

“What troubled us the most” Mothers on the Great East Japan earthquake

► Treasure your neighbors

Building a community network is the best defense in protecting children

[Case 1]

A Father isn't always present

My husband works for an infrastructure related company. We were able to confirm our safety with each other right after the earthquake, but since he was busy with reconstruction work, he wasn't able to come home for 2 days. Until then, I was home alone with my 2 year old and 4 year old son, terrified of aftershocks. It was difficult for me to go shopping with my children, but my neighbor was very kind to share their food with us and that helped very much. (momo)

Learn from 3.11

Even if you're on a greeting only basis, having your children noticed and recognized by your neighbors is crucial.

► Keep life necessities in stock Even a 2 year old needs water!

When our water supply was cut off, I obtained information from TV about water distribution at the ward office. I stood in line with 2 empty plastic bottles in hand with my almost 3 year old son for half an hour. When our turn finally arrived, I was able to receive 2 liters of water being the mother, but my son was denied of any. I protested that "He needs water too. Why does that school boy get water and my son cannot" but the answer I received was "A school boy needs water, but I cannot give any to your son." (R.O)



[Case 2]

Neighborhood association will take charge of evacuation center!

My husbands' job requires us to relocate often. Since there isn't a resident union in the apartment we live in, we are not able to join the neighborhood association. When the earthquake happened, we spent one night in the evacuation center that was managed by the neighborhood association. However, a board member said that it was not right for us to be there since we were not part of the association. I thought what he had said was unreasonable and could not get over it for a year. (T.W)
※Neighborhood associations manage evacuation centers, as well as the distribution of relief supplies sent to the city.

► When with your child... Carrying your food stock up any stairs can be troublesome

2 days after the earthquake, I went shopping with my 2 year old son. I bought 3 packs of diapers and 10 bottles of 500ml bottled water. Due to the power failure, the elevator was out of service. Since my son wanted to hold hands, I had to make 2 runs up and down the stairs to get everything to our apartment on the 6th floor. (natsucoco)

Learn from 3.11

Keeping necessities such as water, food, and diapers in stock will reduce your burden greatly

► An Evacuation shelter is the last resort Children will play even during emergencies

I spent the night with my 6 year old and 18 month old children in the shelter after the earthquake happened. I felt safe there because lifelines were maintained. The next morning, I helped getting breakfast ready while I watched over my children. They started to play when an old man shouted angrily that this was not a place to play. A nice lady defended us but the whole situation was too much to bear so I went home that very day. (T.W)

Learn from 3.11

If you can stay at home, you and your children will most likely be able to avoid unneeded stressful situations.

► Anxiety of working mothers Joining up with your child takes more time than you think

I was in the middle of a meeting when the earthquake happened. After confirming the safety of the building and employees, I was able to find my husband who works in the same building, and was working inside duty by chance. Together we headed to the preschool by car, but traffic lights were dead because of the blackout, and we were stuck in the middle of very heavy traffic. I had no choice but to abandon the car and walk from there. If it were a normal day it would only takes 20 minutes, but that day it took me 2 and a half hours to get there by foot. (nomuzo)

Learn from 3.11

If you spend the day away from your child, letting them know beforehand that you may be late to pick them up in case of a disaster can reduce any anxiety the child may experience

MAMAFUAKAI

MAMAFUA-REPORT



BOUSAINUGUI

Disaster Preparedness Cloth made by Cuwan Coshel kobo add Corp.

Manufactured in Takizawa City, Iwate. A Tenugui, is a traditional Japanese cloth that can be used for various purposes such as wiping, wrapping, display, and even as a bandanna. BOUSAINUGUI Disaster Preparedness Cloth is a twist on the traditional product promoting "Disaster Prevention Awareness" as well as coming in handy during disastrous times. BOUSAINUGUI Disaster Preparedness Cloth is 10cm longer than ordinary products, making it easier to convert into slings, masks, bandages, and even a rope when tying several together.



<http://bousainugui.com/>

“BOUSAINUGUI Disaster Preparedness Cloth for Ladies English version” is also available with additional information about disaster kits that women should have prepared.



