



JLGC NEWS LETTER

Japan Local Government Center (CLAIR, New York)
issue no.70 July, 2011



Reconstruction Effort :

Sendai Airport has recovered from the impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake

ISSUE NO.70 JULY 2011

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Entering the Third Lost Decade or Beginning the Revival Decade of Japan?

Year 2011 is the beginning of the second decade of the 21st Century. For the past two decades, from 1991 to 2010, Japan has been in the so-called "Lost Decades." The bubble economy burst in early 1990's and since then, Japan has experienced almost zero growth in her economy. Once, Japan was one of richest countries in the world but her GDP per capita has nosedived into the high-teens in the world ranking. Outstanding public sector debt exceeds two hundred percent of gross domestic product. One in four Japanese is over sixty five years old making Japan the country with the oldest population.

Then, early in the second decade of the 21st century, on March 11, 2011, disaster arrived in the form of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the worlds' largest ever, registering 7.0 on the Japanese Shindo Scale. The tremors were felt from Hokkaido to Kanto, but especially affected were Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures. Many prognosticated that the future of Japan was dealt a severe setback and that the country would enter another lost decade.

JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER
(CLAIR, NY)

3 Park Avenue, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10016-5902
212.246.5542 office • 212.246.5617 fax
www.jlgc.org

*Entering the Third Lost Decade or
Beginning of the Revival Decade of Japan?*



I disagree! On the contrary, I believe, 2011 will be the beginning of the revival decade of Japan. Here's why. First, average household net financial assets exceed two hundred thousand dollars representing more than sufficient savings to offset the governments' debt. Second, life expectancy in Japan is the longest in the world and the healthy aging population will create new markets and contribute to the labor market. Finally, during the past two decades, Japan has been successful in globalizing its markets; increasing its supply chain of manufacturing resulting in the second largest amount of cultural exports, after the United States. As Japan continues to encourage talented foreign nationals to work in Japan, the strong will of the Japanese people will effectively and efficiently use its resources to resurrect herself from the past two decades' stagnation.

Japan Local Government Center, CLAIR-NY, was established in 1988, just prior to the burst of the go-go Japanese economy. For two decades, JLGC has been promoting the globalization of Japan, through various programs, such as the Japan Exchange Teaching Program (JET), promotion of international cooperation by local governments, the CLAIR Fellowship Program, and information gathering and dissemination on best public administration practices. In particular, Japan could not have realized her industrial and cultural globalization without the JET Program.

In the first JLGC Newsletter of fiscal year 2011, JLGC would like to extend its appreciation to the fellows and friends of JLGC for their commitment and steadfast loyalty. JLGC pledges its best effort to overcome the many challenges that face Japan, and continue its passionate contribution to promote mutual understanding between Japan and North America.

July, 2011

Masaaki Akagi, M.P.A., Executive Director of
Japan Local Government Center; CLAIR, New York

JAPAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER (CLAIR, NY)

JETAA USA: Bringing Japan Home

We all come home from JET feeling a bit lost at first. As we reestablish our lives in the US, we realize that we were part of something much bigger than just ourselves and our ALT or CIR position. We realize that there is a mechanism available at home which we can seize and utilize to continue the personal relationship we built with JET, Japan and our local community during our time there. JETAA USA is the instrument we use to bring Japan home. JETAA is our vehicle to give back to Japan in ways that may not otherwise be possible in our professional lives.

My personal desire to give back to Japan encouraged me to get involved with JETAA first with my local chapter (Rocky Mountain JETAA) and then at the national level as a Country Representative. Working as a JETAA US Country Representative has allowed me to foster projects and relationships in a broader sense that promote US-Japan relations via JET alums.

