



JLGC NEWSLETTER

Japan Local Government Center (CLAIR, New York)
Issue no.74 December 2012



SETOUCHI INTERNATIONAL ART
FESTIVAL 2010 IN KAGAWA.

ISSUE NO.74 DECEMBER 2012

**CLAIR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM WILL BE HELD
FROM JANUARY 20 TO 30
IN 2013 (PAGE 1-2)**

**JETAA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HOSTS
THE 2012 JETAA USA NA-
TIONAL CONFERENCE IN
SAN FRANCISCO (PAGE 3-4)**

**VISIT TO ISHINOMAKI CITY,
MIYAGI REPORTED BY
MATTHEW GILLAM
~ APPEARANCE AND REALITY:
RECOVERY IN TOHOKU~
(PAGE 5-6)
~ IT'S NOT JUST MUD: VOL-
UNTEERING IN ISHINOMAKI ~
(PAGE 7-9)**

**THE FIRST PEACE MESSAGE
FROM HIROSHIMA AT PEARL
HARBOR (PAGE 10)**

**<EXTRA>
LONELY PLANET
ANNOUNCES "TOHOKU IS VERY
MUCH OPEN FOR TRAVEL"
(PAGE 11)**

CLAIR Fellowship Program will be held from January 20 to 30 in 2013

This program has been affording senior state and local government officials an opportunity to experience Japanese government administration first hand. This year the program will be held in Tokyo and Kagawa Prefecture.

From an idea, born of business and local government, to turn the island of Naoshima into a place to appreciate culture and art, the Setouchi islands have become a unique destination for arts-loving tourists from around the world. Now, Kagawa Prefecture has turned itself and the Setouchi islands into a major international arts festival. 2013 will be the second of what is to be a triennial event. Kagawa will be delighted to show how this has transformed its status in the world of tourism.

Theme

Tourism Industry Promotion

Schedule (tentative)

[Tokyo Seminar]

Introduction to the Japanese Local Government System

Presentation by a Japan National Tourism Organization official

Welcome Reception

Tour of Government Facilities in Tokyo



**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

[Exchange Event in Kagawa]

Workshops on promoting the Setouchi International Art Festival and local foods, The quest for UNESCO World Heritage designation of The Shikoku Pilgrimage. Tour of various facilities (Ritsurin Garden, The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, Konpira Shrine, etc.)



Art Museum in the Earth on Naoshima



Setouchi International Art Festival 2010

CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program 2012 Participants



Ms. Erin Sparks

Senior Policy Analyst,
National Governors Association



Mr. Jeremy Lynn Williams

Policy Analyst,
The Council of State Governments



Mr. David Thompson

Executive Director,
North Carolina Association of County
Commissioners



Mr. Jim Brooks

Program Director,
National League of Cities



Mr. Ted Gaebler

City Manager,
City of Rancho Cordova, California



Mr. Robert O'Neill, Jr.

Executive Director,
International City/County Management
Association



Mr. Mike Murray

Chief Administrative Officer,
Regional Municipality of Waterloo,
Ontario



Ms. Nancy Wright-Laking

President,
Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks
and Treasurers of Ontario



Ms. Lucie Lavoie

Counsellor,
International Affairs, City of Montreal,
Quebec



**"Pumpkin" on
Naoshima,
Designed by
Yayoi Kusama**

*JETAA Northern California hosts**The 2012 JETAA USA National Conference in San Francisco*

At the end of October, delegates from eighteen JETAA chapters in the United States gathered for the annual JETAA USA National Conference in San Francisco, CA. Sponsored by CLAIR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the 2012 JETAA USA National Conference was hosted by the JETAA Northern California (JETAANC) chapter at the Consulate-General of Japan in San Francisco. The conference featured informative presentations and workshops on Sister City initiatives, institutional partnerships, entrepreneurship case studies and membership database management. Delegates representing JETAA chapters around the United States were able to participate in lively discussions with presenters and panelists on various topics, such as ways to increase membership and promote Japanese cultural activities in their own regions.



