



Tome City, Miyagi Prefecture. The city is surrounded by mountains and blessed with beautiful nature. This summer, an exchange program for scholarship recipients of the “Dream Support Project” by Civic Force was held in Tome City.

Support Required for Child Quake Victims

Two years and five months have passed since the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake. The damage by this unprecedented disaster was enormous. More than 15,000 people were killed and an estimated 290,000 or more are still unable to return to their homes and are put up in temporary housing set up by the government, existing private and public housing, evacuation centres or are living with friends or relatives. (Source: Reconstruction Agency website)

One of the biggest concerns in the affected areas is the impact of prolonged life in refuge on children, our bearers of hope for the future. Due to the earthquake, many children find it difficult to continue their studies as the finances of their families came under strain: The breadwinners of their families may have died, gone missing, become injured or ill, or lost their jobs from the disaster. Many families also suffered financial losses from the destruction of their homes – Some houses collapsed, were burnt down, or were damaged by the floods. Aside from the decline in their academic achievements, children also suffer from mental and emotional stress.

On the other hand, those children’s parents are always on edge – Some are overwhelmed with worries about the future, some became sensitive to noises while some are depressed. These problems inevitably affect the children.

According to the 2012 data released by the Ministry of Health,

Labour and Welfare, cases of child abuse were on the rise in the disaster areas. To stop the vicious cycle of suffering, more deliberate support is necessary to help tackle the individual problems faced by each victim.

As part of the Mid- to Long-Term Reconstruction Project of Civic Force, the Dream Support Project was set up in March 2013 to provide scholarships and educational programs for high school and university students affected by the earthquake. As of July 2013, 895 scholarships have been given out.

In the summer holiday season of July and August this year, an experiential learning program was organised for scholarship holders in cooperation with local NPOs which have been working with Civic Force in the north-eastern region of Japan. Through discussions with the local NPOs and youths of similar age, the program hopes to broaden the views of the participants and give them strength to live life to the fullest.

This monthly Report features the three-day exchange program organised by the Japan Forest Biomass Network at the Tenohira ni Taiyo no Ie, or House of Sunshine in Your Hand (in short House of Sunshine), a facility that supports children living the Fukushima area.

“New experiences made my horizon broader.”

Monthly Topic

Civic Force selects hot topics among various projects in this month.

Located in Tome city of Miyagi prefecture, Tenohira ni Taiyou no Ie, or House of Sunshine in Your Hand (“The House”), is a facility that supports people who had evacuated from Fukushima prefecture (See page 3). Two scholarship students of the Dream Support Project stayed at the House for three days and two nights, July 29–31. Dream Support Project is one of the initiatives under the larger Mid- to Long-Term Reconstruction Project by Civic Force.



The Dream Support Project provides scholarships and educational programs to students who suffered from the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake. The educational programs are held in cooperation with local NPOs, such as Japan Forest Biomass Network, which have been cooperating with Civic Force as part of the NPO Partner Projects after the disaster. The program is designed to provide participants a chance to think about the present state of the disaster area and its recovery condition. Conversations with people active in the disaster areas also help to broaden their views on these issues.

Japan Forest Biomass Network has branches all over Japan and operates the House, a residential facility for people who had evacuated from Fukushima prefecture. The House of Sunshine aims to be a model for sustainable housing. It runs on renewable energy through the harnessing of solar power, the use of solar water heaters and wood pellet boilers. It is a place where families from Fukushima prefecture can stay for the weekends, summer vacations or even for extended periods.

On their first day, the House staff briefed the two scholarship recipients about how the facility is run, its history and the present state of the evacuees from Fukushima. The participants also got to learn about renewable energy and the problems faced by Fukushima.

During their stay, the two participants also interacted with the families from Fukushima and the staff within the surrounding natural environment. They played with the children, catching frogs and loaches in a river nearby and watching beetles wrestle.

They also had an outdoor barbecue and ate nagashi somen, or “flowing somen” which are thin wheat noodles served floating down a bamboo gutter and are caught with chopsticks by people waiting on both sides.

One of two participants, Mr. Takehiro Sugawara, senior year at Morioka Daishi High School, said, “I was nervous at first because I do not have much experience interacting with people outside my school club activities. Spending

time with the children helped me broaden my horizons. It was good experience to be able to meet so many wonderful people.”

The other participant, Ms. Chisato Ikeda, a first-year student at Tokyo Metropolitan Kitatama College of Nursing, said “My dream is to work in the pediatrics department in the future. That is why I applied for this program. The children have so much fun playing together in the wonderful environment of the House. It is as though they were siblings. That left a deep impression on me. Adults should honor and listen to the voices of these children.” For the full interview, please refer to the Civic Force website.

The next educational program by the Dream Support Project is scheduled for August 21–23 in Iwate and Miyagi prefectures. With cooperation from Mori wa Umi no Koibito, an NPO looking into environmental issues, this program is a unique one which allows participants to interact with and learn about nature and its beauty through an outdoor survival course, a survey of mud flats etc.



