

Toward Reconstruction

Japan Self-Defense Forces

The Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) began rescue efforts immediately after the earthquake of March 11 and to date have rescued approximately 19,000 people. About 100,000 of the approximately 230,000 JSDF personnel have joined the efforts. The activities are wide-ranging, from tasks such as searching for the missing, delivering relief goods and supplying water to the installation of bathing facilities and consolation music performances. Pictured, children relax in a makeshift public bath set up by Japan Ground Self-Defense Force personnel at an evacuation center in Yamamoto, Miyagi Prefecture, March 25.



Temporary Houses

Temporary houses are now being constructed for those people whose houses were damaged or lost as a result of the earthquake disaster. The first of these were occupied by victims in Rikuzentakata, Miyagi Prefecture, on April 9. In the first two months after the quake, a total of some 30,000 temporary houses will be built in Chiba, Ibaraki, Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures, and another 30,000 are scheduled to be built over the following three months. Pictured, a worker carries timber to build temporary houses for disaster victims in Otsuchi, Iwate Prefecture, April 3.



Volunteers

Many citizen volunteers have also participated in a range of support activities. Pictured, boys play soccer watched over by a volunteer at a school, which now acts as an evacuation shelter, in Rikuzentakata, Iwate prefecture, April 7.

Visit by the Emperor and Empress

As of April 11, the number of disaster victims who have evacuated to roughly 2,300 evacuation centers nationwide, including those who lost their homes due to the earthquake and ensuing tsunami and those who live in the evacuation zone designated due to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, is about 150,000 people. On March 30, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan visited the Tokyo Budoh-kan in the capital's Adachi Ward, which is housing some 300 evacuees. Their Majesties spent around 40 minutes kindly speaking to the evacuees with the likes of "Are you able to sleep well?" and "Are you coping physically?"



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On March 16, the Emperor delivered a message about the earthquake by video, which has been released on the Imperial Household Agency website: www.kunaicho.go.jp/eindex.html.

Fundraising Activities

As of April 10, monetary donations given to the Japan Red Cross Society and the Central Community Chest of Japan for the purpose of supporting the disaster-stricken areas had reached a total of 140 billion yen. Collection boxes have been placed at many convenience stores, restaurants and other shops, and the sight of people soliciting donations on the street can be seen all over Japan. Pictured, Ladies Professional Golfers' Association of Japan golfers collect donations in support of victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake in front of Hakata Station, Fukuoka, March 20.



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Charity Soccer Match

On March 29, a charity soccer match between the Japan national team and a J. League select squad was held at the Nagai Stadium in Osaka. The stands holding a sellout crowd of over 40,000 spectators overflowed with banners and flags with various messages such as "Kizuna" (bonds of friendship), "Nihon ni egao wo" (Bring smiles to Japan) and "Ganbaro, Nihon" (Let's do our best, Japan!).

Pictured, Yuto Nagatomo (5), who plays for Inter Milan of Italy, raises his mourning band after Japan national teammate Yasuhito Endo scored during their charity match at Nagai Stadium in Osaka, March 29.



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Encouragement from Koshien to All of Japan

From March 23 to April 3, the National High School Baseball Invitational Tournament was held at the Hanshin Koshien Stadium in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture. Teams from thirty-two high schools selected from around Japan competed in the tournament. Held twice a year at Koshien Stadium in spring and summer, the tournaments are the stuff made of dreams for high school students playing baseball in Japan. Collection boxes were also placed at the event, with part of the proceeds from admissions going to the disaster-stricken areas as donations.

After the earthquake struck, baseball team members of tournament entrant Tohoku High School from disaster-stricken Sendai City continued volunteer activities including the delivery of relief goods and the supply of water at an evacuation center near their school, and moved to Hyogo four days prior to the opening ceremony. Unfortunately, the team exited the tournament in the first round, but tele-

vised scenes of the players giving their best in the match gave great encouragement not only to the disaster victims at evacuation centers but also to many Japanese people.

Pictured, Tohoku High School baseball players line up after their first-round game in the 83rd National High School Baseball Invitational Tournament, March 28.



TOSHIHIRO KITAGAWA/AFCO