



# Let Us Walk Together Project

NSKK Support for Victims of the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake

News Letter

No. 14

1 October, 2012

## »» Second Summer Since the Quake

It is now a year and a half since the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake disaster. But there has been little improvement in the life of its victims. Children are spending their days in a difficult environment. However during their recent summer holidays, the children were able to enjoy with full vigor a "Kids' Summer Program" prepared especially for them.

In addition, making use of their summer vacation time, many visitors came from schools and churches throughout Japan connected with the NSKK.

The fact is that, with little information available about the disaster areas and the people living there, having visitors mix directly with people in the various regions was a great encouragement, not only to disaster victims but also to those supporting them. For the visitors themselves, seeing the situation with their own eyes, and mixing directly with the disaster victims was a profound and very informative experience.



The camp features in children's illustrated homework diaries!

## Kids' Summer Program

Held in Nagasaki, Niigata and Iwate –  
to bring smiles to the children's faces!

## Comments from Student Volunteers

Kobe Shoin Women's University  
St Mary's College, Nagoya

## Kids' Summer Program (1)

# Summer Vacation on a Southern Island

July 26-28

Nagasaki City, Nagasaki Pref.  
Takashima

Fukushima City,  
Fukushima Pref.

Seawater  
tastes salty!

This program was held at the minshuku or holiday inn of a parishioner in Takashima, Nagasaki Prefecture, in the diocese of Kyushu. We encouraged families from the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and especially Fukushima to spend a summer holiday there. With the help of volunteers from among parishioners in Kyushu Diocese, a family of four from Fukushima were able to spend four days on a tranquil island surrounded by blue sea. After this experience, the people in Kyushu want to continue this kind of program from now on.

### "Holiday at Takashima"

Kazuhito Okada, St Stephen's Church, Fukushima

Our participation in this program was decided at the very last minute. We received the invitation at the beginning of August, when our summer plans were already decided, so we thought 'It's impossible,' but then it turned out we couldn't attend the camp we had planned, and my work finished earlier than expected, so it was as if we were meant to attend the Takashima program.

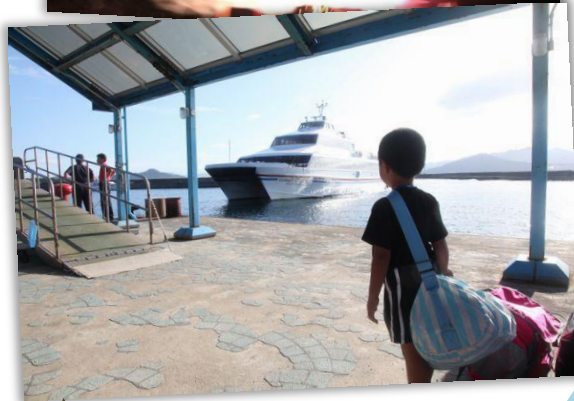
We spent our first night in Hakata, then next day we visited the atomic bombing museum and other places in Nagasaki. I was accompanied by my eldest son, 15 years old, my daughter, 12 years old, and my youngest son, 7 years old. We had experienced the worst possible conditions after the explosion at Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, but seeing what had happened to Nagasaki after the atomic bombing, we all felt there was a similarity between the two in the terrible suffering that resulted.

On our third day, we all went snorkeling and saw the coral reefs at Takashima beach. We were surprised that you can see the coral so close to the shore. In Fukushima, children have almost no chance to swim in the sea, so my children really enjoyed their time playing in the water.

In Fukushima today, you almost never see a child playing out of doors, for example in a park. Children of kindergarten and primary school age especially love playing in sand, but in Fukushima they absolutely cannot do that now. My children will not forget their experience playing in the sand at Takashima beach. It was really wonderful that we were able to go there. It was the kind of place you would like to go to again and again. The beach and the air were beautiful. It was such a relief to be free of the stress of radiation pollution. It still seems like only yesterday that we were there.



All together  
Going fishing



See you again, southern island!

After the October 2004 Chu-etsu Earthquake in Niigata Prefecture, NSKK's Chubu Diocese created an "Open Space in Support of Earthquake Victims," and began activities to support people mainly in Yamakoshi. As part of those activities, a camp for children was introduced, and it has continued every year since.

This year it was held as a joint camp, in conjunction with the 'Let Us Walk Together!' Project, and 24 children from both Yamakoshi and Fukushima. They gathered at the Amayachi camp grounds in Yamakoshi, where they enjoyed barbecues, swimming, making campfires and a rich program of activities. The camp was such a success, and the children became such good friends, that when it was time to go home, the children from Fukushima said "Next year we want to invite our friends from Yamakoshi to visit us in Fukushima!" We hope to continue this kind of joint camp to promote such mutual exchange.