The National Conference began with an informal reception on Thursday evening at Off the Grid, a local gourmet food truck gathering that was started by JET alumnus Matt Cohen. Delegates were able to visit different food trucks, while mingling and getting to know each other. Presentations and workshops officially began on Friday morning with welcome remarks by the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco, Mr. Hiroshi Inomata, First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Washington DC, Noriko Watanabe, CLAIR's Executive Director, Takaaki Ogata, and JETAANC President John Dzida. Delegates learned about the current state of the JETAA USA 3/11 Relief Fund, which raised close to \$89,000 and has been distributed to various organizations and relief projects in Japan. CLAIR Senior Researcher Matt Gillam also discussed the updates from the JETAA Canada National Conference, as well as their goals for the next year. A panel discussion on Northern California Sister Cities initiatives provided conference delegates with ideas on how to foster relationships with local sister cities. On Friday evening, the conference delegates attended a reception at the Consul General's residence, which also included recently returned JET participants and participants of the Japan-US Training and Exchange Program for English Language Teachers (JUSTE).

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Saturday began with a presentation by the JETAA USA Country Representatives on the approved bylaws and newly established Board of Advisors that will help to structure JETAA USA. During the day, delegates were able to choose to attend various breakout sessions discussing topics such as chapter finances and treasury, membership management, and community collaborations. CLAIR also hosted a reception for the delegates and community members on Saturday evening at Yoshi's in San Francisco, which featured modern Japanese cuisine and jazz.

The National Conference concluded on Sunday morning with a discussion on how the JETAA chapters could promote inter-chapter cooperation and teamwork. As the conference came to a close, many delegates felt energized by the useful ideas and initiatives they could bring back to their respective chapters for future projects and events.

Doug Tassin from the New Orleans chapter of JETAA (JETAA NOLA) said, "The conference really provided me with some great insight into membership involvement and collaboration with other chapters and the Japanese groups in our local communities. I feel really confident that I can take these ideas back to my chapter in New Orleans and produce some positive results."

We would like to thank CLAIR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their continued support for the JETAA USA community and our National Conference and we were honored to have their representatives in attendance. We look forward to all of the great initiatives and events that will spring forth after the conference and to another exciting meeting next year.



Melissa Chan

JETAA USA Country Representative

Tokyo, 2005-2007

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Visit to Ishinomaki City, Miyagi reported by Matthew Gillam

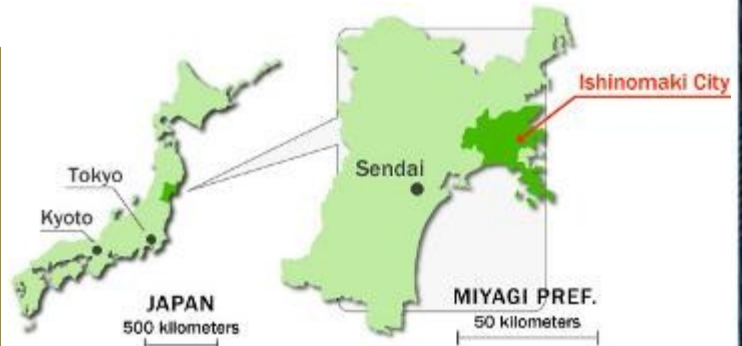
~ Appearance and Reality: Recovery in Tohoku ~

Sendai looks normal. As if nothing has happened. Even as you drive toward the coast, there is really nothing to indicate that a major earthquake and devastating tsunami hit this area a little less than two years ago. And even when you arrive in Ishinomaki City it is still not apparent until you enter the lower sections of town, away from the bus station, that something is wrong.



While most debris has been cleared from the tsunami zone, some buildings are still waiting to learn their fate. Watanoha, Ishinomaki City.

As we approach the second anniversary of the March 11th earthquake and tsunami, through the workings of time and a herculean cleanup effort, it has become harder to discern where large neighborhoods have been erased or decimated, and exactly how massive the scale of the tsunami was. Now, to a large extent, roads are repaired, destroyed buildings torn down and rubble cleared, less damaged buildings renovated, and survivors moved into scattered blocks of temporary housing. There are enough ravaged and gutted buildings left standing to serve as testament to the disaster and, when you look closely, the concrete foundation walls in the lots overgrown with weeds defining where homes and businesses once stood to give a sense of what has been taken. And the “*garekiyama*” – those mountains of debris and junked cars that line the coast – loom over the zones of destruction like breakwaters put in place too late.