Mr. Takehiro Sugawara



Ms. Chisato Ikeda

Briefing for Participants for the 3rd Tohoku Marche in October

As part of the Mid- to Long Term Reconstruction Project for the Great East Japan Earthquake, Civic Force in cooperation with L’Occitane group (including L’Occitane Japon K.K) is supporting the third “Tohoku Marche®” that will be held on October 19 in Kesenuma City, Miyagi prefecture.

Organized by Network Orange, a local NPO, the “Tohoku Marche®” was first held in November 2011, in Kesenuma as part of the reconstruction on the Sanriku coastal region. It provided opportunities for participating store keepers holders to learn about and get hands-on experience in business management. The program aims to groom leaders who are able to lead and develop thriving local communities.

Store keepers at the Marche are required to attend workshops to learn about “tricks of the trade” in setting up a stall, coming up with a business budget and secrets of shop display. A briefing for the workshops was held in Kesenuma city on July 6, with 30 people participating. Workshops are held once a month till the Marche begins. The first workshop will take place on August 25 with author Mr. Akihiro Nakatani as speaker/guest-of-honor.

“Dream Support Project” – What is it about

The “Dream Support Project” provides scholarships and organizes educational programs for students who live in the disaster-affected areas. These students encounter difficulties in continuing their education because their financial situation changed suddenly and was worsened by the Great East Japan Earthquake. The aim of this project is to ease the financial strain of such students. Their parents may have died, gone missing, become injured or sick, or become unemployed from the disaster. Their houses may have been severely damaged. The project also helps to support young people who want to contribute to reconstruct the Tohoku region. There is no refund duty.

This project takes over the “Support Dreams Fund” which was established by Lawson, Inc. in April 2011. Since October 2011, the fund provides 30,000 yen per month to each scholarship recipient. As of July 2013, there are 895 scholarship recipients who were selected through screening. The fund supports not only high school, university and junior college students but also students who learn specialized skills at technical colleges and technical schools.

Providing a “comforting” environment for families living in anxiety

“Tenohira-ni Taiyo-no Ie” located in Tome city, Miyagi prefecture, is a reconstruction housing for coexistence to support the children who suffered from the Great East Japan Earthquake. We especially support those children who are under great physical and mental stress because of their situation, as they are forced to live in high radiation dose areas and can't play out in nature.

After the earthquake, I became worried about the children and was wondering what I could do for them. Then, my acquaintance, the Director of Japan Forest Biomass Network, invited me to work as a volunteer, and I participated in their activities. Through this experience, I have been working as the Director of this house since its opening in July 2012.



2,658 people from 150 families have stayed at the House in one year since its opening in July, 2012.



Ms. Noriko Hosoki, Director, Tenohira-ni Taiyo-no Ie (House of Sunshine in Your Hand)

All rooms become full during long holidays and summer vacation. At other times, families with small children of ages 2 to 3 often stay for a few weeks and some families stay as long as six months. Frequent visitors are gradually increasing because parents want their children to play outside in low radiation dose areas. Many volunteers come from all over Japan to help us. We offer various events for children and relaxation programs for mothers, such as counseling and Yoga, which are well appreciated by the visitors.

I am encouraged to see mothers, who are living in anxiety at home, enjoying happy days at the House. I want this house to be a comforting place for them.

Face ☺ Face

Civic Force is supported by various companies, NPOs and government.

This corner features the latest messages from our partners.

Here are some reports on what we are doing in Tohoku region, as of August 11, 2013.

Mid-to Long-Term Reconstruction Projects

Civic Force has been active in providing assistance in the Tohoku region of northeastern Japan for a year and a half ever since the earthquake struck. To better concentrate our efforts to solve the problems and difficulties that the region faces, we began some mid- to long-term projects in the summer of 2012. The progress report of each project is listed below.
<http://www.civic-force.org/emergency/higashinohon/choki/>

• Tourism Revitalization Project

—Enhancing cooperation between the public and private sectors to make Kesennuma “an attractive city for tourists”

Civic Force has been supporting the development of strategies for “Revitalization of Tourism,” which is one of the most important challenges of reconstruction in Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture. In July 2013, we participated in the foundation of the “Platform for Creation of Ria Coast Tourism,” a general incorporated association, and will continue to support the project as a member of the board of directors.

• Wings for Life Project

—Support of helicopter services for emergency medical purposes

Even before the disaster, lack of medical services had been a problem in the coastal areas devastated by the earthquake. We are planning to start a helicopter service to provide better access to advanced medical institutions. Aiming to launch the service by the end of August, we are now in the finalizing details with those involved.

• Green Circle Project

—Developing a sustainable forest industry and effective utilization of woody biomass

Even before the disaster, availability of medical services was already a problem in the coastal areas devastated by the earthquake. We are planning to start a helicopter service to provide better access to improved medical services. As we enter the final stage of launching the service this summer, we are now finalizing details with our partners.

