

## The Fukushima We Want to Show the World

The first round of judging for the photo contest, "The Fukushima We Want to Show the World" was held at FIA on Friday, September 21st. This is a photo contest for foreigners who are currently living in Fukushima. We had people from Canada, China, Indonesia, Paraguay and Vietnam come and judge. In total, 180 photos were submitted and around 40 photos were selected during the first round. While there was some friendly chatter, the five judges took their time to look at each and every photo.

Later, we will have Natsuki Yasuda, a photojournalist, who will judge the final round and make the winning selection in the photo contest.



※Some of the photos submitted to the photo contest.

Thank you everyone for your photo submissions!

## Disaster Preparedness Training

The Fukushima Prefecture Disaster Prevention and Training was held at Tamura City's Sports Park on Sunday September 2nd. 11 people from Vietnam and the United States as well as 9 volunteers from the Tamura City International Association participated in the event. First, they were able to learn how to register at the evacuation centre and they got to experience an earthquake in an earthquake simulation vehicle. Also, the participants got to try some hot meals served during emergency disasters.

There was also training held at a place designated for those needing extra assistance. Translation practices took place where messages from the main office of the evacuation centre were translated into English, Chinese and simple Japanese.

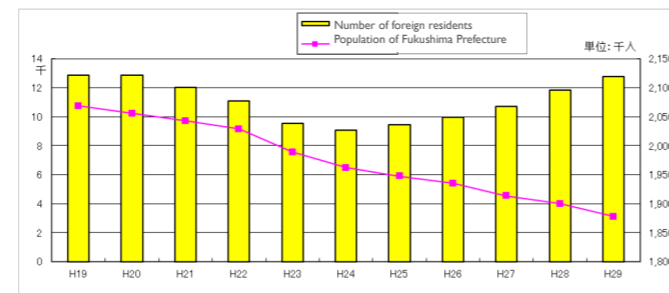
One foreign resident participant said, "There is no disaster preparedness training in my home country. So through this event, I was able to know about what kind of actions to take when a disaster happens."



### ■ Changes in the Population of Foreign Residents in Fukushima ■

According to Fukushima Prefecture Government's report, "The Current Situation of Internationalization in Fukushima," there were 12,794 foreign residents in the prefecture from the end of December 2017. After the earthquake disaster, the number of foreign residents declined temporarily. However, ever since 2013, this number has been increasing and now, the population has reached back to its second highest peak.

Also, it appears that the proportion of foreign residents from China, then Philippines, Vietnam, Korea and Nepal has been increasing.



According to "The Current Situation of Internationalization in Fukushima"

### Multilingual information on the Revitalization effort from "Fukushima Restoration Station"

On Fukushima Prefecture's official revitalization related information portal site "Fukushima Restoration Station" hosts the latest data on food safety efforts and the activities of those supporting Fukushima in 9 different languages (Japanese, English, Mandarin, Korean, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese).

<http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal-english/>

### ● FIA Information

#### Support 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 ☎024-524-1316 ✉ask@worldvillage.org

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Fukushima International Association

# Fukushima

おかげさまで  
30<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
FIA 福島県国際交流協会

# NOW

Vol.8 (Published in November 2018)

30th Anniversary Edition

The Fukushima Prefectural International Association would like to communicate Fukushima in the "now" in multiple languages by recording the voices of the foreign residents of Fukushima and their efforts towards restoration after the disaster, be it through international exchange, or the efforts of various organizations.  
※ Translated versions of the newspaper can be downloaded from the FIA's homepage.



## Voices from Fukushima

For this issue of "Voices from Fukushima", we have Liliana Takahashi from Mexico, who is currently living in Soma City. She has been featured once in the past, right after the earthquake disaster.

Liliana is currently raising two girls while helping out with her husband's family-owned preschool. She lives in the Haragama District, which was heavily impacted from the earthquake and tsunami disasters. During that time, Liliana was in Mexico, preparing to have her wedding reception. While her husband and his family were in Japan during the disaster, everyone was fortunately safe and the preschool didn't suffer much damages. However, many friends and acquaintances were killed by the tsunami. As a result, Liliana came back to Japan in April 2011 to help out with the family's preschool, which was able to reopen a month after the disaster.

7 years later, we wanted to ask Liliana on her thoughts about the time of the disaster as well as about her current life.



### - When was the first time you came to Japan?

It was in 2008 when I first visited Japan and I had my husband show me around the country. Soma city is a wonderful place and I instantly fell in love with it! I practically went to the ocean everyday with my husband and the preschool children.

### - When you learned about the earthquake disaster, what were your thoughts and feelings while in Mexico?

Right after the earthquake disaster in Japan, there were around 45 people who evacuated to the preschool. I decided for the time being to stay in Mexico because I didn't want to bother anyone during this difficult time. After a month has passed, I learned that the disaster-affected regions needed a lot of help so I decided to return to Japan. More than anything, I wanted to be with my husband and his family because families should be together when dealing with hard times. At first, my parents in Mexico were against me going to Japan because they worried about the radiation, but later, they accepted my decision.

### - What did you think when you first saw Soma City after the earthquake disaster?

I couldn't believe my eyes. I was shocked that the places that I knew such as the supermarket, the bakery, etc. were all gone. I couldn't speak a lot of Japanese, but I put myself to work at the preschool and played with the children. Maybe it was from the shock and strain of the earthquake disaster, but the preschool children's behavior was tense and they had a somber demeanor.

Also, the children started to frequently pretend to be tsunamis while playing. Usually, they would playfully build houses from blocks. However, during that time, the children would say "Tsunami! Tsunami" and aggressively smash the blocks down. That left a big impression on me so I put in more effort to have better communication with the children.

