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Yu - Ai **Friendship**

The Newsletter of World Friendship Center
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Pieces of our Hearts

Kent Sweitzer

In seems as though we arrived in a jet-lagged fog – overwhelmed by the apprehension and uncertainties of what lay ahead. How would we know what to teach, to say, to order when eating out, what not to say? Would we be able to pronounce so many new names correctly and remember them - might we remember *any* of the Japanese we had studied, read *anything*? What if we can't do what's expected or if we become ill or injured? It had been 31 years since we last visited Akita Prefecture in Northern Japan, staying with Sarah's host family from her 4-H Teen Caravan program- the Suda family. Would we be able to reconnect with them?

The journey from the very first day of arriving has been both intense in tangibles and intangibles, often as though time were put on hold and frozen and then suddenly accelerates into warp speed – where did that month go? What day is it? Will it ever stop raining? How many guests this morning for breakfast? Did you remember that today is plastic recycling and Mutsumien (Hibakusha Nursing Home visit)? Thousands and thousands of guests e-mailed or phoned, journeyed to the WFC, checked in, slept, ate, talked, shared stories and opinions and then, as we all do, continued on their journeys. Often in a blur of low and high energy and emotions – we laughed and cried and sometimes wondered exactly what it is we were doing here(?)



Above photo: Chizuko san reads "thank you" to Hideki san at Farewell

At times, nearly overwhelmed with routine tasks, many long meetings, packed schedules, maintenance and new projects and programs and at other times lonely for something familiar from that “other world” that had become “too ordinary” and “predictable” it too begged an answer for – “what are we doing with our lives?” Knowing that we all are on our own journeys; we are thankful for having shared this portion of our shared path with each and every one of you. “Life-changing” is not a wholly adequate phrase because all of life is changing – we only need to look at our Hibakusha and Barbara to understand how beyond our best laid plans and dreams something else awaits – begging us to take a closer look and take a few paths less traveled.

The love humans have for each other is a more powerful universal force than all of the weapons on the planet. Our hearts and souls have been altered in a way that cannot be explained. WFC’s family of students, volunteers, members and staff has provided us with such overwhelming generosity that it brings tears. Part of what makes us uniquely human is unbounded joy and heartfelt sadness – that part of the journey where our paths depart for yet another continuation into the unknown. We know that we leave behind pieces of our hearts and take with us all that we shared and learned – that part of



our lives when we lived, worked together, learned together, laughed and cried together and shared our love together at the World Friendship Center, Hiroshima, Japan. ***Above photo: Tsubasa kun, neighbor, brings flowers to Farewell***

Imagine

Kent Sweitzer

The song “Imagine” by the late John Lennon seems to be one of the most popular and enduring here in Japan. There are some themes contained within the verses that are also interwoven into the story of WFC – that we need to look beyond a world which has borders, historical conflicts, and divisions or disputes over what religion is “best”, while striving for a vision that all of the people on the planet want to live in peace. Woven into Barbara’s inspiration is the message that we too should be inspired to share our talents and possessions while believing that there is “no need for greed or hunger” and to continue to “Imagine all the people sharing all the world”. Imagine a World Friendship Center with educators, artists, authors, interns, students, web designers, calligraphers, musicians and others – teaching, learning and sharing their gifts to bring the world closer. Imagine partnerships and inter-generational exchanges with other Asian countries that extend the friendly “person-to-person” connections that Barbara encouraged. Imagine vibrant and purposeful peace education with young students at universities and colleges that builds upon the foundation for a world that learns to value cooperation over conflict, soft power over nuclear weapon power, friendship over force, and volunteers over violence.

Imagine World Friendship Centers around the world, each with their own uniqueness and personality, combined with the interwoven tapestry of connecting with other volunteers and travelers while sharing staff and ideals freely and openly. Imagine if Barbara could change so much of our world with her inspired determination and limited resources what all of us together could accomplish. Just Imagine.

Written in the early morning light and gentle delta breeze of Barbara's Room, 2nd floor Villa Suites – a new space for creative learning and celebrations at the WFC, Hiroshima, Japan, prepared by WFC volunteers working together.