• Community Revive Project

—Support efforts by the local community to create homes and jobs

Cooperating with local NPOs and local administrations, Civic Force has continuously supported the development of new towns for disaster victims who have decided to relocate and the redevelopment of existing towns by sending specialists and providing human resource development programs.

• Dream Support Project

—Support for local youths through scholarships and conducting locally-developed educational programs

See page 2 for more information.

Brief Report on Our NPO Partner Projects

We have been supporting projects that are run by the disaster victims for the reconstruction of their local communities. Since April 2011, Civic Force has supported 34 organizations and 47 projects. As of August 2013, we are supporting six projects together with the organizations listed below.
<http://www.civic-force.org/emergency/higashinohon/npo/>

- Shinrin × Civic Force
- Network Orange × Civic Force
- Mori wa Umi no Koibito × Civic Force
- Kesennuma Future Plan Osawa Team × Civic Force
- Iwate Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists × Civic Force
- Seikatsu Club Yamagata × Civic Force

What we are doing in Tohoku

NOW

A Fund-Raising Seminar will be given

On September 18(Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and event starts at 7:00 p.m.), Civic Force will co-sponsor a fund-raising seminar with TASUKEAI (help-each-other) Japan, a public benefit incorporated association, who advances their supporting projects for the Tohoku area.

The seminar will take place in the Tokyo Metropolitan area with lectures and a meal using ingredients produced in the Tohoku region. We plan to provide the latest update of the Tohoku area and have a discussion on the reconstruction of the disaster-stricken area. We are looking forward to having many participants who are voluntarily motivated to join the event as more than two years have passed since the disaster occurred and it is true that many people are gradually losing interest in the said region.



Information 

- Date and Time: September 18, Wednesday (Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and event starts at 7:00 p.m.)
- Venue: Dreamdesign (1-minute walk from Azabu-juban Station, Tokyo Metro Oedo-line)
- Participation Fee: ¥5,000 (Dinner and donation included)
- For more information please contact pr@civic-force.org

NPO Partners of Civic Force conduct activities in response to outbreaks of disasters in various parts of Japan

With the great impact of heavy rains in Yamagata prefecture (northwestern area of Japan) on July 18, serious damage caused by burst riverbanks and landslides were reported. Civic Force lent two sets of high-pressure washers to Seikatsu Club Yamagata, one of its partner organizations, in response to the establishment of a volunteer center at Nanyo city where damage from the rainfall was largest. These washers will be put to good use in cleaning houses and streets.

Also, the northern district of Yamaguchi prefecture (southwestern area of Japan) suffered heavy damage from a downpour on July 28. To cope with the critical situation, Rescue Support Kyushu, another partner organization in western Japan, immediately started to collect information and took action on their supporting activities. We established contact with them and confirmed the state of the damages on the ground. We continue to gather further information.



Start your support with only 33 yen per day

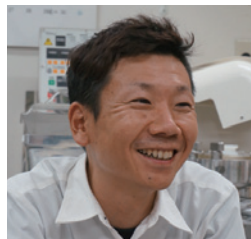
We must be ready for the “next one”. Your donation will be a great help in backing up our activities to prepare for the next large-scale disaster. Donate a fixed amount each month in units of 1,000 yen so you can be a monthly supporter and participate in activities to prepare for large scale disasters.

•Credit card: Please see the “Donate Now!” section on the Civic Force website.

https://bokinchan2.com/civicforce/donation/bokin/page1.php?bokin_type=donation

A Message from Disaster Areas

Two years and five months have passed since Civic Force started activities to support recovery in the disaster-hit Northeastern Japan. This section showcases the people who live in the affected areas and continue efforts for the recovery. As the 5th person, we are featuring Mr. Hirotaka Koyama, the owner of Koyama Confectionary Shop. While running his business, he works as one of the administration officers of Platform for Creation of Ria Coast Tourism, which contributes to creating tourism in Kesenuma city, Miyagi prefecture.



Mr. Hirotaka Koyama, owner of Koyama Confectionary Shop

—— My shop was washed away by the tsunami. At the time, my father, the previous owner of the shop, looked very discouraged, but I said to myself, “I will rebuild a better Koyama Confectionary Shop”, and at the same time I gave thought to the recovery of the whole city.

Each of us being both economically and psychologically handicapped, I was thinking about which direction to take. But meanwhile, the number of people who focus not only on themselves but also on the future of the town is growing. Recovery should not be considered by a small group but is dependent on a large number of people willing to give their time to their beloved hometown. When I picture myself handing over this city to the next

I truly appreciate the support given by the people across the country. It makes me think of how many cream puffs I must sell to be able to donate 10,000 yen. To give money is like giving time as a gift. We want to offer some of our time as a gift and work hard for recovery.