

## BRINGING BACK SMILES TO TOHOKU

Categories: Community Development/ Volunteer Dispatch/ Psycho-Social Care/ Empowerment

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

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

#### Community Development

#### “Come Join Our Fishery Event!” Continues to Succeed and Expands to Other Villages



*Above: Volunteers and locals participate in the “Come Join Our Fishery Event,” catching seasonal seafood.*

The Oshika Peninsula is an area made up of over thirty fishing villages, each with its own unique culture and traditions and their name ending with “-hama.”

Since two years ago when the project called “Come to Join Fishing” was launched, the aim has been to address problems in the fishing villages and ways to rebuild them. One way to help rebuild the villages is to attract outside visitors to the area by promoting Oshika’s attractions. With the help of JEN, this project has been expanding to other fishing villages. In March two main events were held which promoted Oshika’s culture. The first, a Fishing Experience called “Come to Join Fishing Event” allowed participants to enjoy spring foods of the villages. At the second event, participants were given the opportunity to experience a four hundred year old fox deity shrine festival at Kitsunzaki-hama, and some even carried a mikoshi, a portable shrine, during the parade.

JEN has been committed on working toward creating a sustainable community—one in which the locals will be able to continue supporting themselves.

#### Volunteer Dispatch

#### Kadonowaki Elementary School Front’s New Garden

On March 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, JEN assisted in moving a flower garden to the front of Kadonowaki Elementary School. This project was initiated upon request by the Kadonowaki Junior High School students. Despite the event overlapping with their spring vacation, many students came out to help. About fifty students, forty-three volunteers, parents, and children helped dig out over eight-hundred viova seedlings, tulip bulbs, and a signboard and transported them to Kadonowaki’s school front. One Kadonowaki Junior High student Miss Seika Sakurai shared her thoughts on the project with us: “It was a lot of fun! The project started when my sister was my age, so I hope we can continue it as a good tradition.”



*Above: Students and volunteers help plant the flowers in front of Kadonowaki Elementary School.*

**COUNTRY: Ishinomaki City, JAPAN**

**Empowerment**

### Ms. Miki Ando Visits for “Reborn Garden” Exchange Event

In helping those children living in areas struck by disasters, JEN has begun working with a charity project called “Reborn Garden”, which was founded by renowned Japanese figure skater Ms. Miki Ando. The project began back in March 2012 when Ms. Ando and other world figure skaters organized a charity show for the cause. This year on January 25<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Ando visited Ishinomaki City for an exchange party with the children in the area. These children, many who still attend schools in temporary buildings or inland school buildings, were very surprised by Ms. Ando’s appearance. The exchange party was held in a historic restaurant of one hundred and twenty one years after its reopening in January 2013.

Twenty-five students and their parents participated in the exchange party. Although the atmosphere was initially tense, perhaps due to the circumstances of them being there, it soon changed after everyone enjoyed their lunches and the children began playing games. The two hour party concluded with the children each sharing his/her goal for the year.



*Above: Ms. Miki Ando and children play games and draw together at the exchange event.*

**Psycho-Social Care**

### Ishinomaki’s Elementary Schools Receive New Playgrounds



*Above: Children at the Okaido Elementary School at the presentation ceremony of their new playground.*

JEN donated four playgrounds to elementary schools in Ishinomaki. With many of the playgrounds destroyed by the disaster and those remaining replaced by temporary quarter sites, children were left with nothing to play with outside. In addition, the very few playgrounds on school sites that survived the tragedy were rusty and unusable due to salt erosion from the tsunami.

Fortunately, on March 12 a presentation ceremony at Kama Elementary School took place, followed by one at Okaido Elementary School. Two other playgrounds donated by JEN were installed in Teizann Elementary School and Kaduma Elementary School by the end of April.

Miss Yuri Sato, a second grader from Okaido Elementary School expressed her gratitude for the new playground at her school: “We love playing around in our playground; we’ve been feeling unhappy because we can’t play with equipment; thank you so much for presenting us with teeters and swings; we’ll use them carefully.”



#### The 7 EN’s of JEN

Engage  
Entrust  
Encourage  
Endeavor  
Enjoy  
Encounter  
Enable

#### DONATE NOW AND HELP THE CAUSE!

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