

Fukushima News

福島便り

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— Sister Kazuko Hasegawa came to Fukushima in April. She has been participating in various activities of Caritas Minami Soma for a while.

— Samurai Festival

Students from the University of the Sacred Heart are participating as volunteers at the annual festival organised by local high school students at the Nomaoi Festival Centre. This year, eight students took part and helped out at the children's playground.



— Nomaoi Festival (Horse Show)

An event with a history of more than 1,000 years. It includes an armoured horse race by mounted warriors and a battle for the sacred flag at the Nomaoi Festival site in Haramachi. It has been designated a national Important Intangible Folk Cultural Asset. The festival is usually held over three days from the last Saturday to Monday of July, but due to the heat it was moved to 25-27 May this year.



— Sweet potato planting at Sayuri Kindergarten

This year again, the children of Sayuri Kindergarten planted about 30 sweet potato seedlings in the garden (Caritas Field) of the Sacred Heart in Minami-machi. Mr. and Mrs. Yamamoto, farmers who have always been a great help to us, prepared the soil with love. There is a lot of preparation involved: digging up the soil many times, making ridges, adding fertiliser, putting soil on top of it, covering it with black plastic mulch, digging small holes to plant the seedlings, Once again, I was impressed by the farmers' care and attention to detail in growing vegetables. From now on, the children will come to water the plants from time to time. We are looking forward to the autumn harvest.



— Caritas Relaxing Café opens

We have decided to use Caritas Minamisoma's large room to invite elderly neighbours and provide them with a place to chat over a cup of tea once a month. This is being organised by the president and vice-president of Haramachi Catholic Church. The vice-president, who was a teacher at Sayuri Kindergarten, had connections with the neighbourhood. Four former parents of Sayuri Kindergarten gathered at the first meeting. They enjoyed sharing stories of the old days.

— Oretachi (our) lore museum

This year, one of the Sisters of Marie Auxiliatrice became involved in the Oretachi no Denshokan in Odaka, and new information is coming in daily. Various groups of people have come from all over Japan, including university professors, university students, high school students, people in the arts, and others, to keep in mind the progress of Fukushima since the events of March 2011 through paintings, poetry, sculptures and so on. People from abroad have also come. Lectures on nuclear power are also planned.



— Caritas Minamisoma Volunteer activities restarted

Due to the Corona disaster, volunteer activities as before have been suspended for a while, but will be resumed this year. Please see Caritas Minamisoma's website and Facebook page for more details.

— Yokota rose garden in Odaka, Minamisoma.



— Exchange with Ukrainian children

Ms Tomoko Kobayashi from Futabaya Ryokan in front of JR Odaka station has been continuing exchange with Chernobyl, Ukraine, since the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, and this time a zoom exchange was organised and connected with children from a primary school and students from a high school in Zhitomir, western Ukraine. I was able to help a little as an interpreter for the exchange from Ukrainian to English and then to Japanese, and from Japanese to English and Ukrainian. I am grateful for this valuable opportunity.

The primary school that Tomoko Kobayashi had visited several times was completely destroyed in the current war. Among the children, some were from another primary school in the eastern part of the country. There were children who had been evacuated from the east, children who had been evacuated with their families, and children whose parents were involved in the war. There is a military facility in the town, and they have prepared a fun programme for the children who are afraid and scared. Using drawing, the teachers are helping and working hard for children not to keep the painful feelings in their hearts. They love Japanese pencils and crayons.

(Masako Egawa)