Where is the Ishinomaki City located? (From Ishinomaki city's website)

It takes more imagination now, especially for someone who is on their first journey to the region, to understand what was there before and how vast the devastation is. And the people seem to be moving on, adjusting to their cramped temporary quarters, sending the kids to school, looking for jobs, getting on with their lives. Even people who live there can sometimes be amazed at the pace of recovery. Until you talk for a while and realize there are two recoveries going on, the physical and the psychological, and there is a vast difference between what can be seen and what cannot.

This point was driven home for me when I spoke with the principal of an elementary school in Ishinomaki who talked about how many problems the kids are having lately and the increase in theft, bullying, fights, and other manifestations of the stress and trauma that they bring to school from their homes. Even for families that did not lose their homes, there is not a household that did not suffer in some way –



A new shopping center in Watanoha, Ishinomaki City.

with family and friends killed or struggling to put their lives back together, jobs washed away, vital services disrupted and communities devastated. And to add to this, the school is surrounded by temporary housing, so that it has taken in a large number of refugees from the hardest hit areas who have lost everything and are now forced to live in very cramped quarters. One of the biggest problems children have is the lack of a quiet place to study, since so many are forced to live in small apartments or share their space with other family members. Another problem is a lack in many places of sports grounds or parks for students to practice or play, since either their schools have been destroyed and they are sharing space in other districts or their open space has been given over to temporary housing.

One group in Ishinomaki that is working with schools to provide programs for students is Project Yui

(<http://project-yui.org/>).



Yui works in partnership with citizens groups, government, and business to create opportunities for children to learn and to play.

Yui pursues a variety of activities that focus on making schools and the communities they serve more healthful and supportive for families through providing educational and recreational after-school programs, gathering information from and helping coordinate efforts among the various entities involved in relief and recovery in order to more efficiently and effectively provide aid to affected communities, and putting on special events to cheer people up and give them a break from their cares.

Another organization involved in much the same work is the YMCA. The Ishinomaki YMCA, for example, has been holding after-school study sessions followed by recreational time, as well as providing the chance for kids to get away from everything with their families and go camping. Other programs include visiting temporary housing facilities and conducting evening singing programs, and sponsoring other community events.

There are a number of mental health initiatives beyond simply addressing children's needs for quiet places to study or space to run around and be kids. Many of these are being undertaken by various government agencies, but there are also a number of NPOs working with schools and citizens' groups to address the needs of those who have suffered trauma and are dealing with its lasting effects.

One of the first groups on the ground after March 11th was IsraAid, a group involved in addressing issues of stress and PTSD around the world. Their first personnel arrived in Japan on March 15th, 2011, to assess needs in Tohoku, but soon found the situation too overwhelming for even that basic task. However, they have persevered, and were eventually able to start a pilot program to help children find ways to deal with daily stress and to work through the larger issue of post-traumatic stress that so many have been left with. Almost immediately, however, the group came to understand that they could not simply ask teachers to help with these efforts, since the school personnel themselves were suffering just as badly and were in no condition to help others. IsraAid has since developed programs to help educators cope with their own issues while providing necessary support to students. They have also partnered with Hilton Hotels & Resorts in Japan to help provide job training to young people interested in careers in the food and service industries –

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an important opportunity in a region where many people do not go on to college and lack necessary skills to complete in the post-disaster economy. While talk therapy would normally be one central component of healing for disaster survivors, both cultural and linguistic barriers largely hinder that in Japan, so IsraAid has found that many non-verbal activities are better-suited to people's needs. Activities involving singing or movement, creating visual art projects, etc. have been providing effective channels for broaching painful topics and getting both children and adults to face and talk about their experiences. They have also conducted workshops in Fukushima Prefecture, where the need is especially great among children who are forced to stay inside all day because of radiation, making it even harder to get their minds off of their troubles.

Another group active in the area is the Miyagi International Association (MIA). One project they were involved in was the 2nd Looking Beyond Disasters UNESCO Youth Forum, held in Sendai in mid-August of 2012. This forum brought young people from other disaster zones such as New Zealand and Indonesia to Sendai, where they could meet with survivors of the earthquake and tsunami.