[About the Cover Illustrator]

Haruo lives in Sendai and is the mother of a 6 year old and 3 year old boy. She started Kirigami (the art of paper-cutting) when in college and has been creating paper cutouts for more than 10 years.

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● “What troubled us the most” Mothers on the Great East Japan earthquake

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Introduction

On March 11, 2011, the Great East Japan earthquake took the lives of 15822 innocent people, and there are still 2590 people missing today. It was the day that everyone prayed for the safe return of their loved ones. We believe it is our responsibility to educate people on disaster prevention methods and to share our

unimaginable experience to as many people as we can. A tragedy like this should never happen again. We hope for the long-term disaster support towards the victims, and that this pamphlet will raise awareness in disaster prevention.

Mamafuakai

The History of MAMAFUAKAI

December 2011	..... 7 mothers whom were volunteers of Sendai City Child Care Plaza "Nobisuku Sendai" gathered and founded MAMAFUAKAI with the purpose to present and spread Tohoku reconstruction support that is manageable while raising children.	Mar. 2013	..... Hosted exhibition "Look at us now -feelings about Fukushima" Work by 3 mothers and 1 father who chose to stay and raise children in Fukushima
Feb. 2012	..... Published "Watashi nimo Dekiru Fukkoshien (Anyone can help, Reconstruction Assistance) Vol.1"	Sep. 2013	..... Published "Watashi nimo Dekiru Fukkoshien (Anyone can help, Reconstruction Assistance) Vol.4"
Oct. 2012	..... Published "Watashi nimo Dekiru Fukkoshien (Anyone can help, Reconstruction Assistance) Vol.2"	Oct.27 2013	..... Hosted reconstruction festival "Look, Listen, Feel, Share." Share your thoughts on Tohoku's reconstruction and disaster preparation with your family
Jan. 2013	..... Published "Watashi nimo Dekiru Fukkoshien (Anyone can help, Reconstruction Assistance) Vol.3"	May 2014	..... Published "Watashi nimo Dekiru Fukkoshien (Anyone can help, Reconstruction Assistance) Vol.5"
Feb.- April 2013	..... Hosted photo exhibition "The Role of Family - What we found after leaving Fukushima" Case of the Jinno Family	Sep. 2014	..... Published "Watashi nimo Dekiru Fukkoshien (Anyone can help, Reconstruction Assistance) Vol.6"
Mar. 10 2013	..... Four-walling of independent film "After the Tsunami - Record of a year at Ishinomaki Kadosonaki Elementary School -" . Hosted play therapy workshop "Relaxation Time for Mothers." Theme: Mother-child playtime		

of each other, and confirmed the safety of friends.

That was how the workshop where people taught their skills and created things, while drinking tea, started. It was a workshop by the people of Ishinomaki for the people of Ishinomaki. The workshop not only helped the people living in temporary housing feel less lonely, but also helped them to live positively.



4. Helping with regaining pride of living

1) Community empowerment: one becomes two

As the workshop developed, some crafts expanded into creating jobs. The people of Ishinomaki are very talented making bags, Origami, Decoupage, mobile phone charms, and knitting with both craft paper and yarn. They developed an activity where they would go around the temporary housings and teach their crafts. Although they felt shy to be called a teacher, they felt needed by others and that would help them feel better.

2) Community empowerment: two becomes a whole community

I opened a "Challenge Shop" in order to expand connections between the people rather than just create things. This was a coordination between the people of Ishinomaki and people of the peninsula and Higashimatsushima. The management was awkward at first, but after 3 months everything was going smoothly. Meeting new people influenced new products, display ideas, sales methods and thus encouraged independence.

●Sanae Ochiai

Born in Kanagawa. Former public school teacher. When the earthquake occurred in 2011, she left for the disaster area the day after her farewell ceremony. She then started a community salon named "Joinus Aitopia" in June 2012. Today she conducts activities that are rooted in the community together with the residents.



●Community salon Joinus Aitopia

<Address> 2-4-18 Chuo, Ishinomaki-shi, Miyagi 986-0822

<TEL>080-5378-7907 (direct to Sanae Ochiai).

We host workshops at random times. *Contact for further information. Most Tuesdays are reserved for trips to temporary housings.

