

Our story and messages from the 4th Tohoku Trip



29 March - 1 April 2015

Aim of Tohoku Trip

- * To expand the view and perspective by directly going to the real location and experiencing the reality.
- * To learn through communicating with local people.
- * To share to as many people in English about what you learned.
- * Think about what we can do.

19 kids from all over Japan and Nice young people from eight countries visited four towns in Miyagi Prefecture from March 29th to April 1st 2015.



We hope you can feel the same feeling and thought with us from the trip.

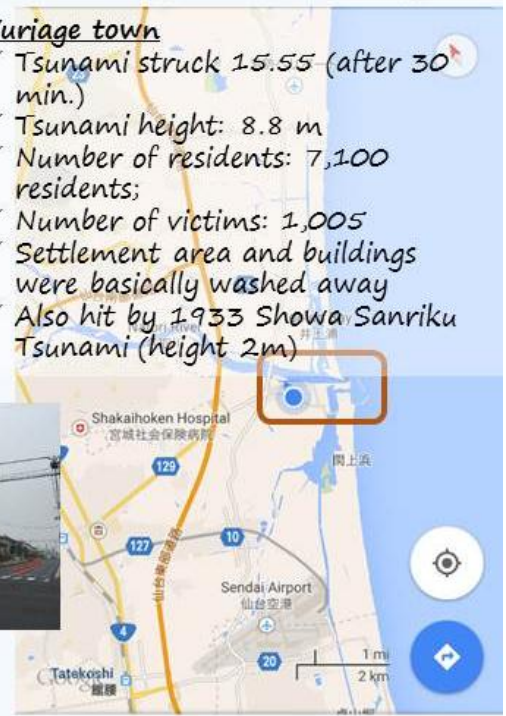
In this report we will see together progress of recovery in Tohoku since we compare condition from all four Tohoku trips, stories and PR video we made from Oshima, and also ideas for actions to support the needs of local people.

2011: "...Yuriage town has completely gone..."

Recovery of Yuriage



Before Tsunami (2001) After Tsunami (2011)



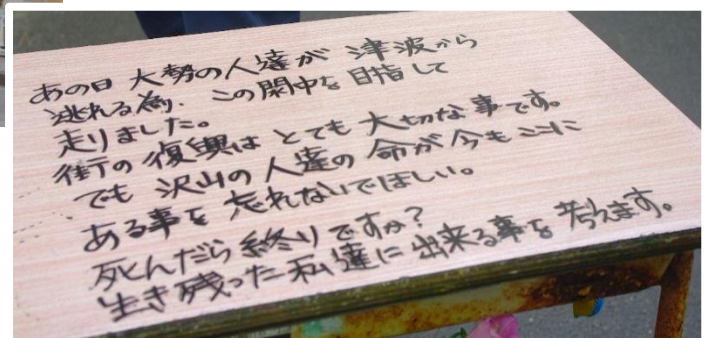
Recovery after Tsunami (2012-2015)
 2015 "... Yuriage town is back on the map and realizing its development plan, including Children of Yuriage dream!"

"Yuriage town goes from the map" so they said in the aftermath of Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami 2011. The tsunami that came 30 minutes after the earthquake struck the town which once home to 7,100 residents in the friendly coastal community, resulted in 1,005 casualties. After four years of consultation with residents, including giving kids with opportunity to express their desired future, Yuriage resident's have determined to have their mission on constructing the Yuriage town to be defended from tsunami. When we visited Yuriage last month, we saw the work to raise the land by three meters, new houses have been built near the Ami's, and new tsunami pole erected to pass the tsunami history information for the future generation. Now: Yuriage is back on the map and realizing its development plan!



In Yuriage area, we suffer big damage from Tsunami four years ago. Many people were killed and many houses flew into because of that. There is junior high school in the center of the town whose name is Yuriage junior high school.

You can see the memorial which say something special words on the desk near that.
 "Revival of the town is very important things. But, please don't forget many people living here. We should think about what we can do."





Four years have passed since Tsunami. Yuriage area has been walking there life better. Raising construction progresses, aiming to environment where people can live again. But, junior high school was demolished, and memorial is unlikely to move. To one of the people that we met in the field, there are people that Ms. Tanno. She said "You never see the place, you can see today." Memory of the earthquake is going gone along with the reconstruction, I do not have a way to have such a feel.

Now, what do what is that we can do?

We visited Yuriage area on day4. We also visited this place last year. When we visited here last year, we couldn't see anything except for empty land. No houses, no cars, no people. There was nothing. But this year, when we visited Yuriage area, we found a change. The soil was piled up here and there. This was a construction work to raise the height of land.

They were making disaster area higher than before by piling up soil, so that we can reduce the damage of next tsunami. This construction had started on last October, and now, it has been done in a really hurry. And, it seems also the mind of people had changed from last year.