Nagaoka City, Niigata Pref.  
Yamakoshi



Fukushima City,  
Fukushima Pref.

Iwaki City,  
Fukushima Pref.

From 6:30  
Radio exercises



In front of St Luke's Church, Nagaoka  
Group photograph



Bishop Shibusawa of  
Chubu Diocese also came!



Splitting watermelons –  
a tough job!



Let's meet again!



Ring the 'Bell of Hope'  
together

## Kids' Summer Program (2) Fukushima and Yamakoshi Joint Camp July 26-28



Fireworks – a gift  
from Bishop  
Shibusawa

# Kids' Summer Program (3)

## Let's Go to "Murone Land"!

July 23rd to 25th

They painted what they wanted on these T-shirts



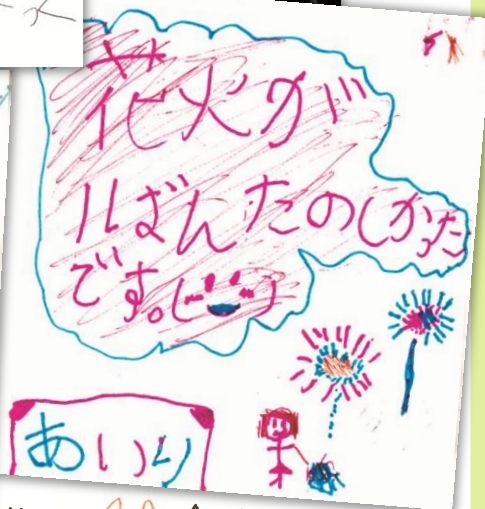
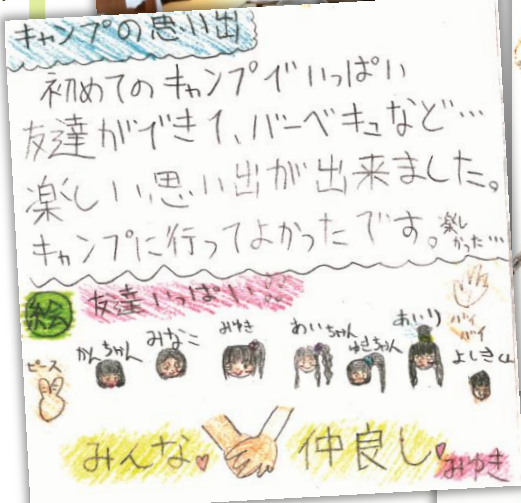
ムロネランドにいて、  
いっぱい友達を作りました。  
あと初めて馬にのったので、  
うれしかったです。



I rode "Mei-chan" the horse!

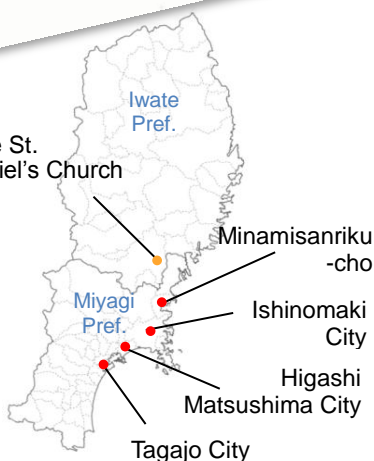


We all cooked meals together.



Meeowow A cat living near the church

Murone St. Nathaniel's Church



We have been helping non-Japanese residents and their children affected by the earthquake and tsunami. We invited those children and their friends to a summer camp, using St. Nathaniel's Church as their place to stay. We renamed the church and its surroundings "Murone Land." There, the kids experienced horse riding during the day, searched for lightning bugs around rice paddies in the evening, and did many other fun things, to their heart's content! The participants included seven kids (from 5 to 11 years old) from Tagajo City, Higashi Matsushima City, Ishinomaki City, and Minamisanriku Town, as well as some children who lived near the church.

The mothers of the children were all Filipinas, with that singular experience of a "disaster in a foreign land." They had quite the ordeal right after the March 11 disaster, because of the barriers of language, culture, and customs. Still, they take part in their local communities, even while striving to raise their children. This summer camp is meant to encourage and comfort those mothers as well.

