

My Reconstruction News

Recovery and reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake. This is not just the greatest challenge for the Noda administration, it is the dearest wish of the people of Japan. How far has reconstruction progressed? Both local residents in the disaster-affected regions and various volunteers have continued to document everyday scenes of daily life with their cameras.

Out of a desire to share the spirit of these photos with a wider audience and ensure that people throughout the country are united with the people in the affected regions, in September last year the Cabinet Public Relations Office launched a “My Reconstruction News” section on the website of the Prime Minister of Japan.

Since September, more than 500 photographs and messages have been posted from the disaster-affected regions on “My Reconstruction News.” Even now, every day the Prime Minister’s Office receives new items of news which are used to update the site.

As we commemorate the one year anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, we have selected 30 images from those submitted, which are exhibited here.



January 25, Rikuzentakata City

This is the “miracle lone pine” that survived the tsunami following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Even this winter, when there was much more snow than usual, the lone pine has kept a dignified appearance.

Although efforts to preserve the tree were abandoned last year, it has been possible to graft its branches onto seedlings and keep it alive in this way.

The people of Rikuzen Takata look forward to seeing these little seedlings grow up big and strong, imbued with the hope passed on from the parent tree, the “miracle lone pine.”

Rikuzentakata City, Tourism & Local Products Association

My Reconstruction News

- Children -



“Reconstruction News” Started from This One Photo.

July 8, Higashi Matsushima City

Finally some soup was included as part of a simple school lunch. Yay! We got some soup! It tastes good and it's hot too.

-Omagari Elementary School



New Life in Fukushima

October 15, Hirata Village

A baby born in the same year as the earthquake disaster. As both parents are teachers they are continuing to live in Fukushima and did not evacuate. With a small baby to look after there are many things to attend to each day, but with lots of love the baby is growing strong and healthy.

-R.S.



Merry Christmas!

December 24, Minamisanriku Town

This Christmas event was held to give some enjoyment to the people of Minamisanriku. With the help of a local bakery a 6m-long Christmas cake was created. The children helped to finish off the decoration. The finished cake was provided free of charge and all the children ate it with gusto.

-The Social Action Collective United Earth



Baby Massage in Temporary Accommodation

January 12, Ishinomaki City

The meeting room in the temporary accommodation facility is freezing cold in winter, so much so that the massage oil that a massage therapist from Miyazaki brought with her was almost frozen. The room was heated up and the babies' bottom halves were undressed. This is part of a mind and body post-disaster care program for parents and children from maternity to pre-school age. By interacting and exercising the participants feel refreshed and enjoy themselves too.

-Babysmile Ishinomaki



We Will Take on the Task

January 14, Higashi Matsushima City

Almost all homes in the Tsukihama district of Miyato were washed away in the tsunami. This district is home to a traditional ceremony that has been passed down for more than 200 years. Known as the “Enzu-no-wari,” it is a ritual performed at the lunar new year to pray for abundant crops and is an Important Intangible Cultural Property of Japan. Every year from January 11 to 16, local elementary and junior high school children live together in a grotto under a shrine. As there were no junior high school students in the district this year, only these three elementary school students took on the task.

-Public Affairs Section, General Affairs Division, Higashi Matsushima



The Joy of “Roast Sweet Potatoes for Reconstruction”

January 27, Kamaishi City

A just-out-the-oven sweet potato appears.

“This is just the right season for sweet potatoes,” says the mother of the small children who concentrate on cooling the potato down by blowing on it. “Quickly!” says the mother, “I’m going to burn my hands.”

-IWATE YUICCO Hanamaki

My Reconstruction News

-Reconstruction-



Decontamination continues

July 1, Fukushima City

Dried grass and fallen leaves are removed even from general roads far away from the city center for decontamination purposes. Based on model programs, Fukushima Prefecture creates leaflets on decontamination methods and is carrying out the decontamination work within the prefecture.

-Public Affairs Division, Fukushima Prefecture



Sakura trees for telling the story to future generations

November 6, Rikuzentakata City

Sakura Line 311 project. The young people in the community have gotten together to ask for the support of Japan to plant cherry blossom trees along the incline where the tsunami reached on March 11 and to tell future generations the massive tsunami that took many lives. On this day, more than 20 cherry blossom trees sent from Matsuda, Kanagawa Prefecture were planted. The community members, joined by participants from Kanagawa, planted the trees of requiem, think about their dreams for the future.

