

外大東北復興支援隊

TUFS for Tohoku



2011.12.18 Christmas event

【About us】

'Team for Tohoku' was formed by four students of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies on 21 in April. They (born and brought up in Tohoku) were in the face of the earthquake and tsunami on 11 in March and had been seeking for the way of helping those who have been and still are suffering in Tohoku. Now it's unclear how long it will take to recover from the catastrophe, but clearly what is needed for the recovery is long-term support. We'll take an approach reflecting of the specificity of our university and we'll keep up-dating the information about our latest activities.

Now there are some 40 members in our group and have been participating in volunteer work mainly in Ishinomaki-City (which locates in Miyagi) with the help of other volunteer groups. Professor Funada (who is the guardian of our group) has also formed other group to help those who have infants are in need of support.

【From the representative of Team for Tohoku】

As winter came, the weather gets colder and colder in Tohoku. Time was changed, in the same time people's concern was changed as well. Now, in Tohoku, we can still see the damage caused by the massive earthquake happened on the last 11 March. Whatever the damage can be seen physically or cannot be seen mentally, don't forget how the catastrophe devastated the Tohoku area. Please concern the devastated area again!

Kengo Yoshimura, Portuguese major

【Report of activities】

① Community Cafe

We are managing a community cafe, called "Nakayasikissa", at Nakayashiki, Ishinomaki-city (Miyagi prefecture) in cooperate with NPO JEN. Local people are gathering, having a rest and exchanging information here. At the time we just started the cafe, people barely came and we struggled to find how to run this place, yet we didn't stop advertising and kept handing out the leaflet. Now many people come to take a break, have a chat. Primary school students came here to play, cook, study together and we accompanied with them.

② Reconstruction of Miura Inn

Mr. Miura, the landlord of Miura Inn, is eager to reopen it in the nearest future, and as volunteer, we continuously help him. We assure you that it absolutely gets recovered, although some pillars only remained just after Tsunami hit.

③ Mobile library

Micro-bus "MIZUUMI (LAKE)" is a mobile library (many books are loaded into the bus). It will visit 4 primary schools in Ishinomaki-city once a week, and local people can borrow books from this bus. Mr. Watanabe is owner of this bus. We help him to put the books in order and so on. We also donated books to this library.



④ NEW PROJECT!! Study support @Higashi-Matsushima city / East Matsushima-city (started from last October)

We got a study support request from Team-Akatsuki volunteering group of east Matsushima-shi last October. Team-Akatsuki holds an after-school learning courses for the junior and high school students at temporary houses every Saturday (from 16pm to 21pm). We join this activity, and go to Higashi-Matsushima shi/East Matsushima-shi study with students there

【About the accident at community cafe】

Last October, during our stay in community cafe, a girl got her fingers broken as member gross carelessness. The wound will heal up in one month, at the same time we had to stop all activities in community cafe. But during this period, representative and vice-representative went to this girl's home, accompanied with her, studying, playing etc. Because they took good care of this little girl with all their heart, she can go to school again. We obtained the understanding from her family and other parents whose children join our community cafe's activities, and restart the activities in the cafe on 12 November last year. For improving risk management on play with children, we invited Mr. Satoru Hoshino, representative of NPO CHILDREN YOUTH MATCHING, to lecture for us last December. After we restarted the activities in community cafe, we put TUFs's diversity to account, introducing ethnic dance, and major languages, also asked oversea students to introduce their countries, culture for the children every week. Save and fun. Through those events, the children who came to community cafe find their smile again. When people see the children smile and have fun, whatever their family or neighborhood smile, laugh with them. The circle of smile is expanding.

Vice-representative Yawara Suzuki, French major.

【From Ms.Funada (Supervising professor)】

What you have now in your hands is the fourth edition of the TFT newsletter. This activity started after a brain storming session that I had with some students from Tohoku, who were troubled to see a big gap between the situation in Tohoku and the everyday life in Tokyo. First the activity was like a toddling baby, but now, it is standing on its two feet and walking, thanks to the encouragement and help of many people. I would like to praise here the zeal and efforts of all volunteering students, especially the representative and the vice representative. I would also like to thank their families, university staff, alumni, and all other people who warmly supported this activity. And above all, I think this activity owes its success to the warm, open heart and patience of the people in Ishinomaki and Tohoku- I would like to express my greatest gratitude to these people.

