

Earthquake updates (JWCU)
As of 1:30 p.m. March 29, 2011
(since the last information)

<Fight It Out! The JWCU Member Meeting in Tohoku>

- On March 23rd, several JWCU executives visited Tohoku region to investigate the affected areas. On March 26th, JWCU executives and members in Tohoku region gathered to share information and discuss the future directions. About 60 people attended the meeting, sharing their horrifying experiences as well as energy to rebuild their lives and communities. The information shared and issues discussed at the meeting include the following:
 - All of the JWCU members have been found safe. However, some members lost their families and/or homes.
 - The damage in Koriyama City (Fukushima Prefecture) was more severe than initially expected. A park in the City, where JWCU provides cleaning services, is a designated evacuation center, and our members have been supporting evacuees. Additional damage is a rumor about nuclear power plants (Koriyama City is about 60km west of the plants). People are living with the unstable conditions of and insufficient information about the plants. Based on this information, a truck from the head office left for Koriyama this morning (March 29th) to deliver supplies.
 - Since the earthquake, a number of job offers and labor contracts (particularly irregular employees) have been canceled. While some jobs may be created through recovery efforts, that is not enough. JWCU needs to find ways to secure and create jobs for people while keeping in mind what the “public” really means.
 - The slogan has been decided: “Fight It Out, Tohoku!” We will rise above this hardship.
 - The next meeting will be held on April 11th (a month after the quake) and each member will bring more detailed plans for the future.

<Second Phase of Material Support >

- While trucks from the head and regional offices keep delivering supplies in the affected areas, the supplies of emergency items seem to become sufficient. While a truck from the head office will continue to deliver supplies regularly (about twice a week) until mid-April, JWCU will stop collecting the items from members for now.

- There have been increasing needs for daily goods as well as equipments to clean houses and communities. For those who lost their homes and move to another place (including temporary housing), furniture may be needed too. The head office will collect information from the affected areas about changing needs and secure the items accordingly. For example, our members in Ishinomaki City (Miyagi Prefecture) have already requested shovels and unicycles to clean up the place. One of our support hubs in Osaki City (Miyagi Prefecture) has secured some of these items and delivered them, while the head office will continue to obtain those supplies.

<Financial Support >

- The recovery work will take years (or even decades) and millions of yens. At the meeting in Tohoku on March 26th, the goal was set to raise a billion yens in 3 years to support members, their jobs and communities. The efforts include not only distributing flyers to call for the wide range of support but also support among members. The JWCU board meeting will be held on March 30th and discuss details on the relief funds, including how to provide long-term support and to spend the fund.
- Our member in Nagano Prefecture has already started raising money to provide support. It is a small day care center for the elderly, and even service users brought whatever they had (some currencies were so old that no one uses them any more, but that shows how hard they have tried to support the members) to make contributions.