

Fukushima International Association

Fukushima NOW

Vo. 3 (Published in February 2017)

After the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear accident at Fukushima's Daiichi Power Plant, the FIA ran GYRO's multilingual disaster recovery edition "United We Stand Fukushima" until this past March. It followed the restoration efforts and acts of the international associations and organizations, making the information available both domestically and internationally.

[Fukushima NOW] will be a portal for conveying the current situation in Fukushima with the voices of foreign residents as the centerpiece.

Voices from Fukushima

Josefina Kudo (Koriyama City Resident, from the Philippines)



I've been living in Koriyama City for 27 years now. I've lived in Japan longer than I have in my home country, so it can be said that my feelings and way of thinking are closer to those of Japanese people. I'm able to live my daily life without any real difficulties, but I was quite shaken by the Great East

Japan Earthquake that occurred 6 years ago. Fortunately, Koriyama City did not suffer any major damage, and we were able to return to life as usual rather quickly. However, after learning that many people were sent to live in temporary evacuation shelters in Koriyama, I was unable to think of them as unrelated to myself, and I began volunteering with my church.

There are many foreigners who attend our church, such as those from Vietnam and America, not just from the Philippines. During events such as Easter and Christmas, foreigners gather from other parts of Fukushima to celebrate in Koriyama. The people that come to our church think of me as an older sister or motherly existence, and often consult with me on life in Japan and how to communicate with their families. Likewise, I find that I am able to relieve much of my stress by talking about silly things in my mother tongue. When we have a place to meet up, after everyone has gotten closer, we realize that we don't have to worry alone. On those days, everyone exchanges contact information and continues to keep in contact afterwards.



▲ Filipino friends at weekly mass

Mercedez Clewis (Fukushima City Resident, from America)



In the summer of 2016, I came to Japan to work as an ALT here in Fukushima City. The day I arrived, ready to start my new life, I experienced a relatively big earthquake, which was the start of my uneasiness. There were so many differences between Japan and where I grew up in the south of America, that I was quite shocked, especially when I got on the wrong bus to work. However, I was starting a new life in a new land, so it seemed obvious to me that there would be some sense of discomfort at first. Nowadays, I've become used to that discomfort, and life has become much more fun.



▲ Participating in the GC Café as a guest speaker and conversation moderator

I actively participate in international events and Japanese cultural events where I can, and I'm having fun finding out about all sorts of things that I didn't know about before. Above all else, Fukushima's food really suits my tastes, so I'm able to take energy and comfort in that. I particularly love the fruits, like peaches and pears, which bring me happiness. I've been telling friends from other prefectures and my friends and family back home just how large, sweet, and juicy Fukushima fruits are. Since the Great East Japan Earthquake, Fukushima has continued to have a negative image with many misunderstandings among foreigners. This translates to their agricultural goods as well. When I came to Fukushima, I realized that all that I heard was not completely true. I will be attending an upcoming study tour that will visit various parts of the prefecture, so I hope to thoroughly learn about Fukushima's reconstruction efforts.

Scenes of Fukushima

Reception of the Central and South American Descendants of Japanese Immigrants

From January 23rd to February 3rd, Fukushima prefecture sponsored the “Japanese Immigrants to Central and South America’s Descendants Training Project” welcoming 5 participants from Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and the Dominican Republic. The trainees stopped by institutions like the Fukushima Environment Creation Centre in Miharu and the Fukushima Renewable Energy Research Institute in Koriyama, and inspected areas like Odaka in Minami-Soma City, allowing them to deepen their understanding of the effects the Great East Japan Earthquake has had on Fukushima Prefecture. They were also able to experience various parts of Japanese culture, such as wearing kimonos and making their own soba. They interacted with middle school students, and were able to ski and snowboard. On the weekend, they homestayd with families in the Fukushima city area, some of whom were registered members of the FIA’s “Multicultural Union and International Exchange Volunteer” program.



▲ The trainees who tried skiing and snowboarding for the first time in their lives

Fukushima Promotion on Facebook aimed at Thai People

Phanich Phooriwat from Thailand is experienced in film and website creation, and started the “WeLove Fukushima” Facebook



Page. It is a page dedicated to showing off Fukushima’s famous places, the beauty of the four seasons, regional cuisines, and other relevant information in Thai. There has been an increase in followers from Thailand, so there are high expectations for

▲ “WeLove Fukushima” an increase in Thai tourists to Fukushima.
Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/WeLoveFukushimaTH/

Learning Japanese for Emergency Situations

On January 22nd, the Koriyama Catholic Church held a class on Japanese used for calling 119, aimed at foreign residents. The one time lecture focused on Japanese for emergency situations, CPR, and first aid treatment. There were 12 Filipino and Vietnamese participants, who learned about the importance of clearly conveying the situation and necessary information in emergencies.



▲ Participants at the Koriyama Fire Department Practice Reporting Emergencies

The Multilingual Portal Site for Restoration Information “Fukushima Revitalization Station”

One of the websites that the Fukushima Prefecture manages is the “Fukushima Revitalization Station” where information on the restoration situation, safety of food, and radiation levels throughout the prefecture can be read in 9 different languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese). Also, on the Fukushima Radiation Measurement Map, you can see the results of environmental radiation for the various establishments in the prefecture.



Fukushima Revitalization Station URL <http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal-english/>

FIA Information

OSupport Desk for Foreign Residents

Here at the FIA, we provide consultation services for foreigners in English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Portuguese.

- English, Chinese, Japanese Consultation
Every Tuesday to Saturday from 9:00 to 17:15
- Korean, Tagalog, Portuguese Consultation
Thursday from 10:00 to 14:00
※Appointment necessary for 4th and 5th Thursdays.

TEL : 024-524-1316(direct line) E-mail : ask@worldvillage.org

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