As explained in the beginning of this newsletter, the accident in October has been a tough challenge for TUFs for Tohoku. The damage caused to the child and her family was serious; as the supervisor of the group, I feel responsible and apologize again for what happened. The students and I will continue to sincerely support them. On the other hand, at the same time as managing the trouble, the students were strong enough to learn from it and to develop a new stage of activity. You can see how they did it in the next pages.

It should have been psychologically hard for students to overcome the crisis, but they helped each other, and grew stronger. This can also be perceived from the fact that they have now a better activity with more fellows. Frankly speaking, I never thought they could come so far (!). Many people deplore that the “young of nowadays” lack courage, determination; but as an adult who was impressed of the kindness and sense of responsibility of these “young of nowadays”, I would like to recommend to you all to know more about these young, and to support them.

Another point I would like to note is that the activity has developed into a direction that shows the specificity of our university. There are now intercultural and foreign language sessions, and more foreign students are participating as volunteers. The students’ comments below prove that broader and more diverse members are included in the group. The arrival of spring vacation, which brings the end of the academic year and with it a change in the group members, will be a challenge for TUFS for Tohoku. However, the situation in the Tohoku region always remains serious. I would like to recommend to the students who have not participated to the group so far to come once. I also thank in advance those who always help for their continual support.

Finally but not last; dear our friends in Ishinomaki, I thank you very much for always welcoming the students. Every time I go to Ishinomaki, I am touched by your understanding and support for the activity, and your warm heart. The students look more independent and responsible than before, but they are still students. There may be times when they get you into trouble and when they show their immaturity. In such case, please do not hesitate to strictly instruct them. I appreciate your continual warm support to the students.

(Sayaka Funada-Classen)



【Looking Back upon the Activity】

● **Study Support in Higashimatsushima**

In mid-December, I took part in helping children studying at an assembly hall in Higashimatsushima. Elementary schoolchildren and junior high school students brought their own texts and soon began studying. They asked me to check their answer one after another, so I was busy marking papers. After studying for several hours, they went outside with a bouncing step. Their strength in the cold winter really cheered me up.

(Major in Arabic, sophomore, Mizuho Tanabe)

Before taking part in this activity, I'd probably never taught someone. I managed to remember what I learned in my school days, while trying to solve a problem with children. Maybe I was an unreliable teacher for the children, but they all (from elementary schoolchildren to high school students) studied hard the whole time without losing their concentration. I must reward them for their efforts.



(Major in Hindi, sophomore, Minako Kamiyo)

● Xmas Event

On December 18th, we held a Christmas Party at "Nakayashikissa". Both adults and children enjoyed making Christmas tree ornaments, decorating cakes, playing games, and so on. I was able to see children, who had lots of energy and were sometimes noisy, earnestly concentrate on something.

We will make more efforts this year to make everyone happy.

(Major in Vietnamese, junior, Rio Kobayakawa)

I took part in this volunteer activity, because I'd like to do whatever I can do in a badly damaged area due to the tsunami.

Although I helped only the preparation of the party, I was able to play with children, and talk with adults and the other volunteers, who struggle to recover the town.



People in Ishinomaki really warmed my heart. I went there to cheer them up, but rather they cheered me up.

Thank you very much for such a wonderful experience.

(Kei Ito, International society at master course)

● Messages from exchange students participating in our activities.

I am an exchange student from Turkey. Since November I became a volunteer for "TUFS for Tohoku volunteering group" and I believe this group is a great chance to go to Sendai, Ishinomaki and witness how strong people are. To be a part of their solidarity was a great experience. I have been there for just one weekend, played with kids in Nakayashi Cafe and



worked with the owner of a Japanese style inn to help him rebuilding the inn. During night we stayed in the Cafe, we ate and cleaned together as a big family. With the warmness of children and hospitality of people who runs the cafe, I felt like "home" since I came to Japan. I'm looking forward to go there again with volunteers from TUFSS for Tohoku!!

(Cankız Çevik, the I-SEP student from turkey)



When I heard that there is a group at TUFSS who is going to Tohoku and helping people I went to the next meeting right away. Because there was so much confusion in the media in Europe about the disaster, not only because of the severe danger of Fukushima Nuclear Plant, I needed to visit this area with my own eyes in order to see the situation, and more important, the condition of the inhabitants.