2014

"I can not imagine the future of Tohoku at this point. This makes me uncomfortable feeling every day, every time"

(Mrs. Tanno in 2014)



2015

"Finally the recovery construction is started this year. Now, I am sure that we are moving ahead to reconstitute our society in Tohoku. So, I don't have worries about our future anymore"

(Mrs. Tanno in 2015)

We met with Ms.Tanno as same as last year.

When we met her last year, she looked like she was at a loss for what to do, and said, "I don't know what will happen in this Tohoku from now. So now, I'm filled with anxiety"

But this year, she had a cheerful look on her face. This was because the construction had started.

She said like this.

"The construction had started. Tohoku had started to walk toward the recovery from tsunami. Know, I don't have to waver anymore."

Yes, Tohoku had started to walk toward the recovery. I can't wait to see the recovered Tohoku someday.



I speak about Oshima. I made 2 new friends in Oshima. With these new friends, we cleaned Oshima together. During cleaning time, I found bottle and wood and stick were falling. We could pick these falling things up and made Oshima clean.

Oshima children were very cheerful and interesting. Now what we can do for Tohoku people is to know great East Japan Earthquake and don't forget.

I want to share Oshima people's message, There will be a new bridge between Oshima and Kesenuma mainland. When the bridge was built, please come and enjoy Oshima!

Oshima English Day



Help & support Oshima kids

During our visit to Oshima Island, we managed to conduct Oshima English Day where mostly the kids of EIC helped & assisted Oshima kids that comes to visit so that they feel comfortable and enjoy themselves throughout the day.



Cleaning up OSHIMA together

At first, Oshima kids are very shy, but with the warm welcome from EIC team, both of the kids becoming more and more energetic and had fun together.



We dance, we play games and we also help cleaning up the Oshima Islands by picking up trash around the area. During all this activity, we can see some older EIC kids taking care of the younger Oshima kids and all of them started to bond with each other. Even though both kids comes from different places, but this day giving them the opportunity to meet and communicate and we are hoping that the bond will continues later on in the future.

We also have the opportunity to visit the disaster area and listen about what had happen during the earthquake day from the people of Oshima themselves.

While listening and visiting the Oshima area, we can see how breathtakingly beautiful this island is and we try to understand how much Oshima island means for them and how sad it is when the tsunami happened.

Stories from Oshima



But, I admire their courage and persistent to keep going strong in rebuilt their lives, and accept with open arms for all visitors who visits Oshima.

We are extremely grateful to all of people from Oshima that had greet and treat us so kindly and we will never forget their hospitality and their energy, the smile and laughter and hoping all of you can also remember Oshima and come and visit Oshima Island one day!

What can we do for Tohoku?



- ✓ Buy local products to promote local economy
- ✓ Share about recovery stories from Tohoku
- ✓ Promote tourism to Tohoku
- ✓ Remember the disaster

The first one is buying local products to promote local economy. After the disaster hit Tohoku, the Tohoku local economy was not good. Factories were broken, stores were collapsed, and fish boats were washed away. People in Tohoku lost everything. Therefore, they need to have new consumers to restart or continue their business. When no one is buying their products, they cannot make money and it will lead slowing the recovery of Tohoku. So, we can be the one of their customers by buying their products. I am not saying that we have to buy. But I am saying that we should use money for buying Tohoku products. It leads to their better life, and your better life.





The second one is sharing others about the recovery stories of Tohoku. Many of people did not know that Tohoku is recovering. In Tohoku area, recovery is going on very well, but it needs more time. We need to share the true knowledge to our friends, parents, teachers, and even our neighbors to help Tohoku. Only people who saw and knew the truth of Tohoku can share and teach the fact of Tohoku. Only we can do this job. We need to do this work.

The third one is to promote tourism Tohoku. If more and more people visit it will improve the local economy. Local people can sell their products and services. This will lead to faster recovery. Moreover, Tohoku region has many attractions: beautiful nature, kind people and delicious food. We can share about these with friends, family and on social media!