It seems we never have enough time to get our entire wish-list completed, but here are some major projects we're working on this year:



JETAA USA National Conference at New York

JETAA USA is responding to Japan in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. We have established an Earthquake Relief Fund which JETAANY laid the groundwork for. The Fund has reached \$60,000 (as of June 10) as a result of individual donations as well as fund-raising efforts by US JETAA chapters and we are continuing to grow the Fund. US chapters voted that the money raised go toward an education-based project that helps to rebuild the community in the affected area. JETAA USA established a committee made up of JET alumni who have been an integral part of our organization as well as having professional backgrounds that lend themselves to directing the Fund. We hope to continue to work with CLAIR, MOFA and AJET on this project to ensure its success.

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JETAA USA: Bringing Japan Home

Many US chapters have been working with local organizations to help raise funds for charitable causes in response to earthquake relief. In a brief poll taken in May, we assessed that US JETAA chapters working alongside local community groups (such as local schools and universities, Japan-America Societies, US city governments, etc.) helped raise \$343,000 so far.



At the reception held at the Japanese ambassador's residence

We have also established the JETAA- Sister City/ Prefecture Project aimed at connecting US JETAA chapters to their respective sister cities/ prefectures. Chapters have the tools to work with US Country Representatives and CLAIR NY to contact their respective sister city/ prefecture counterparts and build a relationship. We hope that this translates into US JETAA chapters working with local Japanese governments to strengthen ties on a grassroots level: something close to every JET's heart. We welcome contact with JETAA chapters initiated by local Japanese governments too!

JETAA USA is looking forward to advancing these projects and other initiatives at our National Conference in Washington, DC. JET may have been the starting point for our relationship with Japan, but JETAA facilitates the evolution of that relationship, allowing us to give back to Japan in ways we weren't able to before.

Jessyca Wilcox

JETAA USA Country Representative 2010- present

JET Program Coordinator (Denver) 2008-present



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Delawareans Raise Funds for Sister State in Miyagi

Days after the major earthquake and subsequent tsunami hit northeast Japan, Delaware Governor Jack Markell and Secretary of State Jeff Bullock launched a statewide fundraising effort for Delaware's sister state, Miyagi Prefecture. The State of Delaware established the fund at the Delaware Community Foundation, and in less than 24 hours the Delaware Fund for Miyagi, Japan (the "Fund") started accepting credit card donations online (see <http://delaware.gov/HelpMiyagi/>) through the Delaware Community Foundation's website.

All donations raised for the Fund will go towards the relief and rebuilding effort in Miyagi. State officials are in contact with counterparts in Miyagi to determine funding opportunities. The intent of the citizens of Delaware is to fund a portion of a school, hospital, playground, or other project that will benefit the children of Miyagi.

Since the inception of the Fund we have hit our goal and raised over \$100,000 from individuals, businesses, schools, and non-profits. Many of the contributions have been small, such as individuals giving \$25 from their week's paycheck or small businesses donating \$50 or \$100.



The Luncheon Fundraiser in Dover Downs on April 14th

The success of the fundraising initiative is due to the grassroots and community lead efforts from Delaware schools. Students as young as elementary level started their own fundraising at their school, many doing coin drives at during school drop-off and pick-up times. An elementary school with some of Delaware's youngest students (3 and 4 year-olds) in Wilmington began a "Pennies for Miyagi" penny drive that raised almost \$500. Students throughout Delaware hosted similar coin drives or origami-folding events at their schools that individually raised over \$1000 per school. Additionally, Delaware students have written hundreds of handwritten letters and cards to students in Miyagi encouraging them to be hopeful and to let them know that others are thinking of them. The letters were delivered to community centers in Miyagi and distributed to youth in the Prefecture.

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Delawareans Raise Funds for Sister State in Miyagi Japan

Most significant about the Delaware and Miyagi sister state relationship which started back in 1997 is the high school student exchange program that sends a handful of students from southern Delaware to Miyagi, and vice versa. Dover, Delaware’s capital city, is a sister city of Iwanuma, and Dover-area students live with families in Iwanuma for 10 days during the exchange program (to see pictures from the exchange programs, visit the Delaware Fund for Miyagi Facebook Page <http://www.facebook.com/DelawareForMiyagi>).

