

Passing Down to the Future: Memories of the Earthquake and Revitalization



Mr. Akira Ikegami (front center) surrounded by the student reporters and alumni of Journalism School

Elementary, Junior High, and High School Students Creating Newspapers

Journalism School

August 3rd – 12th, 2023

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum
Koriyama Nature Center, Koriyama City Central Community Center

Covering “Fukushima Today”

On the first day, the students were divided into six teams and held the opening ceremony at the East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum in Futaba Town. They conducted interviews at various locations, including the Tomioka Headquarters of Futaba Inc. in Tomioka Town, the Historical Archive Museum of Tomioka (same town), Fuji Computer AI Technology Research Institute in Namie Town, Biomass Resin Fukushima (same town), Kohbai Yume Farm in Odaka Ward, Minamisoma City, and Asubito Fukushima (Haramachi Ward in the same city). While taking photographs, they listened to the stories and thoughts of those involved in the transmission of disaster memories and the revitalization efforts.

On the second and third days, at the Koriyama Nature Center in Koriyama City, the students received guidance for newspaper production. Mr. Yoshiaki Takeuchi, a lecturer from Soma High School with extensive experience in advising school newspapers, along with journalists from local newspapers (Fukushima-Minpo and Fu-

kushima Minyu Shimbun), and alumni of the Journalism School, provided advice. The students then took on the challenge of crafting their newspaper. Drawing on interview notes and gathered materials, the students wrote articles, considered headlines, and worked on the layout of the newspaper.

On the final day at the Koriyama City Central Community Center, each team presented the completed newspaper. Confidently showcasing their achievements learned through the process, students shared their impressions such as “We were able to understand the feelings of the disaster victims in detail” and “We discovered that many people are working hard towards recovery.”

The Journalism School, in its 11th year, is organized by Fukushima Prefecture’s “Fukushima-no-manabi” committee as one of the “projects to hand down the experience, lessons, and revitalization status of the earthquake and nuclear accident,” with special collaboration from Fukushima Minpo and Fukushima Minyu Shimbun.

Twelve years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear accident at TEPCO’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The “Journalism School,” conducting coverage of the Soso District in Fukushima Prefecture, was held for four days in 2023 (August 3, 5, 6, and 12). Thirty-eight students ranging from fifth grade in elementary school to seniors in high school participated, conducting interviews with companies and organizations working towards the revitalization of the disaster-stricken area. They successfully produced a newspaper titled “Fukushima-no-ima (Fukushima Today),” aiming to convey the current situation in Fukushima and preserve the memories of the earthquake and nuclear accident for future generations.

Special Lecturer: Mr. Akira Ikegami

Nurturing Talent for the Future

On the final day, journalist Akira Ikegami participated as a special lecturer, providing commentary on the newspapers produced by the students.

He carefully reviewed each page, noting strengths such as “thoughtful use of photos resulting in an impressive newspaper” and suggested improvements like “rephrasing complex words for better readability.” Additionally, he urged the students to leverage the experiences gained from the interviews and newspaper production for future endeavors. He expressed hopes that they would become valuable contributors to the recovery and future of Fukushima Prefecture.

He emphasized that creating newspapers helps improve language skills and serves as a catalyst for increased interest in societal dynamics and science. While answering the students’ questions, he shared his own experiences and past journalistic approaches. He also conveyed the importance of journalism by stating, “A healthy democratic society cannot exist without journalists.”



Mr. Ikegami answers questions from the students about the work as a journalist.

This project is jointly funded by the General Grant for Disaster Victims and the Fukushima Great East Japan Earthquake Child Support Fund