Detailed activities of Joinus: conducting workshops and salons, learning support, community development and advancement, job assistance, coordinating, and attentive listening

Reports from the site, present day

Report 1

Empowering Community Care – to feel pride for life again

Sanae Ochiai, Head of Community Salon Joinus Aitopia

1. Introduction

Almost 4 years have passed since the disastrous day. Even though roads were severed and gasoline was hard to obtain, I set out to Ishinomaki city in Miyagi, just so I could say "thank you for staying alive."

At first, my plan was to stay for a year, but that ended up in being 4 years. That's how much damage was done to Ishinomaki, and there were so many problems that needed to be solved.



2. The first year: support living life for today

I did anything and everything I could to help. Cleaning up home and belongings, removing sludge, rinsing photographs, helping with the soup kitchen at evacuation centers.

The needed to live in their own house, to feed their children and elderly, to get hold of a portrait so that they could hold a funeral. I started by listening to their silent words and by supporting the thoughts and wishes of the victims.

3. The second year: assisting community reconstruction

Even though living in temporary housing meant "being able to sleep in a comfortable position" and "being able to sleep and eat when desired," things like unattended death, suicide, and domestic violence started to afflict the people. I witnessed what "Man shall not live by bread alone" really meant. Losing a familiar community, and having the new community at the evacuation center come

apart, seemed to increase isolation.

Therefore, in order to reconstruct the community, I leased and restored a damaged house and opened up a salon named "Joinus Aitopia"

1) Self-empowerment by a concert

The simple act of watching and listening, laughing and shedding tears, would allow the people to face their feelings and heal their broken hearts. A man in his sixties who lives in temp house K, felt that even seeing people was troublesome and



always stayed at home, but came to the concerts frequently. A woman in her seventies who lived on the

second floor of her damaged house, trembled whenever she heard stories about the tragic day, left her house for the first time in a year and came to a concert with her husband. It seemed as though everyone had the power to get back on their feet by themselves.

2) Peer-empowerment by a Tea Salon

Gingerly participating in a tea salon thinking that they might see someone that knew them, the people rejoiced the safety



Report 2

Live in the current – From the playground after the earthquake

Etsuko Takahashi, Specified Non-profit Corporation Boken Asobiba – Sendai Miyagi Network

During the disaster, there were many children that couldn't understand the situation and had trouble expressing their feelings while in the chaotic disaster stricken areas.

After consulting with temporary housing, parks and schools, we secured a "playground," a place where children could behave as children, and have accommodated many children since. Watching children absorbed in playing, the adults that accompanied them would also have the opportunity to make new acquaintances, making the playground a cornerstone for them as well.

A girl living in temporary housing, didn't talk, smile, or leave the house. Worried residents came to us and so we made a playground. After a while this girl was able to play and laugh out loud with other children. Hearing the sounds of children play, one after another people would gather. Residents smile saying "the children have become the innocent children they should be. How nice, how nice." Children learn to live under the circumstances they are put in.

Some adults say that the sight of children playing healed them time after time.

Children met adults through recreation and expanded their world.

Meeting many people have helped them dream of their future.

Once a new living place is set, the place requires a community with children.

Moreover, the psychological care for children is an ongoing and urgent issue remaining to be solved.



●Etsuko Takahashi

Engaged in youth education, Life-long education, environmental education, and social welfare.



Vice chairman of Sendai Department of Environmental City Promotion FEEL Sendai. Board member of Public Interest Incorporated Foundation Sanaburi Foundation for Positive Social Change. Counselor for Sendai City Support Center. Vice chairman of Rokugo and Nanago District Restoration and Reconstruction Committee. Caretaker for Disaster Children Support Network Miyagi. Member of Earthquake Disaster Reconstruction Memorial Exploratory Committee. Board member of Miyagi Nature Game Society.

●Specified Non-profit Corporation Boken Asobiba – Sendai Miyagi Network

We are engaged in creating an affluent community where children play freely based on themes such as "play" "connection" and "growth." Coast Park "Kaigan-koen Boken Hiroba" (Izuchi, Wakabayashi-ku, Sendai) is currently closed due to damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Thus, we support the reconstruction of devastated areas by creating playgrounds, focusing on the role that "playing" holds in psychological care and the function in which communities are formed.

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