



Photo taken in Ofunato City, at Saito Seika confectionery company

We are deeply grateful for the heartwarming encouragement and support received from both within and outside of Japan in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, which struck on March 11, 2011. The precious bonds created during this time will always be cherished.

On February 9, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Reconstruction Minister Takumi Nemoto and others visited Iwate Prefecture. They inspected public housing projects in Ofunato City and projects move Rikuzentakata City to higher ground.

It's been almost two years since the disaster. We will now bring you the news from Iwate's reconstruction.

Reconstruction Forum held in the affected area

As we approach the second anniversary of the disaster, Iwate Prefecture, held the Building Bridges Reconstruction Forum on Saturday, February 9. The event was held in Miyako Junior College, Iwate Prefectural University, in Miyako City. Its slogan was "Let's turn our bonds into strength".



The Forum welcomed 200 participants from individuals to government bodies and private corporations, as well as NPOs and other aid groups. Takeo Saijo of Project Fumbaro Eastern Japan gave the keynote speech. There was also a panel discussion on the theme "Toward the Third Year of Reconstruction" (above) and information exchange meetings in various areas relating to the reconstruction.

The people of Iwate are turning the bonds formed from aid from within and outside Iwate into strength, and all are working together to move toward reconstruction.

Casualties & Damage in Iwate (as of January 31, 2013)

Human casualties/deaths: 4,672;

Missing: 1,169

Buildings destroyed (residences only, total/partial): 24,872

Iwate Disaster Information Portal (about damage, etc.):

<http://www.pref.iwate.jp/~bousai/taioujoukyou/index.html#new>

The Iwate Reconstruction Support Team

The declining birth rate and aging population has led to a shortage of workers in rural areas, and the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami worsened the situation. Iwate Prefecture is recruiting people for the Iwate Reconstruction Support Team, which helps with reconstruction in the affected areas as well as reinvigoration of rural areas. The team is working for the good of the region. For example, Miharu Yamashita, who works for the group in Noda Village, is coordinating a long-term exchange program. She is working to revitalize Noda's charm. By planning tours for people looking to experience Noda life, she is contributing significantly to the area.



Among other things, we're working on publicizing things that people who come to the village can enjoy.

Miharu Yamashita, Iwate Reconstruction Support Team, Noda Village workforce

For more info (or previous episodes), see <http://bit.ly/raM4Ty>



Broadcast "Iwate: One Step Towards Hope"

No. 42: "The Iwate Reconstruction Support Team"

(Broadcast on January 28, 29, 30, 31 and February 3)

Thank you for all your support!

Donations for survivors (as of January 31):

Around ¥17.53962 billion (83,816 donations)

Donations for reconstruction projects (as of January 31):

Around ¥16.43662 billion (5,857 donations)

Iwate Learning Hope Fund donations (as of January 31):

Around ¥5.00599 billion (8,858 donations)

To assist in the study and daily life of affected children by encouraging sport and study activities

Donations:

<http://www.pref.iwate.jp/~bousai/jyouhou/volunteer.html>

Iwate Reconstruction Supporters registration page → <http://www.pref.iwate.jp/~hp0777/ooendan.html>

We are now recruiting both individual and group (corporate or other) members of the "Iwate Reconstruction Supporters" in the Greater Tokyo Area. Members will receive a membership certificate, and will be e-mailed information regarding reconstruction and tourism in Iwate, upcoming events in the Tokyo area and much more!

Iwate's Efforts: Reconstruction Forums held in the Tokyo and Kansai areas

Reconstruction Forums were held in Osaka and Tokyo Prefectures. Iwate expressed its gratitude for the aid that has been provided so far, and also expressed a hope that there will be continued support for and participation in reconstruction efforts going forward.

Kansai Area "Iwate Sanriku Reconstruction Forum – Let's turn our bonds into strength!"



Exhibiting Miyako Technical High School's tsunami defense model

Date: Saturday, January 26, 14:00~17:10

Location: Osaka Prefecture (Kansai U Takatsuki Muse Campus)

Participants: NPOs and other aid groups, students, companies, government bodies and individuals (total around 250)

Many people were able to learn about the reconstruction efforts through these forums.

Additionally, efforts are being made to promote long-term cooperation with a number of different organizations, and to prevent memory of the disaster from fading.

Tokyo Area "Tohoku Network Reconstruction Forum – Let's turn our bonds into strength!"



The Panel Discussion

Date: Wednesday, February 6, 13:00~16:00

Location: Tokyo (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies)

Participants: NPOs and other aid groups, companies, government bodies and individuals (total around 280)

◆ Iwate Reconstruction Net also reports on Iwate's reconstruction, so why not check it out?

→ <http://www.pref.iwate.jp/view.rb?cd=39696&ik=0&pnp=14>

"Little Rascals Playground" (Wanpaku Hiroba) held in Kamaishi

There has been a desire among parents for a place where children in the affected areas can play and have fun, and where parents can play with their children safely. In response to this, the Child Support Center of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (Iwate Office) held a "Little Rascals Playground" event in Kamaishi City's Nakatsuma Gymnasium on Sunday, January 27.

The pre-school kids and their parents were able to play and go wild with the toys and play equipment, and everyone had a lot of fun.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs exhibits photos of Iwate's reconstruction

On Tuesday, January 22, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "Regional Promotion Seminar" held an exhibition of photos showing Iwate's reconstruction. The photos were shown (in 54 picture panels) to 80 diplomats from the consulates of 75 countries. In addition to explaining both the state of affairs at the time of the disaster and the current reconstruction progress, the exhibit appealed for a continuation of support for Iwate, and introduced Iwate's famous products. It provided information on the regional charm of Iwate Prefecture.

