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Cupertino Raises \$28,500 for Japan's Earthquake & Tsunami Relief

Cupertino transferred funds totaling \$28,500 in the care of its sister city - Toyokawa, Japan, following the devastating March earthquake and tsunami. The Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee served as the custodian and collection focal point for these private, small organization, and school community donations. Funds were collected through a variety of events including direct donations, school projects, T-shirt sales, and the annual Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival. Toyokawa was fortunate to not suffer the direct physical impact of the natural disaster and will assist in disbursing the funds to those in need.

“It was touching to receive checks from community members who were reminded of the special relationship between our cities, and who wanted to show their support”, remarked Fran Ellis, Financial Officer for the Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee. Online donations and instructions for mail-in donations were hosted on the committee’s website: www.cupertinotoyokawa.org.

The Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee organizes an annual student exchange program for middle school students. While the trip to Japan from Cupertino has been cancelled, this year’s delegates anxiously await the arrival of students visiting from Toyokawa in the fall.

Nikita Dhesikan, one of the committee’s graphic artists and a 2009 student exchange delegate, designed and led the sale of T-shirts online, at the Cherry Blossom Festival, and around the community.



Caption: Takemichi Nagaoka (Japan Consul for International Affairs) with daughter, Kenji Sato (JETRO Aichi Prefecture representative), and Graig Inaba (Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Program representative, kneeling with Sato’s daughter), each purchased T-shirts, showing their support for the relief fund. Selling T-shirts are Nikita Dhesikan (T-shirt designer) and Sarah Tang.

When it came time for the 28th annual Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival in April, the entire community united for the cause. Many exhibitors displayed donation jars whose contents added to the fund. The Northern California Sword Club gave a direct donation to the relief fund. The Korean Womens International Network presented a donation check to Asif Kausar, Sister Cities Committee President, on stage during the outdoor entertainment program.

The Kids' Zone at the Cupertino Cherry Blossom festival consists largely of school-aged student clubs who host games and crafts booths as a community service and club fundraising event. Kids' Zone Director, Barbara Takahashi, asked this year's participants if they would like to contribute to the relief fund. "Nearly every group decided to forego their own fundraising needs and generously donated ALL of their proceeds to the relief fund", reported Barbara, "Thank you to: Homestead high school: Art Club & FBLA, Lynbrook high school: YAK Club, Art Reach Club, Octagon Club & FBLA, Monta Vista high school: Leo Club, Interact Club, Chinese Honor Society, the Rolling Hills 4H Club, and Boy Scout Troop 452."



Caption: 2011 Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival exhibitors participated in Japan relief fundraising efforts

Cupertino Union schools participated with a variety of separate fundraising programs at their schools. Those sending their donations by way of the Sister Cities committee include: Collins, Dilworth, Eaton, Murdock-Portal, and Sedgwick elementary schools and Hyde, Kennedy, and Miller middle schools.

Asif Kausar, President of the Cupertino-Toyokawa Sister Cities Committee wishes to thank the entire community for supporting the relief efforts, "Without their support this would not have been possible".

To learn more about the Cupertino -Toyokawa Sister Cities program, visit www.cupertinotoyokawa.org.