



6th International Survivor Exchange Program for Children and Community Survivors of 3/11 Great East Japan Disasters

Background: Now more than five years after the 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake, 170,000 evacuees from disaster stricken areas, including 97,000 evacuees from the radiation contamination zone, continue to suffer the consequences (5/16/2017 report by Reconstruction Agency). In particular, there is continued concern for evacuated children's emotional wellbeing, as they continue to be displaced away from their communities and show signs of emotional stress. With generous support from American Airlines' Kids in Need Program and the US-Japan Foundation, our 6th international outreach program with 9/11 survivors will take place throughout the disaster stricken areas of Tohoku, Japan.

Goals: We wish to empower school communities' recovery efforts by sharing concrete examples of resilience and of people overcoming disasters.

Sadako's Soaring Crane: Together with American Airlines, we brought an origami crane monument fabricated out of steel recovered from 9/11 on our 1st mission in 2012. This symbol of recovery from the international community was especially dedicated to the children and was inspired by Sadako Sasaki, who died at age 12 from radiation exposure after the bombing of Hiroshima. Sadako's origami cranes was donated in 2007 to the 9/11 Tribute Center, and we reciprocated with a symbolic return of Sadako's wish for peace and comfort for the children of Tohoku KyodoNews

Children's Storybook: We have published a children's storybook of a twelve year old girl, Sadako's, strength and courage to help disaster stricken communities move forward after 9/11 and then 3/11 and how Sadako's Soaring Crane monument came to Fukushima. This storybook has been touted as a "book of life" and as "Hiroshima-NY-Fukushima connected with hope." We have donated more than 10,000 copies of the storybook to school children in Fukushima. The story will continue to touch the kids around the world.

Impact of Survivor Exchange Program: Our outreach trip will continue past trips' tradition of connecting 9/11 survivors with 3/11 survivors through individual and group conversations throughout the Tohoku region. We continue to gauge the impact of post-3/11 outreach efforts on both the 3/11 "recipient" community and the 9/11 "donor" community. The success of this outreach program may be partially attributable to the fact that it meets the basic objectives of psychological first aid to "establish human connection in a nonintrusive, compassionate manner"; "support positive coping and empower survivors to take an active role in recovery"; and "facilitate continuity and ensure other sources of support when leaving."