Photo to Right: Morishita Sensei, Chairman, WFC and Calligrapher



Introducing Ron & Barb Siney WFC Directors May 2009 – May 2011



World Friendship Center (WFC)'s tradition of passing the torch to two Directors continues this mid-May with the welcoming of Ron and Barb Siney from Tipp City (near Dayton) Ohio. Ron and Barb retired early and decided to volunteer with Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) into the foreseeable future including their last two assignments prior to coming to WFC.

They have volunteered 13 months at the Alderson Hospitality House (AHH) in West Virginia followed by a six (6) month project at Camp Brethren Wood and Retreat Center, Virginia. They also encouraged and promoted older adults to serve in BVS over a region which included Shenandoah Virginia and Southern Pennsylvania. Barb & Ron's experiences are well suited for the varied roles of WFC Directors with Barb having been a teacher of mathematics, drafting skills and assignments in marketing and engineering departments. Barb also has an interest in movies, reading, knitting, meeting new people and learning about new places.

Above photo: Ron & Barb Siney, Volunteer Directors, May 2009 – May 2011

Ron has a host of hands-on skills having worked 35 years at several public utilities (Electrical Linemen). Sarah recalls that during our BVS training, when Ron and Sarah worked on the same meal team that Ron was even accomplished in food preparation skills in the kitchen. While his interests have changed over the years he now enjoys being challenged by new assignments, reading, walking and watching old moves



Ron and Barb share a blended family of five children and journeys of having lived at different locations in the USA from Arizona and California to Ohio and recently West Virginia and Virginia and next, Hiroshima, Japan.

Ron & Barb Siney, Sarah, Kent with Naomi Kurihara, Staff & Yamashitas

In the tradition of WFC they are assured of a warm welcome and sincere and heartfelt appreciation as they begin orientation at the WFC shortly after arrival on May 11th, 2009. This marks the 44th continuous year of a unique experiment in "Building Bridges of International Understanding" while living, teaching, serving and connecting with others from around the world.

Photo Right: Ron & Barb, Volunteer Directors were greeted at the station by the Yamashitas & Asaka san



Wilmington College- WFC Summer Internship Abbey Pratt-Harrington



Abbey Pratt-Harrington, the first Wilmington College – WFC Summer Intern will arrive on May 13th during the same week as Ron and Barb Siney. Abbey is a Junior majoring in International Studies with two minors – one in History and the other in Religion and Philosophy. She especially enjoys reading, travel and learning about different cultures.

The Internship is intended to strengthen relations and enhance communication between the World Friendship Center and Wilmington College by preserving Barbara’s legacy and re-discovering the appreciation for her inspiration both at the WFC and PRC. The hope would be that a closer partnership between WFC and PRC would help anchor the combined programs for the next generations – including Directors, Volunteers, Internships, Educators and Peace Exchanges and Programs.

Abbey’s special interests are well suited for her internship projects. Her internship projects include video recording interviews with some of WFC’s Hibakusha including those that knew Barbara Reynolds and/or traveled with her on Peace Pilgrimages in 62 and 64, as well as recollections of Tomin Harada (1912-1999), the first Chairman of the WFC(who also knew Barbara). There is also a significant amount of personal correspondence and photographs (here at the WFC and in personal collections) that will be preserved via scanning and uploading to the PRC library and linking to the WFC website. Her WFC Intern coordinators are Kaori Kurumaji and Michiko Yamane, Ron and Barb Siney, along with Charlotte Pack of the PRC. Abbey’s interviews with translation will be connected to YouTube so that her internship work can be viewed and used by thousands around the world.

Abbey will meet the extended WFC family and participate in some classes and many Hiroshima experiences including the August 6th Ceremony. She will have the opportunity to connect with the WFC-Shudo University Interns of 2008 and 2009. We know that Abbey will be welcomed warmly and will be provided all of the support she needs to learn and contribute during her summer stay at the WFC. She will be residing in the newly completed Villa Suites – her room will be the newly painted, fresh tatami and comfortable Garden View, overlooking the WFC Peace Garden – a space prepared by WFC volunteers working together.

