

RECOVERY PROGRESSES IN TOHOKU

Category: Psycho-Social Care/Volunteer Dispatch/Volunteer Program/Income Generation/Community Building

BE A PART OF THE PROJECT: PARTNER WITH JEN AND CONTRIBUTE

<http://www.jen-npo.org/en/contribute>

Cultural Exchange



Above: Volunteers participate in the "Come Join our Fishery Event," learning to harvest wakame seaweed.

Excursions at Sea: "Come Join our Fishery Event!" is a Success

Following the first event held last December, local fisheries in Higashihama hosted the second fishing event on April 13th, inviting volunteers and outside community throughout the country to learn more about the fishing industry of the Oshika Peninsula. In effort of revitalizing local economic activity, the event brought smiles to both the fishermen and participants spending two days at sea. Fishermen wanted to share their appreciation for the work put in by volunteers, and viewed the event as a great way to showcase their seaside fishery attractions.

Higashihama, one of the hardest hit communities, works towards recovery and finds solace in sharing their experiences with one-on-one interactions. Participants gillnetted flat fish, crab, and dark sleepers to name a few. The next day, they harvested *wakame* seaweed, followed with a feast featuring their freshly procured ingredients. The two-day event received positive responses from participants, with comments saying, "I'll tell people what I've learned in Higashihama and Ishinomaki when I get back home" to "I'll remember the fishermen whenever I eat *wakame* and oysters.

Fishermen interacted on a personal level with the outside community, spreading word of their industry in an interactive fashion out at sea. The success and joy spawned from this event has reaffirmed our determination in Tōhoku as we continue to support and learn from the community.

Community Building

Signs of Spring: Blossoms in Ishinomaki

The 13,000 tulips planted last October in Ishinomaki's Kamikama Friendship Park see their first blossom mid-May, adding color and life to the city. The local Kamikama neighborhood association hosted a potluck for local residents to converse and admire the flowers together. Residents noted that before for tulips, the town really lacked feelings of life. Without any flowers and plants, the city lacked a sense the seasons and time of year. The plants not only add beauty to the city, but also help generate community-bonding events such as the *hanami* flower-viewing picnic. Despite the previous concerns of sullied soil as a result of the tsunami, the flowers are flourishing under Ishinomaki's sun.

Below: Tulips planted last fall by JEN Volunteers blossom in Kamikama Friendship Park.



COUNTRY: Ishinomaki, JAPAN

Volunteer Dispatch

Seaweed and Stories, Ricoh Sends Volunteers to Minamisarikucho

As a part of its employee training, Japanese company Ricoh, sent 214 new recruits to volunteer in JEN's social action programs in the Sanriku area. Recruits have aided fishermen in processing and shipping this season's *wakame* seaweed and root (*mekabu*) in ten different villages around the region. Their participation not only aided local fishermen, but also helped conjure genuine relationships between residents and volunteers. At the end of the day, Ricoh employees spent time with locals, hearing stories from the day the earthquake and tsunami hit over two years ago. After four days of volunteering, Ricoh recruits broke into small discussion groups to converse and reflect upon what they had learned and experienced in Tohoku.

JEN has been accepting companies' trainees in promotion of the relational component of their social action programs for Miyagi residents. Those affected by the tsunami find the personal encounters and act of sharing their experiences therapeutic. Speaking about their lives provides them a sense of comfort to know that others, to some extent, have an understanding of what they have been, and continue to go through. JEN hopes to see the number of young volunteers increase in disaster stricken areas of Tōhoku, so that in turn, accounts from the Great East Earthquake become shared memories among the youth of Japan.

Below: Ricoh dispatches over 200 new recruits to volunteer with local fishermen



Income Generation



Above: Women in Ishinomaki sell their handmade goods as a part of a recent crafts fair.

Crafting Brings Income to Community

On May 4th, JEN helped put together an event in support of the women in Ishinomaki. Eleven organizations from around the area displayed their handcrafts, exhibiting an eclectic mix of bags, jewelry, and other handmade goods. The event was very well attended with over 200 people in awe of the "eye-candy" shopping leaving them in a dilemma of which items to purchase. Guests were very interested in how the goods were made, creating new relationships between local merchants and visitors. The event interactively engaged participants, with stations for children to make their own bags, and weaving tables for guests to make coasters. The next event is expected to happen October of this year, with plans to expand and have even more peer-to-peer exchanges. After the event, the program coordinator received responses from guests expressing interest in selling their own goods that they've since been inspired to make. JEN is dedicated to supporting the women of Ishinomaki, if you are interested in participating or learning more, please contact our Ishinomaki field office.

Building and Maintaining Self-Reliance

JEN promotes self-reliance of those people in need. In that light, JEN's programs take a long view and employ mechanisms that maximize the use of people's ability and the will of humans to live. The experience and expertise of JEN make this possible. (Project Management Policy)

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