

The Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents Newsletter No. 55



KAWASAKI CITY
川崎市

Edited & Published by: The Human Rights and Gender Equality Office
Citizens' and Children's Affairs Bureau, Kawasaki City Office

Date of Publication: January 29, 2016

(Japanese) <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/shisei/category/60-7-2-0-0-0-0-0-0-0.html>

(Simple Japanese) <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/250/page/0000042748.html>

International Festival in Kawasaki

On July 5th last year, the Representative Assembly once again participated in the International Festival in Kawasaki. In most years this event is held in sweltering heat, but last year was unfortunately rainy. Nevertheless, over 10,000 people attended and the event was a great success again.

Members of the Assembly spent time with children, offering a rock-scissors-paper tournament and the chance to draw flags of the world. They also introduced the activities of the Assembly to the attendees.



Kawasaki Citizens' Festival

On November 1st, we participated in the 38th Kawasaki Citizens' Festival. As the Festival program included a working day, we were unfortunately only able to be present on one of the three days this year. Despite that, we were blessed with good weather, and many people attended, so that we were able to enjoy interacting with many residents of Kawasaki. At our tent, beginning with our ever-popular teas-of-the-world tasting and our usual fishing game, we had a space for drawing national flags as well as a game including a world quiz.

This year, not only the Representatives, but also their friends and families joined the parade, and it was an excellent chance to draw attention to the Assembly.



Open Forum

The Open Forum for Fiscal Year 2015 was held from 2pm to 5pm on November 15th at Kawasaki International Center, and around 120 people attended in total. As we are now in the second year of the 10th session of the Assembly, at the Open Forum we held a workshop on “The Creation of Local Hubs for Multiculturalism and Support of Foreign Residents — Towards the Establishment of International Lounges (tentative)”, a topic that the Assembly is preparing as one of its proposals. In this workshop, the participants were split into six groups and spent about an hour sharing ideas and opinions about such lounges, eventually creating mind-maps.



After the workshop, each group presented the results of its discussion, and Professor Yuji Nakano of Komazawa University and Ms Chiyoko Hara, the head of Kawasaki Fureai-kan, offered their comments.

As this Open Forum was held in the style of a workshop, the Representatives had the opportunity more than ever to directly discuss with the attendees which made the meeting extremely satisfying. The attendees also found it very good, and we received many positive comments like: “I enjoyed exchanging thoughts”, “I realized that foreign residents face a wide variety of problems”, “I learned a lot from talking to people of different nationalities and generations”, “If there’s something I can do, I would like to be actively involved as a volunteer”.

Many foreign and Japanese residents also participated in the party we held after the meeting. It was short, but a good opportunity to meet all the attendees. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate!

■ Reflections on the Open Forum

This time, I was privileged to chair the Open Forum. It was interesting to see the meeting from the chair, a different position and view-point from last year. But it was not only my position that was different. The structure of the whole meeting was greatly changed. As the main program this time was a workshop, we did not just report on our experiences and opinions in a one-sided way, but had the actual chance to discuss the content of our proposals with the people who attended, and I felt that engagement in the meeting was much higher compared to last year. We were able to hear the various experiences and ideas of other foreign residents who participated, as well as the opinions of the Japanese participants, making it a very worthwhile experience. In addition, the valuable insights offered by the two commentators summed up the whole meeting nicely, and above that will be extremely helpful as we formulate our final proposals.

As representatives of the foreign residents of the city, we naturally consider things from a foreigner’s point of view, but I hope that, by incorporating the opinions we heard at the workshop into our proposals, we will be able to make them relevant not just for foreign residents, but also for Japanese residents of every age group and social background. I hope to continue working to make a real contribution to this city and society.

Daniela Dittmar

◇Subcommittee Reports◇

■ Welfare and Education Subcommittee

In the Welfare and Education Subcommittee, we have taken our time discussing the topics raised by the members this term like “raising small children”, “school & education”, “nursing care”, “pension”, “creation of centers”, “mother tongue & culture” and “progression to high school”. We have now narrowed things down to those topics the members feel are most important.

We have decided to make proposals on the following issues: “multilingual versions of the child-raising guidebook”, “use of the foreign language maternity record book” and “progression to high school”. We hope to efficiently finalize the content of the proposals in the few remaining meetings. Furthermore, in this 10th session we are considering a common proposal, in addition to those from the subcommittees, of “The Creation of Local Hubs for Multiculturalism and Support of Foreign Residents”. We were able to gather many ideas and opinions on this topic from the participants at the Open Meeting in November, and we plan to deepen our discussions in order to create an even better proposal in the remaining meetings.