The 2nd Looking Beyond Disasters UNESCO Youth Forum (By MIA)

This was an important chance for the participants to share their experiences and find support among their true peers – people their own age who know what it is like to suffer loss and disruption, but who have also learned how to find hope and the strength to create a more positive future for themselves despite everything that has happened. One focus of the forum is to find ways to get youth especially, but all members of the community, more involved in disaster preparedness and response. This kind of engagement has not only practical benefits in terms of better preparedness and more effective response, but also in terms of giving people a sense that they are not powerless and have a role to play in an emergency. MIA has also been involved in providing help to displaced non-Japanese residents in the affected areas of Miyagi and in acting as a bridge between these residents and the officials responsible for running evacuation shelters and other response programs, where communication difficulties can lead to poor information exchange and isolation even in supportive communities.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of all the efforts being made by so many people. It is, rather, a quick introduction to a few organizations I have met with during my visit to Ishinomaki, in the interest of learning something about the needs of the people and the resources currently available to them through various non-government groups. There are many relief organizations still very active in and around Ishinomaki and throughout the region, and the services they are providing will be essential for the long-term recovery of the March 11th survivors.

Japan Local Government Center

Senior Researcher

Matthew Gillam

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Visit to Ishinomaki City, Miyagi reported by Matthew Gillam

~ It's Not Just Mud: Volunteering in Ishinomaki ~

Even as governments in Japan at all levels, central, prefecture, and local, work to help the Tohoku region recover from the disasters of March 11, 2011, a huge number of volunteers have also been engaged in the efforts to clean up the debris and help the survivors move on with their lives. And while these numbers have decreased over time, there are still many people, both Japanese and non-Japanese, working through a variety of government-sponsored and nonprofit organizations, where they contribute their time, money, and expertise to support the future of Tohoku.

This past October, I was fortunate to be able to spend four days volunteering with one of these groups in Ishinomaki City, called "It's Not Just Mud". Formally established as a nonprofit organization, INJM is a loose-knit community that claims the loyalty of numerous people in Japan and around the world. Many people come and go as their work and personal demands allow, while others will come through once or twice for anywhere from a few days to a few months to help out and experience what's going on in the region.

Through its website, <http://itsnotjustmud.com/>, the group provides information on its recent activities and on what potential volunteers need to know to sign up for a stint helping out with cutting brush, cleaning up tsunami-ravaged buildings, putting on events for the kids, and all the other activities going on to make life a little better throughout the area around Ishinomaki.



INJM Board of Directors
(Photo is from INJM's website)

During my first two days with the group, we were in Onagawa Town helping cut brush and clear out an old house so that a man who had lost everything could fix it up and move in, allowing him to leave the cramped temporary housing where he currently lives. It was two days of heavy work for a crew of about ten people, clearing away years of growth, hauling out old furniture, and demolishing a collapsed floor where years of neglect had allowed the underpinnings to rot away.



The hospital in Onagawa. The tsunami was so immense it destroyed the first floor.

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Funakoshi, seen from the roof of the three-story school building. The tsunami reached to about the roofline of the house seen to the left in the middle distance.

Our third day, we traveled to Funakoshi Village, about one and a half hours out of Ishinomaki, where we spent the morning again cutting brush, so that a parking lot and temporary units could be put in to house the workshop used by the “Funakoshi Ladies” to create necklaces, charms, and other ornaments out of the famous local slate, which they then sell to raise money for rebuilding the community. The village was almost completely destroyed by the tsunami and must now be moved up onto an adjoining mountain-top if it is to survive. The workshop is currently located in the school building, which was gutted up through the second floor by the tsunami, leaving only the third floor usable now. We then spent the afternoon helping prepare the stones for the women to paint and string. Another volunteer organization very active in the area, Peaceboat, has a very good explanation of the situation in Funakoshi and the origin of the effort by the Funakoshi Ladies, accessible at <http://peaceboat.jp/relief/reports/funakoshi-ladies/>.

The morning of my fourth day was spent on the water in Higashimatsushima, helping the local fishermen bring in loads of scallop shells on which oysters were being cultivated. We then helped arrange and pack these for transport down to Hiroshima, where they would be reintroduced to the water and brought to maturity. Almost all fishing and aquaculture operations were wiped out in the tsunami, so getting these back up and running is critical to helping restore the region’s economy.

We then spent the afternoon helping Habitat for Humanity Japan build simple, bench-like verandas for the temporary housing units in a small complex near Ishinomaki. These enable residents to have at least a small space to step out of their cramped units to hang laundry or get some fresh air. It was heartening to see the young children running around and playing games while some of the older children and mothers helped build and paint the verandas.



