

※For the Japanese, Chinese, Korean and French version of this newsletter, please visit the FIA's website.

On this occasion we would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and would like to pray for the speediest of recoveries. With this newsletter, we hope to provide you with up-to-date information on the present condition of Fukushima prefecture and shed light on the activities of local international exchange groups and lives of foreigners living here.



Fukushima Now in Pictures



Flowers of various colors bloom in Shiki-no-Sato.(Fukushima City 2011.5.14)



An event held at the Machinaka Plaza (Fukushima City 2011.5.15)



Temporary housing for evacuees is under construction at a rapid pace. (Fukushima city 2011.5.26)



Voices from Fukushima

Sharma Narender (From India, Male, Fukushima City)

This will be my tenth year in Fukushima. I am the owner of two curry restaurants and I also deal second hand cars. After the earthquake, as we had difficulties delivering supplies to the restaurants, I had to close them down for a week. At that time, I spent almost every day cooking for evacuees at the shelters. Now, I have reopened all three shops. However, I guess groundless rumors regarding radiation problems caused by the power plants did in fact strike Fukushima. Although there are still second hand car buyers in the prefecture, the number of buyers outside the prefecture has dropped dramatically and if this continues, it will be very difficult to maintain the business. Nonetheless, all of our staff stayed and we will fight through this together.

Chloe Wooding (From U.K. , Female, Koriyama City)

I am working as an elementary school assistant English teacher in Koriyama. On the day of the earthquake, it was the last visit to a particular school for the third term. On returning home, my apartment was in complete disarray. Worrying for some people living alone, I dropped by some neighbors. With aftershocks through the entire night I was glad to stay with one neighbor until morning. Returning to school for the new term, I was welcomed by the cheerful voices of the children. Due to the nuclear disaster, these are difficult times - especially for children, so I want to work hard to keep their spirits up. Radiation is worrying, but my father has reassured me that levels are low enough not to worry about. During my regular tea ceremony classes, is a time to relax and forget about the present troubles.

Takahashi Yetti (From Indonesia, Female, Kawamata town)

I was in the middle of a child care volunteer activity when the earthquake struck. After I had evacuated all the toddlers who participated in the activity and brought them somewhere safe, I waited for the aftershocks to subside to go back to the venue and close all the windows before I went home. As our family has always used water from the well, we continued to use it just like before. However, since the water is not from the water supply system, I became concerned whether it was safe to drink the water as the level of radiation is not monitored by officials. Our 100-year-old house was severely wrecked by the earthquake. I would want to move to the Kansai area when I consider the health of my children who are still in elementary school. However, this is a tough decision to make as they also have school matters to deal with.

Lú Xue Ru (From China, Male, Tsukidate Town)

To tell the truth, when the earthquake occurred, the shaking was so fierce that I was even prepared to meet my final moment. My wife and I chose to sleep in the car with our two dogs that night because strong aftershocks struck continuously afterwards. I am worried about radiation exposure, but also believe that overreacting could only do harm to my mental health and thus cause diseases. Furthermore, the current level is not that much compared with the exposure one gets from an X-ray check-up. I had no option but to take it easy by accepting it as a part of my life and my destiny. My wife is coming back at the end of May after leaving for China. I am really looking forward to walking our dogs with her soon.



Oisín Collins (Iwaki City, Australia)

Five days after the earthquake on the 11th of March, Iwaki City CIR Oisín Collins left to stay with friends in Gunma Prefecture. However, once he realized what needed to be done back in Iwaki, he resolved to return, despite warnings from the Australian embassy not to. Soon after he did some volunteer work clearing rubbish and rubble on Iwaki's coast, as well as helping overseas volunteers to come and join relief efforts. At the moment he is writing about the city's experiences of the earthquake and tsunami in "Iwaki Vision".



<http://www.city.iwaki.fukushima.jp/gaikokugo/english/>

Hearts for Haragama(Fukushima City)

Billy McMichael, the Association's former coordinator for international relations from Canada, together with the assistant language teachers and his Japanese friends in Fukushima prefecture have formed a charity group to help rebuild Haragama



kindergarten in Soma City – a city that was devastated by the earthquake and tsunami. Many children and their families from this private kindergarten, owned by Billy's friend's father,

were affected by the disaster. The charity group visits the kindergarten once or twice a month, bringing supplies such as rice and a refrigerator by car as well as running events and activities with children.

<http://hearts4haragama.wordpress.com>

JOCV Fukushima Association (Aizu-Wakamatsu City)

Formed by previous Japan overseas cooperation volunteers, the association members visited the JICA training facility in Nihonmatsu to help tutor the children evacuated there every Sunday morning until May 1st. As its second project, the Earth Caravan, an interactive lecture was held on May 8th. The association gives the same lecture annually for schools and culture centers in an attempt to introduce developing countries in an entertaining manner. Participants including children from shelters nearby and volunteers enjoyed talks about countries which they had never heard of. Also, having a hands-on experience of playing African drums turned out to be great fun for them.



Fukushima Global Rotary Club(Fukushima City)

On March 27th, Basharat Sato who hails from Pakistan along with other members of the club went to Koriyama high school and Tachibana elementary school to cheer up evacuees sheltered there by providing 300 servings and 50 servings of Pakistani curry respectively. They also went to the Tsunami-stricken Kashima district of Minami-Soma city to clean rubbish and mud in coordination with the volunteer group Bridge for Fukushima and English teachers working in Koriyama city. The club is now conducting research to identify the needs of the affected area based on what other work can be carried out continuously over the long term.



<http://www.f-global.jp>



Service Information

The 3.11 earthquake related damage updates

On Fukushima Prefecture's homepage (link to the homepage of Fukushima International Association), there are various disaster related updates such as the measurement value of environmental radioactivity in Japanese, English and Chinese. On the Fukushima International Association's homepage, you can also find some updates in Tagalog, Korean and Portuguese.

<http://wwwcms.pref.fukushima.jp/>

Foreign Language Earthquake Information Center

The FIA has set up a foreign language earthquake information center to provide foreigners with necessary information. English and Chinese speaking staff members are available to help you with your inquiries. For other languages and out-of-hours service, we may be able to direct you to other relevant services. Please feel free to contact us.

<http://www.worldvillage.org/>

- Hours : 9:00~16:00(Mon~Fri)
- Tel : 024-524-1316(exclusively for earthquake related inquiries)
024-524-1315 (general FIA number)

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