



friendship force  
INTERNATIONAL

April 19, 2011

Dear friends,

The past month has been a very challenging time for all of Japan. Many people have suffered, and the rest of us have shared their grief. We watch the news every day with tears, and we listen carefully for news of the nuclear plants. This has been a huge calamity, and we could think of nothing else.

Many countries have sent wonderful messages of sympathy and encouragement to us in various ways. These will be a big help for the Japanese people on the long road to recovery. We thank you so much!

I want to tell you all that we will be fine. Now people are starting to think about the future. They are finding new places to live, going back to school, looking for work and starting to make plans to return to normal life. Many volunteers and various professionals are arriving to clean up and help in all means.

I received an email from one Japanese FF leader yesterday. He said, "We can't be depressed forever. We have friends in the world. We had to cancel all inbound exchanges this spring, but we will be back very active in the Friendship Force for the rest of the year." I was very happy to hear it.

As much as possible, we need to carry on as usual, despite the hardships we have faced. FF Noumea (New Caledonia) members have said to us, "Please come! We are preparing a busy and happy time for you." So we decided not to cancel this exchange. We will go and meet new friends. Two of our members from Miyagi, the club most affected by the disaster, will join us on this exchange. Their courage and hope are signs of the determination of the Japanese people to recover and thrive again.

We look forward to enjoying the company of our friends around the world.

In friendship,  
Tsuguyo Ishii  
Field Rep Coordinator for Japan