Paul and St Paul's Kindergarten in Koriyama City, as well as helping purchase of safer play equipment for the children there.

Some people decided to leave their homes, and have moved elsewhere; others for a variety of reasons could not or would not evacuate. The kind of support we provide has to seriously take into account the different situations of the people involved. In the midst of all of this, a Fukushima Base (provisional name) has now been set up, and it is now beginning to take concrete steps to come to grips with the issues.

Plans for Fukushima Base

Rev. Antonio Hiromi Kageyama Head of Fukushima Base (provisional name)

In the 'Let's Walk Together!' Project Interim Report published last July 1, reported for Fukushima was the following: "At a meeting of the Operating Committee for the Project on June 28, it has been decided to set up a 'Fukushima Base', along with a new initiative is underway to provide concrete support activities." The developments leading to establishment of the Base can be found in the report. Here I will focus on the Base's proposed future activities. Our plan for start-up has the following elements:

1 Establishment at Misono Kindergarten – Participation in the "Wakuwaku Room"

Our plan is to stand by people who have left their homes and relocated within Fukushima and are suffering under the threat of radiation pollution, and to share their experiences. Focusing on "Life," we plan to work mainly with young mothers with small children, but as noted in the interim report, whereas we were originally intending to use the church as our location, out of concern for high radiation pollution levels, Misono Kindergarten kindly offered to let us use their facility. We are thinking of participating in the kindergarten's "Wakuwaku Room" – a play yard open to the local community, which is a program of this kindergarten not just for its own children but others as well; we are also considering independent activities conducted by the base, and also possibly doing these in the church.

2 Support for/Connection with People in Temporary Housing

Large numbers of evacuees, especially from the town of Namie, have come to Fukushima City, where temporary housing has been erected throughout the city. Already 18 months have passed since the quake, and evacuees have received help from many quarters, unrelated to our project. Unfortunately our help seems rather late, but the end to Japan's nuclear radiation problem is still nowhere in sight, and the evacuees' daily life is still fraught with uncertainty. In one temporary housing facility close to the church were living, as of July, 15 families comprising 29 persons, the majority of them elderly, so we plan to discuss their needs with the local support center and provide whatever help we can.



3 Support for Radiation Pollution Clean-Up (Churches and kindergartens in Fukushima Prefecture)

Despite significant work done so far to clear away accumulated radiation pollution at the churches and kindergartens in Fukushima City and Koriyama City, radiation levels continue to be high. At the Church of St Peter & St Paul and at St Paul's Kindergarten, Koriyama, in particular, major pollution removal is still required. The kindergarten's playground equipment was badly polluted, so we supported the purchase of new play equipment for the children there. We plan to look into the situation at similar facilities in Onahama and Aizuwakamatsu as well.

4 Permanent Appointment of Bishop Tani

Since July, Bishop Shoji Tani (谷昌二主教), the former Bishop of Okinawa, has been appointed permanently to Fukushima, to be responsible for both the church and the new Project Base here, and his appointment is a great joy to us. Also, on the fourth Sunday of every month, the Diocese of Yokohama sends a celebrant to lead us in Holy Eucharist at St Stephen's church in Fukushima City and a group from St Andrew's Church, Yokohama who are working to support Fukushima come to share in our worship with us.

5 Continuation of Fukushima Children's Project

Using the Aoba Seishukan (Retreat House), we plan to offer further activities that can provide a refreshing break to the children and their families.



Our plans are still rather rough-hewn, but we will continue to work on them in the hope of providing whatever support we can to people suffering as a result of the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident. We would be grateful for your cooperation, your support, and your prayers.

■ Miyagi and Fukushima Prefs. – Social missions team from the Anglican Church of Korea

When a social missions team from the Anglican Church of Korea visited us in May, we reached an agreement through our talks with Presiding Bishop Kim Geun-Sang that we should welcome volunteers from Korea on a regular basis; this time we had the second round of receiving volunteers to work here in Tohoku. The team consisted of six members (including a priest to lead them). In the previous round, we got help with the demolition of the former catechist's residence at St. Nathaniel's Church in Murone. This time, the Korean team helped in a program for non-Japanese residents in Minamisanriku, visited temporary houses and helped in organizing our base in Shinchi. Every time they visit us, they tailor their efforts to the conditions we are facing. This time, they worked here for a week and went home. See Photo 1 below.



■ Iwaki City, Fukushima Pref. – “Hokkori” (“Comfy”) Café

Beginning last fall, we have been regularly visiting the Izumitamatsuyu emergency housing and the Watanabecho-hiruno temporary housing, and also started up the “Hokkori” Café. We have carried on with the café so that the residents can enjoy tea together. Some temporary residents themselves volunteered to work for the cafes. Thus, today, the residents, and in particular those on the Social Welfare Council, have taken over the cafes. This is an ideal pattern for the development of one of our projects. See Photo 2 below.



■ Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefs. – English classes launched

We have been providing courses to train non-Japanese women as English instructors. Now, preparations are being made in Sendai, Ishinomaki, and Iwaki to launch English classes. Already, some graduates are teaching conversational English at temporary housing, elementary schools, community centers, at kindergartens, some graduates are working as assistant language teachers. See Photo 3.

■ Ichinoseki City, Iwate Pref. – Visit “Murone Land” and have fun!

We held a camp at St. Nathaniel's Church aimed at children of those families we have encountered as part of our aid to non-Japanese residents, called “Murone Land.” Seven children from Tagajo, Ishinomaki, and Minamisanriku cities joined in the program, as well as some local Murone children who joined in at the last minute. The children had three days of fun in “Murone Land.” See Photo 4 below.

