



GIFT FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS

Grief Camp Project for victims of The Great East Japan Earthquake

UPDATE Vol.8

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The First Camp of Our Grief Camp Project in Taiwan

After one year of preparation, we held the first camp of our project in March. Although the first camp was only for ten campers and there was not a special focus on grief care so may not have been considered as a grief camp, this program showed us how camp can be a very powerful tool for grief care for children.

Outline of the Camp in Taiwan

D a t e : from 25th to 29th of March, 2012

V e n u e : Dongyanshan National Forest Recreation Area and National Taiwan Normal University (Taipei)

Campers: 10 children (aged between 9 and 18 years old) who lost their both parents in the Great East Japan Earthquake

Organized by National Camping Association of Japan, Asahi Shinbun Social Welfare Organization and National Council of YMCAs of Japan
Supported by Formosa Camping & Caravanning Club, National Taiwan Normal University and the Forestry Bureau of Taiwan

Warm, Warm place

At the end of the March, it's still cold in the area affected by the earthquake and tsunami, so we preferred to go to a warm place. There were several possibilities, and we chose to go to Taiwan. The National Camping Association of Japan has kept a good relationship with Taiwan for many years. So, when we asked if it would be possible to accept our visit, the answer was simply "Yes".

Actually, Taiwan was a very warm place in many aspects. Although it was much colder than we expected on the first night, the weather seemed like early summer for us. The Taiwanese people welcomed us in a very warm atmosphere.

We are sure our choice was a very good one.

Tiny adventures

For the campers, this camp was filled with very new experiences: The overseas trip on an airplane (which was painted with Hello Kitty!!), communication with others who speak a different language, tasting new cuisines, etc. Spending time with other campers and camp leaders was also an adventure for them. On the first day, they seemed nervous, and the conversation didn't flow, but fun challenges make them change so quickly.

One high-school-age camper said that it was incredible to make close friends in this short period. The curiosity of a very new experience in a very new situation strengthened the concentration of the group.

Matane!! (See you again!)

On the last night in Taipei, young Taiwanese volunteers visited us as surprise guests with many gifts. Under the circumstances, we were not able to announce the farewell party, but they really wanted to say "Matane!!" (See you again!) to every child. The campers had experienced an unexpected farewell at the time of the earthquake, so we were so happy that the campers could say "Matane!!" to the volunteers in a cheerful atmosphere. We enjoyed the junk food, songs and games.

In this first camp we didn't have any special activities for grief work such as group counseling, but through this experience, the campers could have new places to visit again and people to see again. These are very important elements of grief camp.



Passport as the passport for the future

We are sure that the choice of Taiwan as the destination was a good one, but it's also an obstacle for some children to join. For children who lost their both parents, sometimes it's difficult to apply for an obtain passports. And for children who have to live in a very different situation after the earthquake, it may be very difficult to go abroad for fun. So we greatly appreciate the children and the guardians who decided to join this camp.

The word "Passport" is often used figuratively as a metaphor for the challenge of life. We hope that their new passport will be a passport for their lives.

However, the success of this project will not come quickly. Maybe it will come when they go to college, when they get a job, or when they have a family. Probably it will be difficult for us to follow up on all of them. Nevertheless, we cannot stop imagining how wonderful it will be for some of the campers to visit Taiwan, a place of memory, again for their honeymoons when they get married.

To make this dream come true, we have to keep doing our best to improve our grief camp. The next camp will be even better and will have more campers.



Thanks for the continuous support

On the 3rd of April, El Tesoro de la Vida (DLV) celebrated their 25th anniversary, and they were good enough to share the occasion with our project. In their fundraising dinner, they had a big auction and donated a part of the sales to the NCAJ grief camp. An autographed ball from Yu Darvish, a Japanese pitcher for the Texas Rangers and a rock painted by Nurse Barbara were contributed to share with us. We will receive US\$2,200 from this event. I express our sincere gratitude on behalf of the National Camping Association of Japan to the Camp Fire USA First Texas Council and the supporters of DLV. *Here is a new video of DLV.* [Click Here](#)

Moreover, we also received CAN\$2,010 from Killdevil Camp, Nova Scotia, Canada. It's surprising that we have received such an outpouring of support from all over the world. This support helps us a lot. We promise to use all of the funds to improve our grief camp to give the children a gift of camp.



Visit to the Moyer Foundation



On the 27th of February, I (Tatsuya Kanayama, CEO of NCAJ), visited the Moyer Foundation, which has established a nationwide network of grief camps in the US called "Camp Erin". I was so curious about this camp because it is a weekend-long camp. In Japan, short term camps are much more common, so I thought that it would give us many hints. Actually this visit gave me many ideas to improve the staff training program. Thanks!!

Learn more about Camp Erin. [Click Here](#)

We ask you to...

- Provide information about previous grief camps
Research about the camps, articles about the camps, staff training materials, etc., are welcome.
- Donate to support the project
Donations are being accepted through the ICF website: <http://www.campingfellowship.org>

Contact : National Camping Association of Japan

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NCAJ
National Camping Association of Japan

ARIGATOU means "incredibly rare", thus it's MIRACLE.
It's a miracle that we have you in the camping community. ARIGATOU!!