Bringing in seedling oysters in Higashimatsushima

There are a myriad of projects and activities going on every day to help enable people cope with life after the disasters and, hopefully, to build new lives and a new future for Tohoku. Many things, like the projects I was honored to help with, seem small. But it becomes readily apparent if you look that even the smallest improvements can have huge meaning for the people there who have lost so much.



Volunteers making bench verandas for evacuees.

Japan Local Government Center
Senior Researcher
Matthew Gillam

The First Peace Message from Hiroshima at Pearl Harbor

On June 8, Mayor Matsui from the City of Hiroshima visited the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu. He dedicated flowers and gave a speech for visitors. It was the first speech by a Japanese mayor at the Memorial.



Mayor Matsui at Pearl Harbor

His key message was as follows:

- It is my pleasure to be able to visit and offer flowers here at the USS Arizona Memorial on its milestone 50th anniversary.
- I would like to offer a prayer for the peaceful repose of all the individuals honored here.
- This wall is carved with the names of many of the victims. Similarly, Hiroshima has lost 140,000 people in the atomic bombing. The battle between America and Japan began here in Pearl Harbor, resulting in a large sacrifice for the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- However, the history of friendship between our two countries is very long, and this unfortunate period comprises no more than a moment in comparison.
- What we seek now is peace through reconciliation.
- The reality is that I have a friendly relationship with Mr. Carlisle, Mayor of Honolulu, the city that contains Pearl Harbor. Mayor Carlisle and I know how important it is to sever the circle of past hatred and establish a future-oriented relationship.
- I think all of you are gathered here today to console the spirits of the war victims who lost their lives here. I would like to make a pledge here to one day realize a peaceful world through reconciliation, and I would like for everyone else to make the same pledge.

The City of Hiroshima desires lasting peace and Hiroshima is continuing to promote world peace.

Naomi Maki, Assistant Director, Japan Local Government Center

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Lonely Planet announces “Tohoku is very much open for travel”

Lonely Planet has announced on their website that Tohoku is “an enchanting land of rugged mountains, hidden hot springs and ancient folkways – and is very much open for travel. Infrastructure, excepting the coastline, is fine and visitors will find themselves welcomed with not just the usual Japanese hospitality but with warmth and gratitude.”.

(<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/japan/travel-tips-and-articles/77551>)



Lonely Planet also has been providing the newest Tohoku chapter as a free download (67 pages) – a special early digital release for travelers in advance of their fully updated Japan travel guide due out in September 2013.

(<http://media.lonelyplanet.com/pdfs/21-northern-honshu-tohoku-jap13.pdf>)

Now is the time to take this opportunity to go to Tohoku.

And your sharing this information with someone will show your support for the Tohoku region!

The screenshot shows the Lonely Planet website interface. The main article is titled "Northeast Japan: is Tōhoku ready for travellers again?" by Rebecca Minter. The article text states: "It's been over a year and a half since a 9.0 earthquake struck Japan's northeast coast, followed by a deadly tsunami and the meltdown of the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant. The earthquake itself – the 6th largest in the world since modern record keeping – left comparatively little long-term damage; areas affected by the quake but nothing else were quick to rebuild. Along that narrow strip of coast hit by the tsunami it is another story: the rubble has largely been cleared, but rebuilding is likely to take a decade or more." It then asks, "So what does all that mean for the traveller thinking of heading up to northeast Japan?" and answers: "Surprisingly little. **Tōhoku**, the northern third of Japan's main island, Honshū, is much as it's always been – an enchanting land of rugged mountains, hidden hot springs and ancient folkways – and is very much open for travel. Infrastructure, excepting the coastline, is fine and visitors will find themselves welcomed with not just the usual Japanese hospitality but with warmth and gratitude. Far more damaging than the earthquake, for most of the region, was the sudden absence of tourists." Below the text is a photo of a traditional Japanese wooden pavilion (Godai-ji) with the caption: "Matsumoto's famous seaside Godai-ji, an early 17th-century wooden pavilion, miraculously escaped damage in the 2011 tsunami. Photo: Rebecca Minter." The article concludes with the heading "Open for business" and the text "Even areas frequented by travellers were damaged by the tsunami. **Source: Tohoku's**".

The Lonely Planet website

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