**Report – “Let Us Begin by Taking Our Stand in the Hard-Hit Areas”**

From August 27th through August 30th, 15 college students and five staff members from Kobe Shoin Women's University visited and worked in the hard-hit areas as volunteers. “Let Us Walk Together!” Project has been a great help to us since the planning stages. They introduced us to the Hakozuka Sakura temporary housing complex of Natori City, Miyagi, which gave us meaningful opportunities to interact with people. We are very thankful for their all of their help. Below are comments from the students who participated.

(Revd. Akira Kominami, Chaplain)

**➤ First Day, Visited: Ohkawa Elementary School→Onagawa Town→Ishinomaki City**

**Saya Shono**

**(Sophomore majoring in fashion/housing design)**

I was at a loss for words when I visited the coastal areas. Ohkawa Elementary School was utterly devastated, with infinite amounts of debris surrounding it. When I saw the actual damage before me, I realized that I could not fully comprehend the vastness of the devastation. I want to put to work the things I have learned: I have resolved to take up a job related to rebuilding these communities and building infrastructure that can alleviate damage from earthquakes and tsunamis.

**Shiori Yoshida (Junior majoring in lifestyle studies)**

I visited Ohkawa Elementary School. I noticed some shoe soles in kid's sizes nearby, which filled me with heartache. Not that far from the school, there was a sign indicating the highest point the tsunami reached. I felt once again that just a slight error in a judgment could have resulted in even more damage. At Kadonowaki Elementary School, whose building was burnt down in a fire caused during the tsunami, the charcoal rubble still remained, indicating the intensity of the damages. Around the school, I saw plates, shoes, microwaves and the like carried in by the tsunami. Seeing these scenes for myself, I was able to comprehend the current situation in a more personal way.

**➤ Day 2 : Visited Hakozuka Sakura temporary housing complex for a tea party**

**Naho Tatsuno:**

**(First year, majoring in lifestyle studies)**

I talked with two people at the tea party, and made good friends with one of them. I was invited to visit this new friend's house. Since she was complaining how much of a bother it was to clean up her kitchen, I cleaned it and the surrounding area up, while chatting about nothing special. It was quite enjoyable for me, and the time involved allowed me to think of many different things. I don't want this to end up as just an encounter. Rather, I want make use of this experience in the future.

**Saki Kanaya (Junior majoring in lifestyle studies)**

This visit to temporary housing was a very valuable experience. Now I could see the damage from the earthquake and the current situation of the hard-hit area. Before I had only come in contact with through media coverage, from the viewpoint of

those who are affected. They are still in circumstances which could not by any means be called easy to live in, yet they are determined to make their communities thrive once again. Many grandmas were singing songs and laughing, while the children were looking forward to their future. As a community they were united in one great goal: the effort to rebuild. Now I am thinking of how I can help them reach that goal.



Chairman Owaki of the residents' association giving instructions on home visits

**➤ Day 3: Lecture and dialog, weeding, visit to Yuriage District**

**Chihiro Marugane**

**(Second year, majoring in child development)**

“We lost everything” – this remark has impacted me the most. It was made by residents of Yuriage, when they saw their district for the first time after the disaster. I realized that a house, which seems like just a point on a map, is in fact a huge accumulation of memories and lives for the people who lived there. So now, understanding that all this was lost to these people, I was aghast. This is something that I hope to never forget.

**Eri Takahashi (Second year, majoring in psychology)**

Seeing with my own eyes the coverage on the Great East Japan Earthquake, and thinking about how high the tsunami reached, about rice paddies where rice can no longer grow since they were soaked with sea water, how the work to remove debris is still in progress more than a year later, and so forth, I could envision what it was like for both the people who survived and those who did not, and it broke my heart. After volunteering there, I believe that what I must do first is to let more people know how the hard-hit communities stand today. Through pictures that I took and stories I heard I want to share this experience with everyone.

# Voices of volunteers who helped in recovery work for the Great East Japan Earthquake

Hiroshi Mizuochi, lecturer at St. Mary's College, Nagoya  
August 30th through September 2nd

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In front of "Relief Center Shinchī"

This team of volunteers visited Fuji Kindergarten, "Madoka" the Neighborhood Workshop, Relief Center Shinchī, and some other places, and heard from the head of the kindergarten, the workshop's general manager, and Matsumoto-san, who resides in the Relief Center and carries out relief work. Each volunteer had many experiences, which they then thought through.

Presented below are some excerpts from the volunteers' thoughts:



"(This experience) has given me the determination to protect my children's lives at any cost. To do so, I intend to work hard in preparing to be a childcare worker."

"This is not over yet. I want to continue volunteer activities. To do so, I will re-consider and digest well what I experienced and learned this time."

