

## Voices from supporters

### ▶ Activities of Kumustaka at the time of Kumamoto Earthquakes

Kumustaka, the Association for Living Together with Migrants, dispatched earthquake related information in various languages on their website since April 15, the day after the Kumamoto earthquake on April 14, and distributed food at the Foreign Evacuees Center in the Kumamoto City International Center from April 16 to 30, as well as providing individual consultation with foreign sufferers and emergency relief activities. After May we have been doing activities as follows; (1) providing earthquake related information in 10 various languages, (2) emergency loans to foreign sufferers, especially to single mothers, (3) conducting surveys for foreign single mother sufferers and (4) foreign sufferers relief, report of relief activities, publicity, symposiums, seminars, and study groups. And we are working toward foreign sufferers to be self-independent, especially with domestic violence sufferers, the needy, single mothers and defendants. At the time of the disaster, many unexpected matters and matters impossible to deal with happened continuously. We learned the importance of quick response of sufferers themselves to deal with relief activities right after the earthquakes, as well as the importance of the transmission of information in various languages. We also learned the needs of sufferers and the difficulties of supply and demand of relief goods and supporters. It was a very precious opportunity to think and act toward a multicultural society at the time of the disaster

Mr. Shinichiro Nakashima  
(Kumustaka Association for Living Together with Migrants)



### ▶ Support activities with disaster prevention cooperation of Kyushu International Association

As a member of Kyushu International Association, I was involved in support activities for four days from April 21. On the 21st, with the Shinkansen being cancelled and no information of the operation of regular trains, I finally managed to arrive in Kumamoto City seven hours later. Even though city trams were running, I could see cracks everywhere on the roads, and walls of buildings and fences falling down from the train window.

I was in charge of patrolling evacuation sites and collection and arranging of multilingual information. I had some knowledge about the Multilingual Support Center, but it was the first time for me to work for it. Being instructed by staff of KIF and Multicultural Managers, I had to react to the changing situation, which was a very precious experience for me. At the same time I had to correct my understandings.

It has been said that there are relatively fewer natural disasters such as earthquakes in Kitakyushu. However, it is necessary to improve the systems as soon as possible to deal with such disasters. Observing many people, including foreigners, supporters and organizations working together to support sufferers, I understood it was a result of mutual trust constructed by the staff of KIF. I strongly believe we should learn from them.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in support activities this time. I pray quick recovery for all sufferers.

Mr. Nobuaki Hiraki  
(Kitakyushu International Association)



### ▶ Taking part in the operation of Kumamoto Earthquake disaster multiingual support center

As for the Kumamoto earthquakes, we, NPO National Conference of Multicultural Managers, helped in the operation of Kumamoto Earthquake Disaster Multiingual Support Center along with the Kumamoto City International Foundation from the beginning of the disaster.

We have taken part in activities in disaster-stricken areas and training for emergency situations since 2007 in Niigata. It was an astonishment to find out that an international association was so powerful in such a disastrous time.

We are truly impressed by high multicultural awareness of KIF, their trustworthy relationship with foreigners and involvement of staff in support activities despite themselves having suffering damage. The activities of KIF are a role model when we think of foreigner support at the time of disaster. All of us who took part in the activities this time will make effort in promoting multicultural societies.

We hope for the quick recovery of Kumamoto and appreciate the staff of KIF for receiving us to work together

Mr. Kazuhiko Takagi (Vice representative of board of directors, NPO National conference of Multicultural Mangers)



### ▶ The role of Local Japanese class at the time of the earthquakes – Musashigaoka Class

Having connections among each of the study groups, on April 16, the day of main shock, to the next day, we could confirm most of the participants' safety when the secretariat of the

KIF contacted us.

(With LINE groups of participants, we confirmed the safety and exchanged information with each other). Everyone in our LINE group reported the damage situation and exchanged information of supermarkets, the place of water supply, gas stations, and transportation. Shared information through LINE was interpreted into various languages by participants whose Japanese ability was quite high, so that those who could not understand Japanese could also understand. Participants and Japanese volunteers who lived in the same neighbourhoods exchanged actively in the course of their daily lives. Even after the earthquakes, they frequently exchanged information and encouraged each other.

As for the Musashigaoka class, both the Japanese and foreigners who live in the Musashigaoka area could contact each other much quicker than the secretariat. Thanks to the daily face to face relationship, Japanese and foreigners could overcome the emergency together.

Ms. Yurika Murakami (KIF)



Exchange with volunteers and participants