

FUKUSHIMA DESK NEWS

Sendai Diocesan Support Center

No. 23 July, 2016

Withdrawal from EU;

National Referendum of England Affects Fukushima, Too

The attitude of refusing to accept refugees and immigrants perceived in the national referendum of England was disturbing news for those who live in Fukushima, too. It reminded them of the confusion Fukushima people experienced immediately after the accident of the First Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, the messy life of evacuation, the hesitant attitude to accept immigrants, and so on.

Even today, we are certainly aware of the wall existing between the newly arrived refugees and the original inhabitants of the area of the Nuclear Power Plant. They often talk about who gets how much for compensations from the government. If the work of the extinction of the reactor prolongs and if the people involved in decontamination should increase, we shall see a considerable change in the town. In the midst of such a situation, there are people who are involved in trying to regain their "ordinary daily life". In the present issue, we hope to introduce some of their topics.

Multigenerational Community House :

For Parents, Children and Other Adults in the Area...

The house is situated in Sasaya, Fukushima City. You can find it five kilometers from JR Fukushima Station, and it is called *Minna no Ie* meaning A Home for Everyone. It is conducted by the NPO Corporation *Beans Fukushima*. Since some years before the Big Earthquake, the members of this NPO group had been supporting reclusive, unsociable



children who were unable to attend school regularly, as well as their family members from various areas. After the Earthquake, the house for this group was made available for the disaster victims of all ages, starting from those connected with the coffee house run by the mothers. Finally in March, 2016, it was officially opened as a place where people of all ages could get together.

The program is varied, including the “*Babies and Moms’ Day*”, “*High School Kids’ and Moms’ Day*”, “*Grade School Kids’ and Moms’ Day*” and “*the Talking Room for Moms*”. There are also clubs for adults, such as “*Eco-craft Club*” and “*Let’s Knit Club*”, where adults make new friends and began to develop heart-to-heart talks. There are seasonal events such as the “*Start Festival Yoga*”, where the participants get refreshed with the help of the Yoga instructor from Koriyama.



There are more colorful events being planned for the summer vacation, among them are the “*Kids’ Cooking*”, “*Smoothly Written Compositions*” and “*Exciting Science Class*.” Some teachers of Japanese came to give hints as to how to write essays, and the science class members are looking forward to making a “film case rocket and a hot-air balloon” to introduce to their schoolmates.

The characteristics of the Home for Everyone are not only the number and novelty of the planning. This project has been basically supported by the mutual help of the mothers who originated the *Moms’ Café*. These mothers learn from each other, and support each other, thus strengthening their unity and friendship.

Another point which wins our admiration is the program of what they call “*The Neighbors’ Day*”. The Sasaya Area in Fukushima City was subdivided in lots when it was sold fifty years ago. The inhabitants there have been advancing in age.. During the month of June, the people living there became teachers in “*The Neighbors’ Day for Making Chimaki Cakes*”, where not only little children but many grownups enjoyed learning how to make chimaki cakes. The *Moms’ Café* which started in various places in Fukushima became popular salons for young mothers. Now, the development called *Minna no Ie* is definitely manifesting its evolution as a new model in a society with fewer children and an increase in older people.

Radiation Studied in the Aquarium :

Scientific Communication between Citizens and Scientists

Aquamarine Fukushima situated in Onahama gives “Let’s Study” Lab on the third Sunday every month.

“How many Bq in potato chips?”

“400 Bq per kilo. They contain potassium.”

“How about watching fireworks? 6700 Bq! If you watch them with your mouth open, what do you think will happen to you? Remember the half-life of the radioactive potassium is 1200000000 years. By the way, beer is 5 Bq!” The veterinarian who is the instructor makes the students laugh.



The aquarium called Aquamarine Fukushima offers to work with the “Ocean Lab”, a group of researchers in the city, in studying the condition of the ocean facing the First Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. The “Ocean Lab” of Fukushima invites applicants for the monthly co-investigation of the ocean condition as near as 1.5 km from the First Nuclear Power Plant. With the instruction of a veterinarian, they gather some earth at the bottom of the

ocean using a special instrument, and then catch some fish to sample.

A few days later, the veterinarian dissects one of the fish in front of the children who had joined the investigation. The veterinarian’s skill was that of a professional cook, and won the admiration of the spectators. The children’s eyes were wide open with excitement as he also explained that the amount of radioactivity differs according to the species and age of the fish.

The teacher who is a veterinarian loves fish, and his explanations are very easy to understand. A part of the cause of the confusions after the nuclear power plant accident was said to be the lack of communication between the general public and science specialists especially about technical scientific matters. The situation is evidently improving now.



Children came with their parents. This is also serving as a good opportunity for

developing good relationships within families. Apart from the value of professional fishermen and their own scientific studies, there are many other approaches which are both precious and valuable like this experience.

Aquamarine Fukushima prepares radiation classes for elementary schools and junior high schools, and sends lecturers when invited.



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