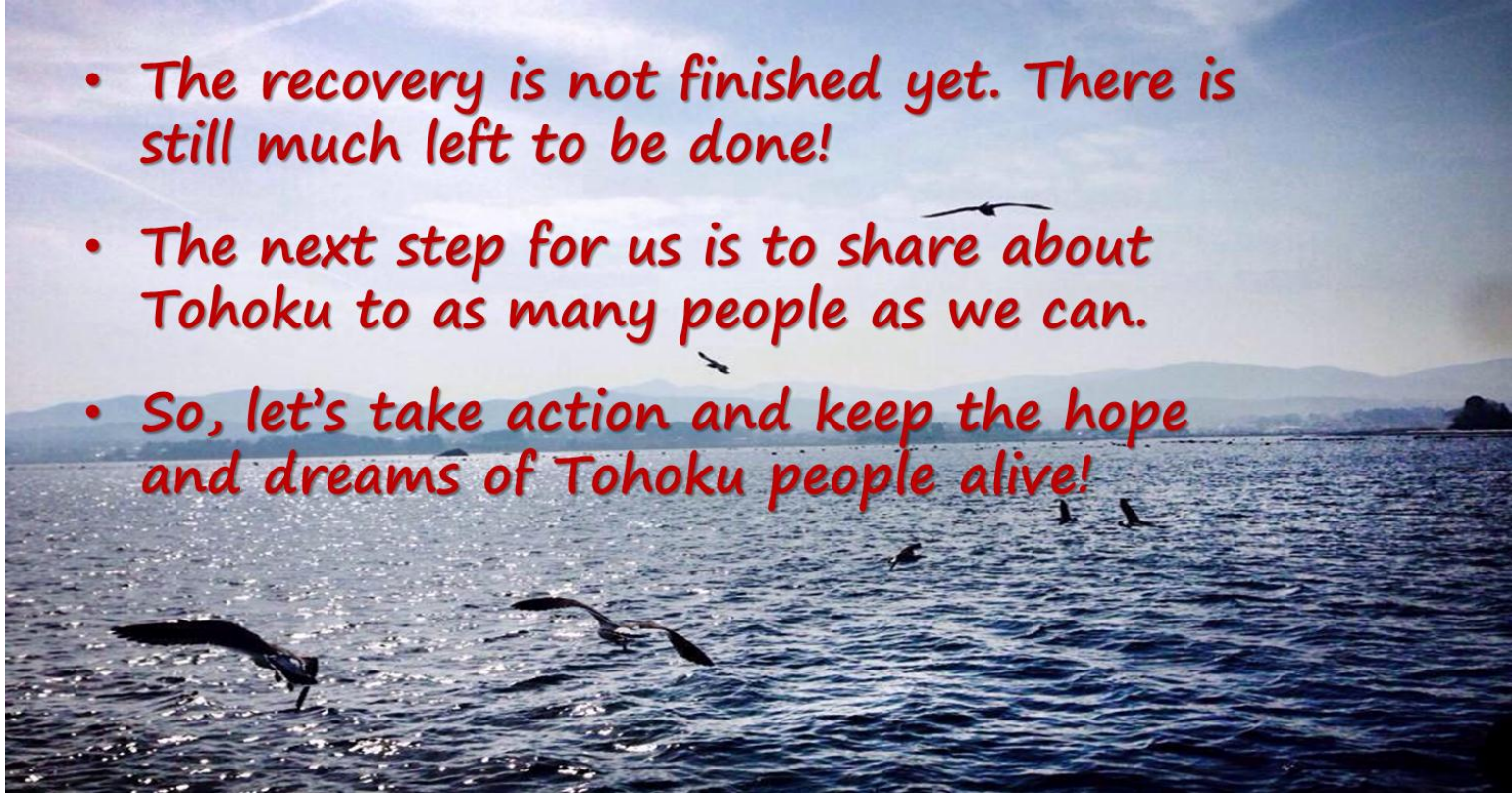
And finally, the fourth one is remembering the Tohoku disaster in 2011. We heard very variable stories from many people in Tohoku. And we knew that the terrible truth of earthquake and tsunami from news, video, and stories of Tohoku people. We have to keep this in our mind. We should not forget this disaster, for the people who became victims of disaster, for people who survived from the disaster, and for our future generation. If we do not forget the disaster, then we can recover the area much faster next time and we can reduce the victims of tsunami. Using the experiences of terrible disaster for Japanese future generation will be the best way of using the experiences.

And we should be the one of the people who remembers the disaster to save our lives.

In 4th Tohoku trip, we visited many places hit by the disaster and experienced the real situation there. We could also learn so many things. We saw the damage caused by the earthquake/ tsunami. We listened and communicated with local people who experienced the disaster. It was sad to hear stories about loss and suffering. However, we also saw a lot of improvements and recoveries in Tohoku. Local people are full of hope and energy for the future. They taught us about keeping hope alive and never

giving up. They taught us about the value and importance of life. The people we met, the stories we heard and the places we visited inspired us to try harder in our own lives.

Things we can do for Tohoku are getting fewer, but the importance of help is getting even more. We can help the Tohoku society by buying Tohoku local products, sharing the information about Tohoku, and remembering the disaster in 2011.

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- *The recovery is not finished yet. There is still much left to be done!*
 - *The next step for us is to share about Tohoku to as many people as we can.*
 - *So, let's take action and keep the hope and dreams of Tohoku people alive!*

In our report, we were saying "Tohoku is now recovering". However, they did not finish the recovery. They are still struggling. We need to keep this in our mind and help Tohoku as a member of Kumon, EIC, and Japanese nation.

The next step for us is to share about Tohoku to as many people as we can.

There are many things we can do to help Tohoku

So, let's take action and keep the hopes and dreams of Tohoku people alive!



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