When I went to Ishinomaki for the 16th and 17th December 2011 I was stunned by the severe damage the tsunami still leaves behind half a year after. But I was also amazed by the strong belief in life of the people and pure joy the children had when they were playing with me. These people have lost so much, but they continue cherishing life. This fortitude is what impressed me most and I am glad that I could see it with my own eyes.

(Lars Thielen , the I-SEP student from Germany)



My experience in 東北 (Tohoku).

When I saw in Spain all the news related with the 大地震 (terrible earthquake), I felt the necessity of going to Japan to help the people who suffer the disaster. At that time I could not come to Japan because I was in Spain, but now I have the chance to come and help, that's why I enrolled in the volunteer group of 東京外国語大学 (TUFS).

For me the best experience has been helping people and share my time with the kids of 石巻 (Ishinomaki). When I see children's smiles I feel happy and I think that what I am doing really worthy.

ダニー (Daniel García, I-SEP student from Spain)

Ishinomaki report

My name is Javier, and I am an Exchange Student in TUFS. When I saw there was an association in our University which was doing volunteering in Tohoku I was so interested in participating, and I have to say it was such a great experience to do it. Since I am living in Japan, I feel so glad to help in whatever I can to the people who was affected for the earthquake. It was a tragedy, and from Spain we all felt so sorry about that terrible situation. When I went to Ishinomaki, all the people were so friendly and I really appreciate their hospitality. They are working so hard to return to their normal lives, but always with a smile in their faces. Studying and playing with the kids, helping in the Ryokan which was damaged... I am glad to have contributed, even if it has been just a little thing, it was really worth. 心からがんばって東北！



(Javier Rodríguez , the I-SEP student from Spain)



In the newspaper, an article was launched about the “Christmas Party”, held no 18th in December in 2011. Here is the article.

*Children enjoying the Christmas in the event
students of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies organized.*

Ishinomaki Sanriku Kahoku Ishinpou on 25th in December in 2011.



•”Team for Tohoku”(whose representative is Kengo Yoshimura) formed by some students of TUFS held the Christmas Party on18th in Community Café in Ishinomaki-City. Some 20n children enjoyed decollating christmas trees and christmas cords.

• Suzuki Yawara, who is from Sendai-City(majoring French, at the third grade), Kengo Yoshimura(majoring portuguese, at the third grade), an exchange student from Germany and other 6 exchange students participated in the party.

• In decollating the christmas cards, they began to write what they feel in their mind for their parents after Kengo Yoshimura said,” Let`s show your appreciation your father and mother by writing a message here in the card.”

• Natsumi Takahashi (is 11 years old), who came there with her sister, said that she had a wonderful time enjoying the party with other many people. They ate Takoyaki, Goboumeshi, , Tonjiru (which are popular in the region) and Cake.

• ”Team For Tohoku” usually form one group with from 3 to 6 members when they visit the Tohoku region for the participation of volunteer work. From the beginning of March, the team has helped people there to remove scares from their mind. They also have been devoted to teaching children there. To their activities, many children and their parents have sent messages saying “Thank you.” “The Team for Tohoku” is to continue to take part in the volunteer work.

(Photo; Children writing their cards to their parents with students of TUFS. At Nakayashiki ,Isginomaki)

【Organizations that we cooperate with】

Project in Response to Needs of Infants, Children, and Pregnant Women of Fukushima:

<http://fukushimaneeds.blog50.fc2.com>

JEN : <http://www.jen-npo.org/>

WataChildren: <http://watachildren.blogspot.com/>

【Donation】

As we wrote above, we have the aim of devote ourselves to volunteer work in the long term. In fact, our team is only composed of university students. Now it's the truth that we have the difficulty in raising fund and we are in the face of the lack of funds to continue our activities. So it would be so pleasant if somebody could support our activities from the financial point. When you are in favor of our activities and willing to give us a hand, please send an e-mail to the address followed: *tufs.tohoku2011@gmail.com*

Thank you for reading this news letter to the end.

【How to join us】

How about joining us, Team for Tohoku? There is lots of things you can do as a member even if it's difficult for you to go to Tohoku. If you are willing to join us, please send an e-mail to the address followed: ***tufs.tohoku2011@gmail.com*** .

*Weekly meeting is hold at lunch time @ 106 room. Feel free to attend this meeting if you are concerned with the activities. We are waiting for you!!

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