

Save the Children marks one year since the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami

Tokyo, March 15 2012. As the one-year anniversary of the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami drew to a close, international children's agency marked the date through a series of events to remember those children affected by the disaster.

On March 10th, a group of Save the Children staff came together to volunteer and help clear the rubble at a local children's play park outside of Sendai, Miyagi prefecture, one of the areas hit by last year's earthquake and tsunami. While the park is tentatively scheduled to re-open its doors in the coming month, rubble and trees torn down by the disaster still remain strewn across the park grounds, making it unsafe for children to play.

"It seemed to us to be the right thing to do," said Save the Children CEO Hironobu Shibuya, who volunteered with his wife and son together with other Save the Children staff. "We have heard directly from children themselves how much they need spaces to play and have fun, and we know from experience how this contributes to children's emotional and psychological recovery after a disaster."



Save the Children is implementing a five-year recovery programme to support children's longer-term recovery in the years following the disaster. The agency hosted a charity dinner Wednesday evening with its corporate sponsors to look back on the past year and report its achievements to major donors in Japan, thanking them for their continued support. As in previous years, Her Imperial Highness Princess Kiko, who is a great supporter of the activities of Save the Children attended as the guest of honor. The agency also held a lunchtime panel discussion and presentation with some of its key partners in the recovery programme, looking at innovative ways to build up partnerships between corporate sponsors and aid agencies, while highlighting the continued need for support as children and communities begin to recover from last year's disaster.

In Washington DC and Westport, Connecticut, the agency will be hosting an event for staff to remember the children who were affected by the disaster, and all those who continue to struggle today to rebuild their lives.