-Rikuzentakata City Reconstruction Support Center, National Youth Mayors' Association



Niigata gives back

November 19, Yamamoto Town

We are the Niigata Give Back Unit.

In the past, Niigata Prefecture suffered from large disasters, such as flooding and earthquake, and received an outpouring support from all over Japan. We wanted to give back by providing support to the people that are affected by the earthquake disaster, and are dispatching volunteer buses from Niigata City to Miyagi Prefecture. The photo is of the garbage that was collected by an earlier unit in the process of cleaning the ditches. This time, we are working in the no-entry zone for the first time. The damage was so extensive that at first we could not tell where the ditches even were.

-President Katsumi Tanamura of Niigata Give Back Unit



After the heavy machinery work, it's time for our hands

November 21, Kesennuma City

We removed driftage and debris from lots where only the frames of the homes remained after the tsunami. Twenty-five volunteers dug up and separated such materials as glass and wall materials. In places where heavy machinery were used to remove the debris, the remaining fine debris materials were removed by hand. Incidentally, yesterday we worked as snow fell lightly onto the ground. To those of you who will be coming from now on, prepare well for the cold!

-RQ Civic Disaster Rescue Center



Finally above the water

December 11, Kesennuma City

A cultivation facility for oysters, scallops, etc. in Kameyama district. The earthquake disaster caused land sinkage in this area too, flooding it in roughly 50cm of water during high tides.

Thus, preparatory work was carried out to level the sunken bridge. While it is temporary construction work, it is truly very helpful.

-Takeshi Komatsu



Let's have many flowers

December 20, Rikuzentakata City

A flower garden brings smiles to Rikuzentakata! 'Volunteer members from Keppare Tohoku' gathered from across Japan!

In an area where houses were washed away with the tsunami, a rainbow of viola flowers and participants together reach the blue sky!

-Hitoshi Imai, Iwate Kenpoku Tourism

My Reconstruction News

-Mutual Support-



Gifts from Kyushu

May 26, Higashi-Matsushima City

A whole bunch of delicious Japanese *mikans* (mandarin orange) arrived from Kyushu. They were sweet and big. Thank you for sending them from so far away. We enjoyed them very much!

-Omagari Elementary School



Compassion Conveyed Through Apples

December 5, Noda Village

Third year students from Hirosaki City Higashimeya Junior High School and their parents and guardians visited and kindly gave out "apples for recovery" to the students of Noda Junior High School. Each and every apple had a picture with a message expressing a wish for the recovery of Noda Village. Apparently, if letters or drawings are sealed onto an apple and the sunlight is blocked out, just the covered areas do not turn red and a pattern is created!

-Noda Junior High School



Hope from Kobe

December 10, Rikuzentakata City

1.17 Light of Hope—a symbol of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake. The kindness and compassion of humanity and the importance of *kizuna* (bonds of friendship) shall not be forgotten.

Family members of victims and volunteers merged flames brought over from all 47 prefectures of Japan into one, and this flame continues to burn in Kobe City. On this day, the "Light of Hope" was lit at the folklore museum of Rikuzentakata City.

-Rikuzentakata City Tourism & Local Products Association



Yet More New Kizuna

December 13, Rikuzentakata City

At the urging of the Rikuzentakata City Social Welfare Council, the Rikuzentakata City Network Liaison Committee was established, comprised of roughly 80 organizations and community centers conducting support activities in the city and the local government, and its first meeting was held. Moving forward, effective support measures on a variety of themes will be explored. Valuable *kizuna* has been formed at this forum where all people can meet to support the disaster-affected people as one.

-Rikuzentakata City Restoring Happiness Support Center, National Youth Mayors' Association



Chatting over Footbaths Continues

January, Shichigahama Town

Footbaths at the meeting place of a temporary housing unit. "Even if I am laughing here, I become sad when I am by myself. I believe that's true with everyone here." "I lived in Minatohama, the smallest beach in Shichigahama Town, and everything was washed away by the tsunami. I have made friends from different beaches at the meeting place." Everyone shares with us their loneliness, concerns, and worries.

-Rescue Stock Yard



Helping Each Other Out

February 1, Miyako City

Students from Miyakonishi Junior High School who visited the temporary housing unit in Nishigaoka district. Many students helped shovel the snow in the narrow spaces between the houses. In addition to Miyako Technical High School and Miyakonishi Junior High School, students from Sakiyama Junior High School and Second Junior High School also helped out. We hope to continue to receive everyone's help!