"I don't think of the heaps of debris as heaps of debris, but as valued mementos of the victims killed in the disaster."

"As I worked together with those people affected, I learned that they were not just in despair. Rather, they were all facing forward, determined to live on. From their attitude, I learned how crucial the ties between people are."

"What can we do for these people affected? I intend to remind myself, and let more people know, that the rebuilding is not done yet. I also would like to live my life giving thanks for the circumstances with which I have been blessed."

"I want to engrave in my eyes the sights I saw, so I will never forget them. I will think about what I experienced this time, and make this a mission in my life."

"I want to live in a way that puts, not just being with children day by day, but being able to act to put the lives of children in my care first. Then, I want to grow into a person who can share others' feelings and respond to them."

"Having seen the disaster sites and heard directly the voices of those affected, there are things I have learned and felt, and now it comes home to me how hard they have been striving to rebuild. This has been a precious experience that enables me to consider many things."



With the kids of Fuji Kindergarten



To conclude, I would like to pray for God's mercy and blessings on all those who lost their lives in the tragedy as well as their families and friends. Also, my sincere prayer is that the hard-hit regions can rebuild soon and its people will be able to smile brightly again..

### ■ Minamisanriku – cho (Miyagi Pref.) – Handiwork program

The Sampaguita Fighting Ladies (SFL) \* regularly get together with people of Christ Church, Sendai to make shopping bags, pochettes and the like. The church people advise the ladies on what to make. Although they had already gained their licenses as 2nd-class nursing helpers, the ladies wanted occasions to get together and practice Japanese, thus planned these meetings. They always start the gathering in Japanese but soon switch to Tagalog, their native language. What they make, they plan to sell in order to make some money for the SFL's activities – yet too often they cannot let their own pieces go. Putting aside the matter of the initial objectives, as we watch them do the sewing and laughing uproariously, we come to think "it's all good!"

\* The name for a group of Philipinas living in Shizugawa.



### ■ Ishinomaki City, Tagajo City (Miyagi Pref.) – Helping kids learn

In a room within Caritas Japan's Ishinomaki Base, we helped children of non-Japanese mothers and their friends do their homework during the summer vacation. Too often, their own moms are not able to help them with their school learning, due to the language barrier. In this room, however, some nice volunteers helped them do their homework, and their help proved to be very effective. Working with friends there encouraged the children to concentrate better on their work. They had a good time, and got their homework done! The volunteers, moreover, regularly visit 9th graders who need to prepare for the Japanese high school entrance exams at their homes. These volunteers provide them and their moms with information on the Japanese school entrance system, local high schools, and so on, while helping them in learning.



### ■ Iwaki City (Fukushima Pref.) – Joined "Taira Tanabata Matsuri" stargazing festival as an exhibitor

Residents at Hiruno temporary housing, Watanabe-machi, Ohkuma Town and Izumi-tamatsuyu, Tomioka Town, have together survived this summer. Amid the heat, they prepared for a traditional festival – the "Taira no Tanabata Matsuri" stargazing festival of Iwaki, their local city. They created some ornaments to display at the festival. Advised by the Social Welfare Council, the residents went all out in creating the ornaments, which won a Special Award.



## Visit by Right Revd. Michael Ipgrave Bishop of Woolwich, the Church of England



After attending the Religious Summit Meeting on Mt. Hiei, the Bishop visited the hard-hit areas around Sendai, Kamaishi, and Morioka from the 6th through the 8th of August. During a candle light service commemorating the atomic bomb disaster of Hiroshima, he delivered a short message. Given below is a summary of that message.

Every year, on August 6th, two things come into my mind which complicate my feelings greatly.

One is the atomic bomb that devastated Hiroshima on this day in 1945. My father, who was then forced to work for the (former) Imperial Japanese Forces in Thailand as a POW, came back home alive after the war. There is the possibility that the atomic bomb made the Pacific War shorter. \* If the war had been further prolonged, he probably would not have survived it, which in turn means I would not have been born into this world. (\* Editorial note: There are many different opinions on this issue.)

The other is, this is the day of Transfiguration of Lord Jesus. This is a day we commemorate his transfiguration, in which he revealed his glory and honor as the only begotten child of God. Thus he showed his good news of hope and peace to us.

Unfortunately, there are no few people who try to justify the atomic bomb as a means to bring the war to an end. I cannot subscribe to this point of view, no matter what happened to my father and myself, personally. The use of the atomic bomb cannot be justified! Also, I am firmly convinced that no hope or peace from God can be achieved by human acts of death and destruction.

