

A Message from Fukushima



Journalism School participants with completed newspapers.

Journalism School

August 9 – 11 2019

Shirakawa City & Nishigo Village

Journalism School is a program for children in Fukushima Prefecture in which they interview and report on the revitalization efforts conducted by Fukushima citizens following the earthquake and nuclear disaster. The program ran from August 9 to 11 in Shirakawa City and Nishigo Village. Thirty students, from 5th grade elementary to high school sophomores, participated in the program completing newspapers reporting on the current state of Fukushima.

Elementary, Junior & High School Students Make Newspapers

Special guest: Akira Ikegami

Mr. Akira Ikegami attended as a special guest lecturer during the presentations on the final day of the program where he gave feedback on the students' newspapers.



Mr. Ikegami giving advice on giving speech

Mr. Ikegami carefully read the papers and gave some comments and advice such as: "Good point!", or "Replace these difficult words with easier expressions." He also gave some tips on how to give a persuasive presentation.

In addition, he praised the program saying "I better understand the current situation of the Fukushima that I live in, and I have rediscovered what makes it such a great prefecture." As for Fukushima's revitalization efforts, he said, "It is important to reinvent Fukushima, rather than restoring it to what it used to be." He attended a lunch with the students where he talked about his childhood and his dream of becoming a journalist. He also talked about the hardships he had faced while reporting in a battle zone overseas.

Reporting on Fukushima citizens' efforts for revitalization

Students worked in 6 groups, interviewing at different locations on the first day. They visited, interviewed people of concern and took photos, including the owner of Obori Soma-Yaki Kiln who had to evacuate from Namie Town to Nishigo Village, as well as people involved in the reconstruction of the stone walls at the site of Komine Castle.

On the second day of the program they started making articles with support from local newspaper journalists at the Nasu National Youth & Children's Center in Nishigo Village. They wrote articles including headlines using

computers. Each group brainstormed and came up with unique titles for their newspapers and completed them after revising and editing in order to make them easier to read.

On the third and last day, they showed their newspapers to local residents at the Shirakawa Cultural Exchange Center Cominess. They proudly gave presentations on what they had learned through the program and said things like "I learned great things about Shirakawa through the interviews", and "this makes me want to put what I have learned to use by contributing to Fukushima."

The Journalist School is a Program aimed at passing on experience and lessons learned from the revitalization efforts following the earthquake and nuclear power station disaster. It is organized by the Fukushima Prefectural Government and Fukushima no Manabi Committee, and has been running for 7 years with special support from Fukushima Mimpo Newspaper and Fukushima Minyu Newspaper.

Prior to the program, on July 30, a study bus tour was organized where students visited several areas affected by the disaster such as Iwaki City and the Futaba district.