### - Because of the earthquake disaster, your wedding reception in Mexico didn't happen. Instead, you held a wedding ceremony in Fukushima in May 2011. I believe that really encouraged everyone during the difficult time.

I didn't even know about the wedding until that very day so I was really surprised. My husband and his friend did it as a surprise gift to me.

First, I changed into a dress at the preschool. Then we held a wedding ceremony among the debris at the beach while family and friends watched over us.

### - Do you think anything has changed personally during these 7 years?

I think I became stronger. Before, I would worry about what other people thought about me, so I didn't really express my own feelings. I even hid the fact sometimes that I lived in Fukushima. But now, I grew a sense of pride for my town and I can confidently say that "I live in Fukushima."

Overall, I want more people to know and understand about Fukushima. If you have two days, that's plenty of time so go ahead and eat delicious ramen, go to the hot springs and get to know the Fukushima people.

### - What are your dreams for the future?

Japanese children are really nice, always smiling and they're really cute. However, they can be a bit shy compared to Mexican children. I think Japanese children can become more open towards other people and different cultures if they just had more experiences with foreign cultures. Also, I'm currently busy taking care of my own young children but later, I would like to teach the preschool children English or perhaps dance too.

### English Teachers Volunteering in the Odaka Area

On Saturday, September 8th, English teachers from foreign countries participated in a volunteer event at the Odaka District of Minamisoma City. Until two years ago, this area was designated as "Difficult-to-return zone," "Restricted residence zone," and "Evacuation order cancellation preparation zone" because it was 20 km away from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Apart from a small area in the region, most of the restrictions have currently been lifted. Also, 35% of the registered households have returned back to the town.

On this day, 24 English teachers, from Fukushima as well as from Yamagata and Tochigi, gathered to trim down bamboo groves. According to one man who volunteers every month, a lot of bamboo groves grew in the area of Minamisoma City because it was once restricted. These trees grow quickly, so if they are left unattended, they can even break down the walls of houses. And so, recently there seems to be an increase in requests for trimming down these bamboo groves.

Also, the organizer for this volunteer event, Sarah Jones, experienced the earthquake disaster first-hand in the town of Futaba. She said, "This volunteer activity has been happening every month since 2014 and I took over this work from the previous organizer. I really appreciate all the volunteers who come and help out. If we all join forces together, we can do a lot of good work. I want to keep doing these volunteer events in order to help bring about recovery in the area."



They cut down bamboo trees with a chainsaw and then they remove the branches. After, the trees are evenly cut 50 cm in length.

### Agriculture Training Program in Miharu



「We are harvesting cucumbers, tomatoes and melons. Touching the leaves of cucumbers makes my hands itchy!」

Located in the town of Miharu, the Ouchi farm has been accepting foreign agricultural trainee workers from Indonesia, Malaysia, etc., for around 20 years. For the first time, a Filipino trainee worker, Sagansang Fahad Casim, has come to work at the farm this year. He will be living in Fukushima from April 2018 to February 2019 to learn about techniques in vegetable farming as well as how to manage a farm.

Fahad has been already been cultivating his own rice and vegetables in the Philippines. When talking about his future dreams, Fahad said, "There is a big difference in the efficiency of work in agriculture between Japan and the Philippines. When I return to the Philippines, I want to manage my own farm and also be a consultant to the other farmers. I want to work hard here in Japan so I can use what I have learned back at home."

### What I Like About Fukushima



After the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Disaster, FIA has started publishing issues of FukushimaNOW (previously known as Ganbarou Fukushima). This multilingual newsletter is a disaster recovery edition of FIA's PR magazine "GYRO." For the special anniversary edition, we have asked 7 foreign residents, currently living in Fukushima Prefecture and who have been interviewed in the past, to tell us about what they like about this prefecture.



I have been living in Aizu for over six years. I really like Mount Bandai and so, I have climbed it already four times. You can see Aizu-Wakamatsu, Kitakata, Inawashiro, etc., up on top of the mountain. From Vietnam, living in Aizu-Wakamatsu

**Pham Van Thanh**

Xin chào ! (Vietnamese)



Fukushima Prefecture is a place full of nature and has a lot delicious seasonal food. Lake Inawashiro has beautiful scenery and beaches as well as water sports that you can enjoy. Also, I was deeply impressed by the polite and nice residents of Fukushima. From Britain, living in Koriyama

**Chloe Yamaki**

Hello ! (English)



I really like Koriyama City because of the many shops and buildings. There are a lot of places to see and experience such as Koriyama Big-I's Science Park, the water fountain in front of the station, big libraries and shopping centres. I really like Fukushima.

**Francis Amimo Okoti**

Jumbo! (Swahili)  
Hello ! (English)



Fukushima has beautiful scenery and delicious foods. In Shirakawa, not only do I have Filipino friends, but I have a lot of Japanese friends as well. That's why I have a comfortable life with a great support system. Shirakawa is a really nice place to live. From the Philippines, living in Shirakawa

**Christina Iwasawa**

Magandang Tanghali ! (Filipino)  
Hello ! (English)

I really like the beautiful nature and hot springs, as well as the warm kindness from the Fukushima people. Even if they don't know each other, people always greet as they pass. I think it's really nice how the local residents are respectful of one another. From China, Living in Sukagawa city,

**Ai Shirotsaka**



你好 ! (Chinese)



From working to taking care of the children to studying and playing in a band. Before I knew it, 23 years have passed and Fukushima has now become my home. During these years, I have become able to speak and really understand Japanese as well as increase my interest and fondness towards this prefecture. I have grown to really like the people living in this region.

**Sean Mahoney**

Hello ! (English)  
Bonjour(French)

