

Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents Newsletter

Issue No. 43



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Thank you for your Opinions!

◆◆ Report on the Open Forum ◆◆



The Open Forum of 2011 was held on November 20. About 180 people, both foreign and Japanese residents, participated. The first part of the Open Forum this year was a panel discussion and the second part was a meeting to exchange views. First, we had a panel discussion with academics and former representatives of the assembly. The theme was "Internationalization in Kawasaki City - what we can do to realize a multicultural society as community residents". The presenters spoke about the history of the city's efforts and civic activities. After that, participants asked questions, and the importance of communication between communities and between parents and children was highlighted. A new perspective came from the discussion of the importance of information provided by foreign residents as well as information provided to foreign residents by the public administration and Japanese residents.

During the latter half of the meeting, we received opinions from the participants on the themes that had been discussed and selected as topics for the Assembly's proposals. For example, regarding the survey of foreign residents that the Life and Society section will propose, one participant said that children of international marriages who have Japanese citizenship and naturalized Japanese citizens should be covered. Meanwhile, regarding multicultural education, which is a proposal topic from the Education, a participant suggested that Kawasaki City should train more instructors of other cultures.

After the meeting we held a party at the venue to enable participants to meet each other informally. Representatives and participants chatted and although the party did not last long, we felt that we had made better connections.



(David CHART)

Topics of the Open Forum and participants' opinions

● Survey of foreign residents

- How about including Japanese residents?
- How about conducting the survey in conjunction with the census or other surveys run by the city?
- Consider incorporating interviews in addition to a questionnaire.

● Multicultural education

- Lessons for meeting instructors from other cultures may not go well if they are forced on schools. It is necessary to encourage schools to hold them on their own initiative.
- There is also a scheme in which students in Japanese language class visit elementary schools to mingle with pupils. We should consider various ways to approach the problem.

● Pension

- We pay two sets of pension premiums, to our own countries and to Japan. It is important to seek assistance from governments.
- There are things that the city can do to solve the problem that the system is difficult to understand, such as providing a simple explanation.

● Bullying

- It would be good if people could be referred to a place where they can receive counseling sessions in their native languages.
- We would like to learn specific Japanese language terms to use at counseling.
- We should separate what schools can do and what we can do at home.



**En no shita no chikaramochi
(Unsung Heroes)**
Report of Multicultural Festival in Mizonokuchi

On October 22, the Multicultural Festival in Mizonokuchi was held at Nocty near Mizonokuchi Station. There were many events: Hawaiian and Korean dances were performed, and food from Okinawa and various countries was sold. The Representative Assembly had a booth on the 11th floor. In one corner of the floor, we sold Chinese prawn crackers, Philippine rice vermicelli, and Slovakian goulash. We were worried about the heavy rain that had lasted until the morning, but it had no major effect. The food sold out unexpectedly quickly.

I feel that this festival is a very meaningful event that connects Japan and foreign countries and deepens mutual understanding. I hope that it will be continued. In the meantime, I am grateful that I was able to work to help ensure the event will continue next year. I would like to thank everyone involved and those who enjoyed and participated in the event.

In Japanese, there is an expression, "En no shita no chikaramochi". "En no shita" means the foundation of a house. It is an important part of a house that supports the entire structure, although it is out of sight. "En no shita no chikaramochi" means a person who does everything possible without being seen. In this case, we have staff members who worked hard run the festival, as well as people who cooked and purchased ingredients. We must not forget that the efforts of all these "En no shita no chikaramochi" supported the success of the festival.



<Cooking ethnic food>



<Booths for the Representative Assembly>

(Sang Hwa KIM)

Report on the meetings
(September 2011 - October 2011)

- Second Meeting: Day 2 (September 11, 2011)
- Third Meeting: Day 1 (October 30, 2011)

Life and Society Section

The deliberations of the Life and Society Section has reached the stage of putting the proposal together. It was difficult to narrow down the various themes that we had discussed over more than a year, but we got them down to two. There were many important themes that were not selected as proposals but as time was limited, we settled on the following two themes.

First, we have decided to request a survey aimed at foreign residents. Although an extensive survey was conducted more than 10 years ago, the lives of foreign residents in Kawasaki City have changed significantly since then. At the Representatives Assembly, we can hear from 24 foreign residents. If we could directly hear from the approximately 30,000 other foreign residents, we would be able to grasp the real problems they face. At the same time, we would be able to find out which measures and policies are useful for foreign residents. The results will give a boost to those who are working to create a multicultural society and will be helpful in future deliberations of the Representative Assembly.



We decided to take up the problem of pensions as another theme. The current pension system is not geared toward foreigners who work in Japan for more than three years but will not reside here permanently. Therefore, we will ask for a solution. Deliberations are still taking place. Specifically, we are considering urging entry into international social security agreements. This will be helpful not only for foreigners living in Japan but also for Japanese people living abroad. We will put together our proposal during the limited number of meetings we have left and prepare to submit it to the mayor.