Delaware is nearly the same total square area as Miyagi, although Miyagi has more than double the population of Delaware. So when one of the most powerful earthquakes ever hit the northeast coast of Japan including Miyagi, many of us could begin to imagine the impact of such a large disaster on a small area.

The Fund will continue to accept donations through the summer, and will likely be closed out in mid-Fall when the Delaware Secretary of State plans to visit Miyagi and take with him many well wishes from the entire Delaware community.



“Pennies for Miyagi” on May 20th

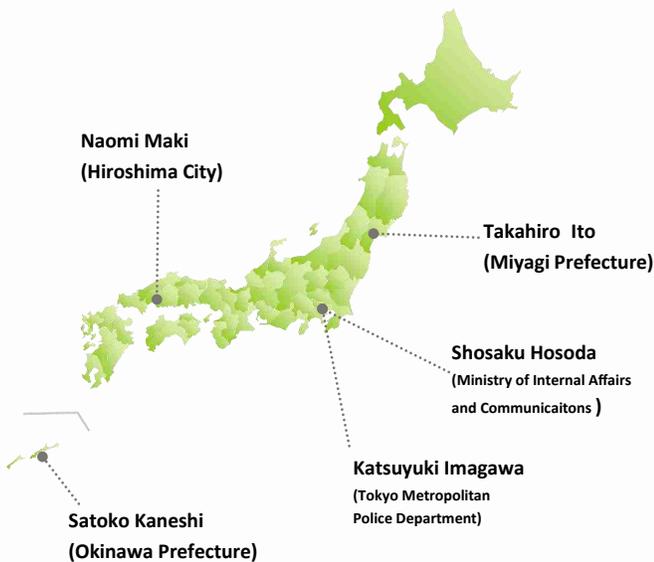
Dana Rohrbough is Deputy Principal Assistant in the Office of the Secretary of State in Delaware and has coordinated Delaware’s fundraising effort for Miyagi Prefecture.



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JLGC New Staff Visits Novi, MI



JLGC new assistant directors visited the city of Novi, Michigan with our deputy executive director, Hotaka Kawasaki on May 4-7, 2011.

The city of Novi is located in southeastern Michigan and has a population of about 55,000. There are a number of Japanese companies doing business in Novi, resulting in a strong relationship with Japan. Mayor David Landry and other hospitable Novi residents graciously opened up their homes providing JLGC visiting staff with a valuable home stay experience where they could observe and participate in American family life.

Following are personal greetings from our new assistant directors and their impressions of Novi.

Takahiro Ito, Assistant Director Representative of Miyagi Prefecture

Hi, everyone. My name is Takahiro Ito. I am from Miyagi prefecture where a massive earthquake and tsunami struck on March 11. Miyagi has been recovering with the help of people in the U.S., specifically in the state of Delaware; Miyagi's sister state. As Miyagi's representative based in New York City, I shall do my best to maintain connection with Delaware state officials.



Local Miyagi Marketplace Recovering from the impact of the earthquake

I arrived in New York with my wife and young son. In my two year stay at JLGC I hope to gain valuable knowledge about state and local government in the United States while enjoying the full experience of American culture.

In Novi, I learned a great deal about the successful management of a small-mid-sized American city. In particular, I was impressed by their public library and high school. While visiting these newly constructed buildings, I witnessed advanced technology used to encourage children to participate in discussion and think freely. My visit to Novi convinced me that state of the art public policies and practices are very much a significant part of how American local government operates. When my busy schedule allows,



With Mayor David Landry, City of Novi

I hope to return to the city of Novi.

