



2011 JETAA-I INTERNATIONAL MEETING

Press Release

October 2011

JETAA-I Executive Committee

1. Overview

- (1) The 2011 JETAA-I International Meeting will be held in Tokyo on October 21st and 22nd (Friday and Saturday). Tokyo has been chosen as this year's venue in honor of both the 25th anniversary of the JET Programme and the Great East Japan Earthquake. The meeting will be held at the offices of the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR), and will include sessions on topics such as "Contributing to Japan's Recovery" and "Improving the JET Programme".
- (2) Participants will include representatives from 10 countries with JETAA chapters (US, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, France, Jamaica, England, Canada, Ireland, & South Africa) and the Executive Officers. In all, 16 participants are expected to attend.

Reference: JETAA (JET Alumni Association)

- (1) The JET Alumni Association grew out of the efforts of participants in the Program who formed local chapters after returning home from their time in Japan, with the first chapters being formed in 1989. Over the years, they have carried out many activities at a grassroots level in order to promote close relations between their home countries and Japan. Almost immediately after the earthquake and tsunami on March 11th chapters around the world leaped into action to begin raising funds and sending support to the stricken areas in Japan on their own and in concert with other groups, and many alumni actually traveled to those areas to assist with rescue and recovery efforts on the ground. As of July 2011, there were 51 chapters with approximately 23,000 members around the world.
- (2) JETAA-I meets once a year to promote the development of international networks among all chapters worldwide in support of efforts to promote Japan on the world stage and to better serve their chapter members. The 2009 meeting was in Kingston, Jamaica, and the 2010 meeting was in Edinburgh, Scotland.

2. JET Visit to the Disaster Zone and Disaster Relief Efforts

The meeting participants are planning to visit Tohoku from the evening of Saturday, October 22nd, to the early morning of Monday, October 24th. On Sunday the 23rd they are planning to take part in volunteer efforts in Rikuzentakata-shi, where one of the two JET participants, Monty Dickson, a JET ALT, lost his life in the disaster.

3. JETAA USA Relief Fund

- (1) The alumni association in the United States, JETAA USA, will donate approximately \$76,000 (approximately 5.8 million yen) to relief efforts in Japan. This money has been raised by the individual chapters throughout the US and pooled into the JETAA USA Relief Fund.
- (2) Most of the money will be contributed to initiatives in Rikuzentakata-shi, where Monty Dickson lived (the Taylor Anderson Fund has taken the lead in providing support to Ishinomaki, where she lived). The following organizations will receive funds:
 1. Hope for Tomorrow, to assist students in taking their college entrance exams (\$25,000)
 2. Rikuzentakata Learning Support Project (\$20,000)
 3. Rikuzentakata-shi Education Project (\$10,000)
 4. Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund (\$5,000)
 5. Support for various relief efforts by current JET volunteers (about \$10,000)

Reference: From US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's October 7 speech to the US-Japan Council Annual Conference

"I recently heard the story of an Alaskan named Monty Dickson who taught English at Yonesaki Elementary School as part of the JET program. While in Japan, Monty came to love Japanese poetry, and on the morning of March 11th, he had translated a poem by Shiba Ryotaro into English, and it read: "There's nothing as beautiful as dedicating one's life for a cause." And just a few hours after writing those words, Monty Dickson was swept away in the tsunami. In fact, both of the Americans who died that day, Monty and Taylor Anderson, were teachers in the JET program. Their lives and their cause are part of the fabric of the friendship that we now share. The Dicksons, the Andersons, and the entire extended family of JET alumni have been working to help the communities that both Monty and Taylor lived in and grew to love."

4. Coverage Guidelines

- (1) The JETAA-I International Meeting will be held in the 7th Floor meeting room at the offices of CLAIR (Sogo Hanzomon Building, 1-7 Koji-machi, Chiyoda-ku). Several sessions are open to the media from 8:30 am to 10:30 am on Friday the 21st (with interviews possible immediately afterward). However, space is limited, so please RSVP.
- (2) For more information, please contact James Gannon at jgannon@jcie.org.