

2011.3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake
Local Aid Committee News Letter from Tohoku
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Issue # 19

Churches throughout Japan, thank you for daily prayer and support through your donations. We would like to thank the Seinan Gakuin University Volunteer Team, churches, and volunteers for visiting the locations we support. The long hot days have finally passed and we are to enter autumn and winter. Please remember those that continue to live in temporary housing estates and pray for their health and wellbeing. In this issue we will share about the Miyagi team and the aid work in Oshika (Ayukawahama, Oginohama, Tsukiura, Kyubunhama).

Ayukawahama District Aid Work

The aid work being carried out in Ayukawahama (at the point of Oshika Peninsula) (16 households) is in a district that reveals many connections. We first connected with the families and people of Ayukawahama when we transferred scholarship funds from America, Australia, and Hong Kong to the Miyagi Gakuin Women's University. Through carrying out visitations at smaller temporary housing estates, we have seen the realities brought about by the delayed construction, how people must continue to live in temporary housings that are used well past their intended duration. In this reality, we see the importance of carrying out aid that works alongside the people we support.

Each time we take with us small bags of vegetables. With big smile, we hand out handmade snacks that have been sent from faraway churches. We have been doing this for four and a half years. This is possible because of the prayers and donations from churches around the world. Before setting out to Oshika, we in the team bring our hearts together and pray, "Let your will be done." Though we cannot share the direct words of the people of Ayukawahama, we would like you to know that each time we are thanked with bows and words, "Thank you so much."



The temporary shopping center Oshika-norengai (Opened 18 Nov 2011) has 16 fresh food stores, gift stores, and restaurants. We always make sure to visit the gifts shop there.

Oginohama, Maginohama, Tsukiura District Aid Work

Thanks to the support and prayers of Baptist churches in Japan and throughout the world, our work in Oginohama and Kyubunhama has continued for four and a half years. From the relief work carried out in the Oginohama primary and middle schools directly after the tsunami, to the aid work for those living in temporary housings.

The high-land residential construction is still ongoing. It seems that life in the temporary housings will continue for another 2 years.

One year from the disaster, the representative of the Ishinomaki Social Welfare Council requested Maginohama

Tsukiura to receive aid support for being an area that was not receiving enough aid. The ward chiefs were contacted and the aid work started. Maginohama, like in Kyubunhama, has a meeting hall where we have tea parties. Every month the residents look forward to our meetings. In Tsukiura, we take vegetables to the ward chief to give to the disaster victims, and hear about their current issues. Maginohama, like Oginohama has ongoing highland residential construction, but it seems the date for resettlement is still in the future.

In Tsukiura 5 out of the 9 residential and public houses have been completed and people have started new lives since February. Concerning the other 4 households, construction for their homes is about to begin.

Since the disaster, many worry about future disasters and tsunamis. Because of this, many people moved away from the shores. There are areas where only a half, or a third of households in the district remain. The continuation of the districts is a huge issue when considering the reconstruction process. Many of the elderly say, "Thank you for visiting us every month. You give us energy!" But ask, "If we all move out from the temporary housing, will you stop coming?" How to answer that question is something that we will have to consider as we continue our aid work.



Maginohama (Takehama) - We made cards using seasonal colors at the meeting hall. The homes of the Takenohama residents that used to live in Maginohama have been completed, and they have started their new lives since February. They still come to the tea parties to have a great time.

(Sendai Church Yoshinobu Oga)

Kyubunhama District Aid Work

The aid to Kyubunhama started in April 2011. After the convention's task head office connected with the victims of the disaster, we started providing supply goods and soup kitchens. It is thanks to God's protection, and your prayers that we have been able to continue the monthly aid work up until now. There was some damage done to the vegetable farm by wild deer. We hope that we can visit the temporary housing and those living in the residential homes, safely delivering the fresh vegetables and snacks that all of you have prepared.

The team will gather in Kyubunhama, pray, sort out the vegetables, and will be sent out to the different districts. We will have a tea party in the meeting room, doing our best so that those in the temporary housings can have a good time, and will also deliver the vegetables and will check up on those that can not join us. The foundation for the highland construction site was completed two years behind schedule, and the completion of the private homes and public homes are planned for February and May of next year respectively. The aging of the residents who eagerly wait to move into their homes, despite the repeated delay of the completion date, is a dire problem. In August, when the Seinan Gakuin University Volunteer Team visited, everybody thanked them saying, "Thank you for coming such a long way". Please keep this issue in your hearts and minds.



Aid work with the Seinan Gakuin University Volunteer Team. It is stressful living with children in a home with walls so thin that you can even hear the sound of dishes hitting each other. The people here always look forward to our visitations

(Taitomi Church Mamoru Oda)

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