JLGC New Staff Visits Novi, MI

**Naomi Maki, Assistant Director
Representative of Hiroshima City**

Hello, my name is Naomi Maki from the City of Hiroshima. Hiroshima was featured in the Lonely Planet's *Cities Book* as one of the 200 most attractive cities in the world! I'm in charge of the CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program which affords senior state and local government officials an opportunity to experience Japanese government administration first hand. I look forward to meeting with many people and finding out a lot of things.



Itsukushima Shrine in Hiroshima

It was a valuable opportunity for me to talk directly with Mayor Landry. The mayor is elected directly by the people of Novi, yet he receives no salary for his services. In addition to his responsibility as mayor, he also maintains a law practice. In Japan, mayors are compensated with significant salaries. I was impressed that the reason why he became mayor was not due to ambition but because he loves the city of Novi! His caring demeanor and charming personality encourages excellent human relations. He embodies many of the fine attributes that characterize the citizens of Novi.

**Satoko Kaneshi, Assistant Director
Representative of Okinawa Prefecture**

Hello, my name is Satoko Kaneshi, from Okinawa prefecture government. I am in charge of the JET program in JLGC, and liaison work for tourism. Okinawa is the only subtropical area in Japan, and it is famous for its beautiful beaches with white sands where people enjoy diving, snorkeling, and marine sports. I believe that Okinawa has the most scenic beaches in the world. Also, Okinawa has strong ties with the United States and so I would like to work as much as possible to make the most of my opportunity in the United States.



Beautiful Ocean in Okinawa

I felt that Novi is quite a unique city. An international city that accepts foreign workers and companies, Novi officials provide foreigners with Midwestern hospitality and a comfortable living environment. I believe this is the main reason why foreign companies decide to locate their branch factories and offices in Novi. All of the Japanese workers I met there praised Novi city's warm and congenial atmosphere. I enjoyed my time there and am especially thankful to my host family for taking the time to take care of me. Their heartfelt welcome and hospitality made me feel at home in Novi.



Visiting Novi Civic Center

Satoko Kaneshi, Naomi Maki,
Ms. Koehler (host), Mayor Landry

JLGC New Staff Visits Novi, MI

Katsuyuki Imagawa, Assistant Director
 Representative of Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department



Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department

My name is Katsuyuki Imagawa from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, where I have worked as a detective for more than ten years. I have served in the organized crime control bureau investigating

crime activities of the “YAKUZA” and other international crime organizations. My main task in New York City will be to exchange information with NYPD regarding international crime activity and counter terrorism strategies.

Although I’ve just arrived, New York City has offered a few surprises. For example, on the weekend you can encounter more tourists than native New Yorkers walking the streets and window shopping. On a particular Sunday, I ventured out for my first subway ride and felt quite comfortable among the other tourists holding subway maps and asking each other directions to famous sites. I suppose this is what makes New York City exciting and I am confident that during my stay I shall become an experienced subway and bus rider.

During my brief stay in the city of Novi, I particularly enjoyed experiencing the daily lives of Midwestern Americans. They were hospitable and friendly and I enjoyed visiting with police officials and sharing information about crime fighting at the local level.



Won the Prize at 5K Run in Novi

Shosaku Hosoda, Assistant Director
 Representative of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications



The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

Hello, my name is Shosaku Hosoda from The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). MIC has jurisdiction over various systems involved in the fundamental framework of the nation, including administrative organizations, the public service personnel system, local administration and finance, fire fighting and disaster prevention, information and communications. I was in charge of managing the JET Programme at MIC nine years ago. At JLGC, I’m mainly responsible for accounting and the JLGC fiscal year budget. By working at JLGC, I hope to meet and communicate with a variety of American and Canadian state and local government officials.



Visiting the Novi city council

My impression of the citizens of Novi was that they exuded good will and hospitality and were immensely proud of their city. I was impressed by their ability to collectively boost economic development. I visited many public facilities; including a high school, hospital and various public works sites. This opportunity enabled me to understand the differences between the U.S and Japanese systems, policies and practices of local administration.