

Soran show with feelings of gratitude to many people – Ohdaira Soran Executive Committee (April 18, 2012)

Save the Children Japan has been contributing to creating an environment and opportunities which play a part in the educational, intellectual and social growth of children in the disaster-hit areas through sports and cultural activities under the support of Wall-Mart Stores, Inc. In Iwate Prefecture, we have supported a total of 100 organizations.

On this occasion, we supported the Ohdaira Soran Executive Committee (consisting of students from Ohdaira Junior High School in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture) in the form of covering the tour costs from Kamaishi City to Chigasaki City. On this tour, 15 students in the second grade of Ohdaira Junior High School visited Shonan Bellside, an intensive-care old people's home in Chigasaki City, and put on a *soran* (traditional Japanese folk dance) show.

Instead of just receiving support, we also want to do something to help out

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, when students of Ohdaira Junior High School were taking part in volunteer activities in shelters and temporary housing, the Ohdaira Soran Executive Committee was formed. "We want to return vitality to communities. Instead of just receiving support and doing nothing in return, we would like to start by doing the things that we can do." "We want a great many people to learn about *soran* with the intention of 'we will never give up.' If we do this, it will revitalize Kamaishi and lead to reconstruction."

We were intending to cheer people up, but instead we were the ones that were cheered up



When the *soran* performance began at Shonan Bellside, the spectators naturally started beating the time and calling out “dokkoisho” to cheer on the performers. The movements were more intense than we had imagined, but when seeing this dance with such force, vigor surged forth from the bottom in the hearts of all. “Thank you. Thank you for dancing with all your heart. Even though it was you who had really a hard time, I was energized by your dancing.” An older gentleman from Yamagata Prefecture said, “That takes me back. It brought back memories of my hometown in Tohoku.” Among the audience, there were also those moved to tears by the *soran*. The passion of the junior high school students were thoroughly shared with a great many people through the *soran*.

Interaction was deepened with elderly people

At the end of the *soran* show, one of the members said, “I danced with the intention of cheering the audience up, but actually I was the one who was cheered up. I got the feeling of ‘It was really good that we had done this!’ because we received vitality after seeing the smiling and weeping faces of those watching us.”



Ms. Sugawara, the teacher who led this tour, said, "Now we live in tough times after the earthquake, but when I see their faces, I feel that as long as there are these children, vitality will surely return to Kamaishi." On this occasion, we could see the unceasingly strong support to the children by their teachers and parents, as well as the fact that at the same time the children are being raised by the community, the children are also raising the community.