(David CHART, Life and Society Section Leader)



Participation in the Citizen's festival

On November 5 and 6, 2011, the Representative Assembly participated in the Kawasaki Citizen's Festival. There were many tents at the site and I was surprised at the large turnout. Invigorated by the superb performances, the representatives took the stage and introduced themselves and the assembly.



In the Representative Assembly tent, we exhibited displays showing the culture of many countries, and well-known souvenirs of each country including Philippine toys, Russian dolls, world currencies, picture books, and brochures for children. We also provided traditional costumes for visitors, and took photographs of them dressed in the costumes. For children, we exhibited water balloons, presented quizzes from around the world, and displayed wooden puzzles. The representatives welcomed children in a friendly manner and the children had a lot of fun. By taking part in activities outside regular meetings, I think that the representatives and other city residents had a good opportunity to get acquainted. The representatives also had an opportunity to make and strengthen friendships with one another.



On the 6th, the representatives took part in the parade. The representatives wore specially made Representative Assembly polo shirts during the parade. It was great. The people who participated in the parade dressed in traditional costumes, greeted visitors and talked with them. The weather was good. The excitement of the people at the site and the music and dance performances came together very well and the festival proceeded in a comfortable, delightful atmosphere.

(Orietta OIDE)



Report on the meetings

(September 2011 - October 2011)

- Second Meeting: Day 2 (September 11, 2011)
- Third Meeting: Day 1 (October 30, 2011)

Education Section

In the September and October meetings, we deliberated on the problems of bullying, information, and day-care centers. The following describes some of the opinions aired.

<Bullying>

- When children reach junior high school, they often become reluctant to talk with their parents. As a result, it can be difficult to find out whether your child is being bullied. It is important to discuss with teachers how your child is behaving at school at parent-teacher-student meetings.
- It would be good if there were a counseling desk for parents where they can speak in their native languages. Information on counseling desks is not readily available.
- Some children use their formal alternate names instead of their real names at school. As they grow older, they may find themselves in a quandary regarding their nationalities, names, and identities.

<About Information>

- It would be good if there were a system for the city to transmit information via e-mail. Information in simple Japanese is useful to many foreign residents.
- Can they use the website to promptly send information?

<Day-care centers>

- Children placed on a waiting listed for day-care centers have become a problem. We would like to see the Kawasaki Childcare Plan pushed forward.

Having deliberated on a number of themes to include in the proposal at the section meetings, we narrowed down the list of themes to two, "Multicultural Education" and "Bullying". At the Open Forum, we received a lot of feedback on the two themes from participants. Thank you. Please continue to give us your comments and feedback so that we can create a proposal that incorporates a wide variety of ideas and opinions.

(Edmond DUNCAN, Education Section Leader)



Registered Number of Foreigners in Kawasaki City (by Ward) As of the End of December 2011

Kawasaki Ward	Saiwai Ward	Nakahara Ward	Takatsu Ward	Miyamae Ward	Tama Ward	Asao Ward	City Total
11,529	3,662	4,263	3,650	2,648	3,519	1,854	31,125



Meeting Schedule

Fourth Meeting, Day 2: February 19, 2012

Everyone is welcome to observe the meetings. Feel free to attend!

- Useful Information for Foreign Residents #4 -



Prepare for disasters - Where is information about how to cope?



Everyday preparation is important!

What should we do when a disaster occurs? It is critical to prepare ourselves for disasters. Kawasaki City provides important information about disasters through various channels. We also provide multilingual information.

◆ **Disaster prevention map of Kawasaki City:** This map shows evacuation centers (safe places where people can evacuate to), water stations, and medical institutions. The map is available from ward offices. You can also download the map from the Website. Languages: Japanese and English



◆ **What to prepare:** Shows what you should prepare in case disaster strikes. A multilingual version can be downloaded from the website. Languages: Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Tagalog



◆ **Mail News Kawasaki "Weather and disaster prevention information"**
Distributes emergency information, earthquake information, weather warnings, weather advisories to PCs and mobile phones by e-mail (Japanese only).



How to register: Send an e-mail to the following address, and you will receive an e-mail containing the URL to use for registration. Access the URL and register.

From mobile phones
mailnews-m@k-mail.city.kawasaki.jp
From PCs
mailnews@k-mail.city.kawasaki.jp

◆ **Kawasaki FM 79.1MHz**
Broadcasts emergency information in multiple languages during a disaster. Languages: Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Tagalog



◆ **Emergency messaging service "171"**
Voice call (landline/mobile phone)

◆ **Emergency message board**
You can find out the status of others via mobile phones and PCs. The address differs depending on the mobile phone company.

◆ **NHK World** <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/index.html>
You can hear and read the news in multiple languages.



* The city's website has a collection of links to information for foreign residents about earthquakes and disasters in foreign languages.

<http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/25/25zinken/home/gaikoku/earthquakeinfo.htm>

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We welcome your ideas and input regarding the newsletter and Assembly.