Above photo: Abbey Pratt-Harrington

An Inspiration for the future- Being a WFC Peace Park Guide Miho Ikeda



We, the members of the Future Peace Park Guide have trained to become literally – guides in the future. Sarah san launched this new idea and provided support and encouragement for us. It was just one year ago when the newly assembled group of nine met for the first time. We formed a petit kanpai ceremony with tea –“Toast! To our Future Guide Group!” It was a nice beginning. Sarah san was so kind as she walked together with us and listened to our guides. Sometimes, during a guided tour

we would “go blank” even though our practice had been perfect. But she always said, “Wonderful! You did it! Thank you so much.” She genuinely praised us and her warm words encouraged us a great deal. **Photo: Miho san reads Farewell & thanks**

In addition to training to provide a guided tour, we also had “follow-up” meetings and visitations. For example, we visited the Kurihara Sadako Library and toured the former Bank of Japan where millions of peace cranes are stored and displayed. Each of us, reaching for a goal at our own pace, step by step, one by one, are preparing to join the Peace Park Guide group.

The night before my first solo tour I hardly slept at all – my heart was pounding. Sarah san and Kent san were so pleased to hear that I finished the tour even though I was not fully confident in my abilities. Since then I continue to “move my feet forward” with growing confidence. The Japanese translated idiom is similar to “a once-in-a-lifetime-chance”. Even though the tour takes only about one hour, I can share my thoughts of peace and share with guests. Sarah san has given us this opportunity. We continue to say “thank you” from our hearts.

Kent san and Sarah san – we must say “good bye” in a few weeks. We will never forget your gentle, cheerful and powerful minds. Kent san’s nice photography helped create a good atmosphere while Sarah san gave us excellent training. Someday, someplace - we will certainly meet again. By then we hope to be WFC Peace Park Tour Guides – we look forward to that day! We send to both of you countless “thank you” with many smiles.



Photo: Peace Park Tour Guide Group Grows

Korean PAX 2009
-the 4th Korean-Japan Peace Ambassador Exchange
Chizuko Taguchi

In the middle of April, when colorful flowers and trees with fresh green leaves are beautiful, we welcomed the 4th Peace Ambassadors from Korea. At first, this exchange program seemed somewhat awkward due to nervousness and possible miscommunications, but now we are feeling much more relaxed. Last year we visited Korea and discovered that Korean schools were frequently teaching children what Japanese had done in Korea during the colonial days. On the other hand, Japanese children have hardly learned anything about the negative aspects that happened during the war. If historical understandings are different, the two countries can only be "close geographically but will be distant otherwise". We can develop more meaningful "person-to-person" friendships in order to avoid a continuation of negative stereotypes about each other. By meeting in person, we need to learn and share together the past and present differences between some people and our countries while building on our understandings of history. Above all, young people are expected to learn together and keep trying to build peaceful relations together so as not to pass down a distorted and biased view to the next generations. Perhaps we can find better ways together to teach our children that we are all one people – independent of the past. I sincerely hope this Korean-Japan PAX will deepen our mutual understandings and strengthen the "bridge of friendship" between our organizations and our countries..



Morishita Sensei & Kyong Jung exchange greetings

Photo Right: Chizuko san & Yoon Seo share PAX Reunion smiles



Korean PAX to Japan 2009: Backrow (L-R) Kyong Jung, William Loewen, Kwang Kyu, Jung Ki, In Hee, Yoon Seo (coordinator). Seong Kyul, Seong Guk. Front Row (L-R) Eun Hae (Grace), Joo Young and Jung Hyuk.



WFC Riji Michiko Yamane and Chizuko Taguchi along with Korean PAX group meet with Nagasaki: Yasushi Tomono, Aya Ono, Yaeko Nishiwaki, Mutsuko Yoshida, Takeshi Yamakawa, Yoshiko Sekiguchi, Hiroko Takahara