



Gift for the Next 100 Years

Grief Camp Project for victims of The Tohoku Region Pacific Coast Earthquake

UPDATE Vol.4 August-2011

Fruitful visit to El Tesoro de la Vida - Grief Camp by Camp Fire USA First Texas Council-

Four representatives of NCAJ spent a week in El Tesoro de la Vida. This camp for bereaved children has a history of 24 years, and is an exemplary role model for us to establish a new grief camp program for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Every child who attended the camp is struggling with the loss of someone close to them. But with a quick glance, it wasn't easy to realize their heartache. That is how much the camp was filled with fun!! Denis, the volunteer director, is one of the "Super Generators of FUN". He always talked friendly to the campers and staff, and sometimes transformed into "THING 1" in "The Cat in the Hat", a psychedelic lady, an elephant, etc... Every camper laughed a lot, talked a lot, danced a lot, sang a lot.

However this camp wasn't just for fun. There were some activities for grief work. Every day each cabin group had a one-hour therapy session led by a professional therapist. The therapists programmed the session according to the campers' ages and genders. For example, the group of ages 7-9 started with playing a game, and they showed very little change until the second to the last session. But changes were happening very gradually.

In the last session, they drew two pictures with and without the loved one and started crying. Then walking into the woods, they picked the cross on which their loved one's name was written and talked about the person. They thought and talked of the loved one, sang some songs, and hugged each other in tears, under a sky full of stars.

Soon after the last session, campers howled with joy in the swimming pool. In a fun atmosphere, they relaxed and healed. We found one of the reasons why this camp was filled with much fun.

"We cannot always choose the way we are hurt, but we can choose the way we heal"
- This is a phrase written in the brochure of El Tesoro de la Vida. We learned much in this fruitful week and set our minds to build our own grief camp filled with much fun, which will be chosen as the way to heal.



Media resources

American Camp Association media release - Camp: A Global Community of Support and Healing

<http://www.acacamps.org/media/story-ideas/camp-global-community>

Star-Telegram - Granbury camp for grieving kids shares lessons with Japan

<http://www.star-telegram.com/2011/08/05/3272721/granbury-camp-for-grieving-kids.html>

KERA Public Radio - Japanese Learn From Texas Grief Camp

http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/keranews/newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE_ID=1838535

Website of El Tesoro de la Vida

<http://www.campfirefw.org/CampFire/Families/CampElTesoro/GriefCampElTesorodelaVida/tabid/188/Default.aspx>

We ask you to...

- Provide information about previous grief camps
Research about the camps, articles about the camps, staff training materials, etc., are welcome.
- Donate to support the project
Donations are being accepted through the ICF website: <http://www.campingfellowship.org>

Contact : National Camping Association of Japan

Executive, Tatsuya Kanayama e-mail : kanayama@camping.or.jp

The full project plan is available at http://www.camping.or.jp/grief_camp_ncaj.pdf



ARIGATOU means "incredibly rare", thus it's MIRACLE. It's a miracle that we have you in the camping community. ARIGATOU!!