-Miyako Livelihood Reconstruction Support Center

My Reconstruction News

-New Beginnings-



Many Things have happened

September 10, Sendai City

While I was devastated when my home in Yuriage, Natori City, was destroyed, in September I married the love of my life. I have found my own place in the world, which is so, so important. I want to create a bright home life full of smiles.

-K.T.



Out to Sea Once More

November 12, Kamaishi City

At the Hakozaki Fishing Port, which remains strewn with broken levees, there was a launching ceremony for the new vessel *Dai-nana Hakozaki Maru*. The ceremony marked the first time the vessel had touched water, and there was a celebration for its completion. "We want all the volunteers to come down to the ceremony too!" We were invited to participate alongside the city residents. The vessel was decorated with many colorful fishing flags.

-Tono Magokoro Net



The Shichinoichi March

November 27, Shichigahama Town

Making signboards for temporary shops
Progress continues in Shichigahama Town, Miyagi Prefecture on the construction of temporary shops for seven businesses washed away by the tsunami, including a fish shop, produce shop, cafeteria, and flower shop. The area has been nicknamed "Shichinoichi Shopping Street." More than 50 people, including volunteers, local junior high school students, and others from small children to adults helped out with the creation of signboards for the shops.

-Rescue Stock Yard



A Revived Fish Market

December 7, Noda Village

The new Noda Fish Market was completed in December. A Shinto purification ceremony was held on the day of the opening, with mainly villagers involved in the fishing industry participating. Seven chief priests from the Kuji Office of the Iwate Prefecture Association of Shinto Shrines purified the area by offering prayers for the repose of those who passed away in the Great East Japan Earthquake and for reconstruction.

-Noda Village Tourism Association



Our Shopping Street is Open for Business!

December 17, Otsuchi Town

A temporary shopping street, "Fukkou Kirari Shopping Street" has been opened on the grounds of Otsuchi North Elementary School, which was destroyed in the disaster. A rice cake throwing ceremony was held in celebration of this. The shopping street contains a supermarket, hair salon, yakitori restaurant, ramen restaurant, and other shops. It also contains a Japanese-style bar, and some locals were heard joyfully saying that they had been drinking there before the opening of the street. There has not been a place like this in the town for 10 months.

-Rescue Stock Yard



A Carpet Leading to the Future

January 8, Miyako City

Also known as "Shopping Street Red Carpet 2012." Here people walk cheerfully along the red carpet while being congratulated by many residents on the street. The event celebrated those coming of age in 2012 and those with things to celebrate from 2011. Together we celebrate, together we aim for reconstruction!

-Miyako City Reconstruction Support Center

My Reconstruction News

-Festivals-



Smiling for the First Time in a Great While

April 18, Kamaishi City

A feast for the viewing of cherry trees at night.

-Shinpei Kikuchi, photographer



Let the Drums Beat Once More

June 12, Kamaishi City

The Oubu Taiko Group. All of the *taiko* drums were washed away in the tsunami. The drums were found and gathered again to drum the beat of reconstruction.

-Shinpei Kikuchi, photographer



Moving Forward with Determination, No Matter What

November 27, Shichigahama Town

A *mikoshi* shrine is carried in front of a large, grounded fishing vessel at the Kamaishi Ozaki Shrine Festival.

-Shinpei Kikuchi, photographer



We'll Light Up This Town Once More

December 13, Minamisanriku Town

A 6m-high Christmas tree.

The tree is located in a space originally occupied by a construction company. The location is a hill with a good view. The tree was set here to allow everyone in the town to see it clearly, and it fills this place that was completely washed away by the tsunami with a warm light. Here we face the backs of a parent and child looking up toward the tree, wishing for a bright future.

-The Social Action Collective United Earth



Praying with Intense Concentration

January 7, Ishinomaki City

The first *hadaka-mairi* (naked shrine visit) since the earthquake. Just as these individuals at Otori Shrine clasp their hands in front of the pyre and pray for reconstruction, completing their *hadaka-mairi* without giving up because of the cold, we hope to take one step after another toward reconstruction.

-Ishinomaki Disaster Recovery Assistance Council Inc.



It Has Been Almost One Year Since That Day

February 13, Miyako City

A seven-row doll display set up in the lounge of a temporary house.

The dolls were donated from the citizens of Morioka via the Morioka Social Welfare Council. A local mother decorated the dolls and explained which one should go in which location.

"Isn't it wonderful!" commented those who had gathered around the dolls. We hope everyone will come see the dolls every day.

-Miyako City Reconstruction Support Center