* We plan to offer more news on this program in the next issue.



■ Kamaishi City, Iwate Pref. – A temporary housing program

A new program “Gathering to sing Japanese songs” was kicked off. In carrying out a program, our base's staffers go out beforehand to the temporary housing areas to survey the needs. They then take those items many residents show a deep interest in and make them into a regular program. Our aim is to give some tangible shape to the will of the residents, and heighten their autonomy. This program started as simply singing Japanese songs. Yet gradually, many desires came up, like wanting to sing better or wanting to sing in chorus and so on. We look forward with anticipation to how this program will continue to develop.

Aid to “Himawari” (a workshop for intellectually challenged) through purchase of its baked cookies will now be ending.

This August was the end of a one year agreement to make purchases of Himawari's cookies. As churches and others nationwide bought the cookies, this created new work, and helped in the purchase of a new oven. We received a delighted message that this has widened the range of products. Though the “Let Us Walk Together” purchase program has ended, Himawari is still welcoming orders for its products. Please fill out the Order Sheet from the web page below and fax it to Himawari.

The workshop is currently developing new products as well, which we will introduce in future issues of this Newsletter. We hope you readers will continue to provide them with unwavering support.



Website (Japanese only)

http://www.nskk.org/walk/doc/himawari_fax.pdf

Phone & fax (Inside Japan)

0226-24-8255

Help to temporary house residents

- Gym class program: Kamaishi
- Cooking party: Kamaishi
- Haiku gathering: Kamaishi
- ▲ Shopping bus tours: Natori
- ▲ Tea parties, bazaars: Shinchi
- ◆ "Hokkori" ("Comfy") Café: Iwaki
- ◆ Making of "Sakura Sakasu Zoh" ("Elephants that will Make Cherry Blossoms"): Iwaki

In addition: Patchwork, nail art, "zabuton" (floor cushion) distribution and salon chat programs;; decoration making for "Taira Tanabata" festival, programs for children, etc.

Help to non-Japanese residents

▲ Individual assistance

(Aiding children in their learning, accompanying them to city offices and employment offices, etc.) : Ishinomaki, Minamisanriku, Tagajo



Following up on our work over spring break, we developed a program to help non-Japanese children with their school homework over long breaks. We mainly invited non-Japanese school children, but then their friends and siblings would also take part, so the program site was truly bustling! During the breaks, the kids had a good time with goodies and playing outdoors. Of course, they worked hard on their homework, and many were asking "let's have this again!"

- ▲ Helping to start up conversational English classes: Natori
- ▲ Hand-made goods program: Minamisanriku

- Murone Land: Ichinoseki, Iwate Pref.
- ◆ Asked Emmaus (the Tohoku District Center for the United Church of Christ in Japan) to conduct examinations on internal exposure to radiation: Fukushima Pref.

Help for the disabled

- ▲ Purchase of products: "Madoka" of Sendai City, "Himawari" of Kesennuma
- ▲ Help with work, participation in opening ceremony for their new facility: "Madoka," Sendai City

Help for the disabled

◆ Helping All Saints' Church, Wakamatsu move: Aizuwakamatsu

The 3-11 Earthquake did serious damages to this church building, so All Saints' Church has decided to demolish all the structures within its property, including its kindergarten, and rebuild them. As part of the preparation for the rebuilding, we helped the church people carry objects out of the rectory and kindergarten in early July. At present, the demolition work has already begun.



- ◆ Fukushima/Yamakoshi (Niigata) joint camping event: Nagaoka, Niigata Pref.

The colors for the bullet points indicate activities in: ◆ Iwate Pref. ◆ Miyagi Pref. ◆ Fukushima Pref. There are other activities not listed here. For more information, visit each base's blog. [only in Japanese]

The project's website <http://www.nskk.org/walk/>

Column On that occasion, with that person

(3)"Tanabata" festival – beautiful!

On August 6th through 8th every year, Sendai celebrates its "tanabata" stargazing festival. The Sendai event completely covers the heart of the city with gorgeous ornaments. A single decoration can exceed 10m in length and there is a decorations contest, where gold, silver, and bronze are awarded to deserving ornaments.

This year, once again, some people at Christ Church, Sendai submitted a tanabata ornament which partly used thin filament taken from "mayu dama" (silk cocoons) dyed by workers of "Machi no Kobo Madoka" (literally, "Madoka, the Neighborhood Workshop"), a workshop for challenged people. Eight workers from "Madoka" visited the site where the special ornaments were being made.. They looked quite happy to see their "mayu dama" used in ornaments – "I made the pink, brown and green."

"I did all sorts of ornaments." Some visitors wrote down their impressions of the ornaments in notebooks. When we asked to see them, it said: "Thinned cocoons beautiful. Triangles, beautiful. Tanabata, beautiful."

They came visiting just as some flowery ornaments were being made. Some members of Christ Church, Sendai said, "Next year, we would like to ask you folks from Madoka, to take on some of this work as well." We hope such friendly interactions can be duplicated year after year. The ornament submitted by the Church won the "gold" award, which is awarded by the shopping district to only one entrant! (August 2012, by a staffer of Sendai Office)



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The "Let Us Walk Together!" Project Office **OPEN** Mon-Fri 10:00AM-5:00PM **CLOSED** Sat/Sun/Holidays
2nd Fl. Kreis Bldg., 3-4-5 Kokubun-cho, Aoba-ku, Sendai, Miyagi Pref. 980-0803

Phone:(in Japan) +81-22-265-5221 Fax:(in Japan) +81-22-748-5321 (from overseas)

E-mail: walk@nskk.org Website: <http://www.nskk.org/walk/>