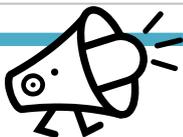
Welfare and Education Subcommittee Chair, Izumi Beatriz Sonoda

■ Life and Society Subcommittee

At the meeting in October, the Life and Society Subcommittee refined the themes for its proposals. First, based on earlier discussions, we decided to choose the proposals from the following four topics: “employment support in the field of nursing care”, “accommodation support”, “ward office services” and “information delivery”, gathering the main opinions on each topic. Regarding the “employment support in the field of nursing care”, we felt that it would be helpful to have a system to support foreign residents in learning the difficult Japanese necessary for care related jobs. Looking at “accommodation support”, the results of the survey of foreign residents revealed how serious the problem of accommodation discrimination still is, and based on this, we concluded that consultation services might be necessary in order to grasp the background and actual state of this discrimination. For the topics “ward office services” and “information delivery” we felt that both will be largely covered by the common proposal on “The Creation of Local Hubs for Multiculturalism and Support of Foreign Residents”. However, we did leave the “recommendation to improve the simple Japanese pages of the city website” as a separate proposal.

Finally, choosing the topics by a show of hands, we settled on “accommodation support (accommodation discrimination)” and “information delivery (improvement of the simple Japanese webpages)” as the topics for our proposals. In the remaining meetings, we will decide on the specific content of these proposals.

Life and Society Subcommittee Chair, Jialin Ren



Fiscal Year 2015 Meeting Schedule

Location: Kawasaki International Center (10 minutes' walk from Motosumiyoshi Station)

Time: From 2pm to 5pm

Map: <http://www.kian.or.jp/accessmap.shtml>



Fourth Meeting, First Day: 17th January 2016 (Sunday)

Fourth Meeting, Second Day: 14th February 2016 (Sunday)

Anyone may come to listen to the discussions of the Assembly, which are held in Japanese. Why don't you come and see the Assembly at work!



Did You Know? Room Hunting Information

In the new year, the number of people looking for an apartment increases as jobs change and new students enter universities. Kawasaki city has a "Basic Housing Ordinance", which commits to providing support for foreign residents, elderly people, handicapped people and others who might experience difficulties in finding a room, in order to help them finding suitable accommodation smoothly and maintain a stable residence. Furthermore, there is the "Kawasaki Residential Support" system introducing guarantor companies to people who cannot find their own guarantors, or supporting the dispatch of interpreters when problems arise due to language differences. Anyone who meets a few conditions may use it.

The Kawasaki City Housing Supply Corporation, in addition to managing city housing intended for low-income people without accommodation, also offers good quality rental housing, meeting conditions on building structure, size, and layout. It is possible to rent from the corporation without a guarantor or key money, and financial assistance with the rent may be available depending on income and family circumstances.

Once they have found a new home, most people in Japan use mover companies. Even the busiest person can use the internet to get rough estimates from several companies at a single site.

- Basic Housing Ordinance (in Japanese) : <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/kurashi/category/24-4-2-6-1-0-0-0-0-0.html>
- Kawasaki Residential Support: (in Japanese with furigana) : <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/500/page/0000043481.html>
(scroll down for links to PDFs in languages including English) : <http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/500/page/0000017768.html>
- Kawasaki City Housing Supply Corporation : <http://www.kawasaki-jk.or.jp/>

Sunok Kim

〈Kawasaki International Eco-Tech Fair 2016〉

Have you heard of the Kawasaki International Eco-Tech Fair? This fair, with the theme "Eco-Tech we want to send from Kawasaki to the world", has been held every year since 2009. It gathers a wide range of environmentally friendly technology and know-how, aiming to promote it within Japan and internationally, and add impetus to business matching activities. Last year, 138 organizations were displayed in 220 booths, and about 11,300 people visited. I also participated, and it was extremely interesting, providing many opportunities to learn, experience the technology, and meet people in the field. If you have time, please consider going along.

Date: 18th–19th February 2016 (Thursday and Friday), 10am to 5pm
Location: Todoroki Arena (Kawasaki-shi, Nakahara-ku, Todoroki 1-3)
Free entry
Home page: <http://www.kawasaki-eco-tech.jp/index.html>

Ngoc Bao Lin Nguyen

<Inquiries> The Human Rights and Gender Equality Office, Citizens' and Children's Affairs Bureau, Kawasaki City Office

1 Miyamoto-cho, Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki City 210-8577

Phone: 044-200-2359 Fax: 044-200-3914 E-mail: 25gaikok@city.kawasaki.jp

Your opinions regarding this newsletter and/or the Assembly are always welcome.