

Feel the art and express yourself! – Drawing workshop (August 22, 2012)

Summer holiday is the busiest period for Gakudo (afterschool children' program), because during this long vacation time for students of elementary schools, children spend almost the whole day at a club while their parents are working.

In order to help these children coming to the clubs enjoy their summer holiday, with support of the Felissimo Fund and the Japan Clinical Art Association, Save the Children conducted drawing workshops in three locations in Iwate (Ofunato City, Yamada-machi and Otsuchi-cho) on July 30 and 31, 2012. On these two days, about 100 children and over 10 supervisors participated in the workshop.



By snapping off the oil pastels donated by the Japan Clinical Art Association, the pastels become a size that fits in the hands of children and so they can freely use them vertically and horizontally. Children add dots, sharpen crayons and shade off colors with fingers, saying like, “Let’s draw a line” and “Draw a spiral next.” To finish their drawing, they made a frame of their own favorite color with paper and neatly signed their name. Each child produced a unique art work of an abstract painting.



They presented their works, finding out the good points of each piece, saying like, “The color here is beautiful” and “This shape is interesting.” Children looked a little embarrassed to be praised. Drawing was not the only thing that they could learn. During the process, they could also learn the importance of praising and respecting personalities. The participating supervisors of

the children's club also commented, "I could release my stress through expression by drawing" and "I could enjoy more than the children did."



Having suffered due to the tsunami, the environment around the Gakudo has been greatly changing. What they have in common is that at each Gakudo, supervisors are making a great effort to create places for children while spaces, people and materials are limited. Particularly from this year, as the number of working mothers gradually increases, it is said that more children need to go to the club. Now the Gakudo are the second place for children to belong to. Although most supervisors have their own family, they also take care of many children at their second "home." Also, through creating an environment so that their mothers and fathers can work at ease, the clubs are playing an important role in supporting the reconstruction of their community.

Save the Children will continue our support to create an environment in which both supervisors who keep supporting families and children can lead an active life every day.