

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Earthquake Updates by JWCU Japan Workers' Co-operative Union April 13, 2011

A month has past since the massive earthquake and tsunami that hit Tohoku (northeast) region on March 11th. But Japan is still having a series of aftershocks, some of which are as big as M7. The situation of the power plants in Fukushima Prefecture is still unstable, and their nuclear threat has been raised to Level 7, the highest.

Despite all these hardships, JWCU members are moving forward, and our global friends (that means, YOU!) are helping us move forward. Please allow us to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the greatest support!

In this issue, we will introduce some of the reconstruction and support efforts by worker coops within the affected areas as well as across the country and the globe.

From the Frontline

Children Halls Opened in Sendai (Miyagi Prefecture)

21 days after the deadly earthquake, 2 children's halls newly opened with full of energy in Sendai, the biggest city in Tohoku region.

Because most of the shops were closed due to the quake and tsunami, their worker-members were not able to purchase toys for children. Hearing about such a difficult situation, friends and colleagues across the country have sent hundreds of toys to these halls.

The earthquake hit the community in March, the new school year started in April, and some children, particularly those who have had to evacuate, are going through these changes in a totally different environment than what they are familiar with. Our members are determined to provide safe and enjoyable environment for these children.



Nationwide Support

From Hokkaido: A Story in Noda Village (Iwate Prefecture)

From March 27th to 29th, our members in Hokkaido delivered supplies in Noda Village. While in the village, the members also helped removing rubbles.

One of the members said, “When we drove the truck to the village, we couldn’t find any building. The village was gone. It was so unrealistic that I was speechless. When we started the cleaning, we were told ‘Please be prepared. You may find bodies.’



One of the city officials greeted everyone, saying ‘Let’s work hard, but don’t forget to smile!’ His words made me realize that we have no time to be depressed.”

The next step for the recovery is creating jobs in the community, and worker coops have an important role in it.

From Tokyo: WAP Charity Concert

Worker Coop Art Project (WAP, a group of JWCU members and friends who are talented in music and art) had a charity concert on March 27th in Tokyo to support Tohoku region.

The concert was very entertaining with piano, guitar and band performance, and it closed with everyone singing “Sukiyaki Song (its Japanese title is ‘I look up when I walk’).”



Over 200,000 yens were raised at the concert, all of which have been sent to the victims in Tohoku region.

Global Support

Messages of Support

We deeply appreciate a number of supporting messages from our global friends. We are truly encouraged by these messages and grateful for the concern.

We are introducing the messages in our nationwide member newsletters. The first group was introduced in the March 25th issue, and each issue afterward has also introduced and will keep posting the messages as they arrive.



Calling for Donation

Some of our global friends have also kindly posted the call for donations on their web sites to support worker coops in Japan.

We would like to express our special appreciation for the following organizations.

- ICA (International Co-operative Alliance)
- CICOPA (The International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Cooperatives)
- CECOP – CICOPA Europe (The European Confederation of Workers' Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Social and Participative Enterprises)
- The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives

If a similar notice has been posted in other organizations, we would like to share this kind act with our members via our newsletter. So please contact Yoshiko YAMADA (e-mail: ymdysk@roukyou.gr.jp) and let us know.

<Endnote>

We still have a long way to make a recovery and go further. Each step may be really small, but little things can make a big difference.

Please allow us to share these steps with you. And hopefully, the world will be filled with smile by the year 2020 because, as we all know, co-operative enterprises build a better world and this recovery effort is no exception.