Four Years after the Disaster

UCCJ East Japan Disaster Relief Projects
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Introduction

【Church & Parsonage Reconstruction】 (through domestic contributions)

81 Congregations received funding for repairs to damages caused on March 11, 2011. There were 43 congregations in Tohoku District, 10 in Ou District, 27 in Kanto District and one in Tokyo District.

As of February 28, 2015 there are 29 congregations which have received support and an additional four which are scheduled to receive support for a combined total of 34 congregations. Already ¥446,148,429 has been dispersed with another ¥150,000,000 expected to be dispersed. Along with aid twenty congregations have received loans, additionally loans have been made to two preschools and one institution. A total of ¥255,505,500 in loans has been made. Funds have been made through the Church Mutual Aid. It is anticipated that four more churches will be receiving loans of ¥100,000,000.

1. Emmaus Sendai & Ishinomaki (Support from UMCOR * EMS * RCA & UCCJ)

【History】

In the immediate aftermath of March 11, 2011 the Tohoku district created the Emmaus Relief center. Youth from all over Japan came to the center to volunteer. They distributed food and supplies, assisted in repairs and rebuilding, and the removal of rubble. In 2013 Emmaus Sendai began work on restoration of the agriculture – planting and harvesting. At the same time in Ishinomaki restoration of the fishing industry began – helping with the seeding of oyster beds and the harvest of kelp. To this point there have been 6,669 volunteers.

【2015 Activity Plan】 Work will be focused on the needs of the residents of temporary housing. “Ochakko Salon” a tea-time fellowship ministry is being used to provide an atmosphere in which these residents can find relaxation and hope through conversation and fellowship.
2. Heartful Kamaishi (Support from EMS・UMCOR・Mission21 & UCCJ)

【History】In February this work began when four "Ochakko Salons" were opened at four temporary housing complexes in the city of Kamaishi. Currently work is being done at fourteen locations including twelve temporary housing complexes and one reconstructing housing area. As of February 28, 2015 9,105 people have participated in this gathers.

【2015 Activity Plan】Four years have passed since the disaster. The “Ochako Salon” now features arts and crafts. Also gardening is being done including weeding and picking up fallen leaves. Additional we have begun visits to private residencies.

3. Little Lambs Camp (Support from UMCOR・EMS・RCA and UCCJ)

【History】The first Little Lambs Camp was held at the YMCA Yamanaka Lodge in January 2012. The intention was to take children and families within close proximity to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant away from the radioactivity in their environment. In January 2013 through an invitation from the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan we began also having camps in Taiwan. In cooperation with the YMCA we have had 16 camps in Japan along with the 3 camps in Taiwan.

【2015 Activity Plan】Six camps are planned for 2015. Each camp will have 25 participants with priority being given to those who have yet to participate.

4. Disaster Relief Concert (Support from Federation of Swiss Churches, RCA & UCCJ)

【History】In January 2013 the first Disaster Relief Concert was held in Ishinomaki. Since then there have been six more concerts in Sendai, Natori, Iwaki, Tono, Kamaishi and Ishinomaki. The performances have been held at churches, supermarkets, preschools, temporary housing complexes and private homes. The performers are primarily from the New Japan Philharmonic – Suzuki Ryuta: Piano, Yamaguchi Sachiko: Piano, Watanabe Leo: Double Bass, Tanaka Shigeyuki: bassoon. They are joined by Takahashi Iori: Cello (President of the Kamaishi Music Educators Association), Nishitani Iyo (Niki Kai Opera), and others.

【2015 Activity Plan】Plans are being made for Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter Concerts.

Conclusion
Each project is both initiated and brought to its conclusion through prayer. It is through being led by prayer that we receive the power to accomplish the work with which we have entrusted.

In addition to prayer, we have received much support to do our work through our fellowship with partners from overseas. UMCOR, EMS, and the PCT along with the RCA and Mission 21 have given us much support throughout this journey of recovery. Without the support from these organizations we would not have been able to accomplish the work we have done. Truly I am not fully able to express my gratitude for this invaluable support.