In our world, wars and civil wars still persist. What road will we find to attain to peace? I believe we always live facing these choices.

### Help to temporary house residents

- Haiku gatherings: Kamaishi city
- Cooking party: Kamaishi city
- Gym class program: Kamaishi city
- ▲ Shopping bus tours: Natori city
- ◆ **“Hotto (Relaxing) Corner”**: Shinchi

At long last, on August 24th, “Hotto (Relaxing) Corner,” a small café, opened at Relief Center Shinchi. Anchoring this café is a certain woman who was affected by the March 11 disaster and is currently living at the temporary housing in Sakuta. The best thing on offer at this café is



her enlivening talk and smiles, which make the good coffee even better. Her friends often get together here, and the cheerful laughter never seems to end. As you see, the Relief Center is now part of the everyday living of many local residents!

- ◆ **“Hokkori” (“Comfy”) Café**: Iwaki City
- ◆ **Creation of “Sakura Sakasu Zoh” (“Elephants that will Make Cherry Blossoms”)**: Iwaki City

In addition: Visits to individual households (at the Kojirahama and Ohsoné (Karafune temp. housing), Kasshi, and other places; distribution of cookies and handmade fans from Workshop Himawari; patchwork items; “zabuton” (floor cushion) distribution; salon chat programs; exhibiting at “Taira Tanabata” stargazing festival; programs for children, etc.

### Help to non-Japanese residents

- ★ Individual assistance : Ohfunato, Ishinomaki, Tagajo
- ▲ Helping to start up conversational English classes: Natori
- ▲ Hand-made goods program: Minamisanriku
- ▲ Helping children with their summer vacation homework: Ishinomaki
- ▲ Course for “Class-2 home helper” licenses: Kesennuma

### Help for the challenged

- ▲ Purchase of products: “Madoka” of Sendai City, “Himawari” of Kesennuma
- ▲ Visits to facilities: “Madoka” of Sendai City, “Himawari” of Kesennuma

### Help for the challenged

- ▲ **“Refreshing program”** at Aoba Seishukan (Aoba Retreat House): Sendai City
- ★ **“Refreshing program – Summer holidays on a southern island”**: Nagasaki Pref.
- ★ Visits to damaged areas by Rt. Revd. Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Woolwich, the Church of England: Several places in Iwate and Miyagi Prefs.
- ★ **“Refreshing program”** for kindergarten teachers: Yufuin [a famous hot spa resort in Oita Pref.] and other places

### ★ Student volunteers’ help at temporary housing, kindergartens, etc.: Many places in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefs.

During this summer vacation season, many students served the hard-hit communities as volunteers. The students from Seigakuin [Woman’s] University, Tokyo, performed songs and dances which they had learned and rehearsed in advance and the residents also enjoyed dancing together with them.



### ★ Youth Assembly of the NSKK 2012: Several places in Miyagi and Fukushima Prefs.

This Assembly convened in Sendai City on August 23rd through 26th. Some 80 young people got together from the Anglican Church of Japan and the Anglican Church of Korea. They learned about the hard-hit areas, shared together, and prayed together. They walked among the damaged areas, facing the disaster areas as their own problems. “Let Us Walk Together!” Project cooperated with the Assembly to help the young people’s activities.

The colors for the bullet points indicate activities in: ● Iwate Pref. ▲ Miyagi Pref. ◆ Fukushima Pref. ★ Elsewhere, or in multiple prefectures  
There are other activities not listed here, due to space limitations. 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 (4) Turning on the Light!

“This is not a sight I have ever seen, either” – so said a certain woman to us, when we visited Ishinomaki, Miyagi Pref.—this woman was born and grew up in Ishinomaki! The Youth Assembly mentioned above carried the slogan, “re:member – Turning on the Light!” and had visits to hard-hit areas as part of its program. In these visits, locals from such areas showed the young people around their ruined communities. For this woman, the site that she saw, ravaged by the tsunami, was not the Ishinomaki that she knew. No wonder she felt no nostalgia as she returned to her hometown. Her remark was an honest expression of her feeling, it seems to me. She said later, “I am happy that the same old stores are reopening at their same old places.” She referred to the restoration of stores and homes to the town, where the lights in the houses had been lost due to tsunami damage, as “turning on the light.”

(From the 2012 Youth Assembly participant)



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The **“Let Us Walk Together!” Project Office** **OPEN** Mon–Fri 10:00AM–5:00PM **CLOSED** Sat/Sun/Holidays

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