

Full of Energy in Nature: “Exciting! Konan Study Camp”

(November 27, 2012)

From May to October 2012, the Koriyama City Board of Education organized the “Exciting! Konan Study Camp”, in which children from all the elementary schools in Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture (58 schools and 18,000 students) took part in carefree and full-of-energy activities. This is a program for the children of Koriyama City to take part in a field trip that focuses on nature experiences as part of the school curriculum. This is a learning experience in Konan-machi by the shore of Lake Inawashiro where there is an abundance of nature and a relatively low level of radiation. Save the Children Japan (SCJ) provided support for the bus to Konan-machi together with the Mammy Mart Corporation, that provided cooperation through its Kizuna donation activity.

Memorial photograph with everyone in front of Mt. Bandai and Lake Inawashiro

On October 19, eight teachers and 62 children between grades 1 and 6 from Koriyama Municipal Takano Elementary School had a study camp and went to Nunobiki Plateau, where there is a wind farm for environmental studies. The learning aims decided upon by the school in this environmental study were “Let’s broaden our own world!,” “Let’s find a lot of good points!” and “Let’s make ourselves strong!”

On this day, because it was a little cold, the children rubbed their bodies and repeated, “It’s cold! It’s cold!” In the freezing wind they received hand warmers from their teachers to stave off the cold. However, when employees from the company that operates the wind farm gave a talk to the children about the mechanisms behind wind power generation, everyone listened intently with serious looks.

People from Konan district participated as volunteers in the “Exciting! Konan Study Camp” and taught the children about the history of Konan-machi and wind power generation. The employees who explained wind power generation to the children also worked with this program on a volunteer basis.



A child asked, “Why has that windmill over there stopped?,” and the employee replied, “Because people have entered inside to inspect it.”



This magnificent windmill is about 100 meters tall including its blades

After learning about wind power generation, there was a walk rally to let the children move their bodies as much as they wanted. Eight students of a range of ages were mixed together to form each group and these groups then went around the plateau with maps in their hands to checkpoints that had been marked.

Teachers were waiting at each checkpoint to issue challenges, such as singing the school song. When these challenges were completed successfully, the children could proceed on to the next checkpoint.



Walking while looking at the windmills and fields

The children who had been cold gradually warmed up by walking a lot. The sixth grade students acted as leaders and took care of the children in the lower grades while walking with sidelong glances at the windmills and fields. While saying such things as, "I'm tired" and, "Hey, where are we now?," the children somehow achieved their goals while crossing over hills, climbing steps and losing their way!



The children are walking hard with all their might toward their goal!

The children who were active with all their energy throughout the day made various comments: “We got lost on the plateau walk rally, but I enjoyed walking while looking at the windmills. I was surprised by how big the windmills are.” “Walking around the plateau was fun. The air is really clean, so I felt really good.” In addition, the teachers also gave their thoughts on the program: “Although I live in this town, this is a place I had not yet been to. It was great to be active outdoors today.” “Above all, everyone, from the first graders to the sixth graders, moving together as one is the best thing for children.”

SCJ will continue to provide support so that the children of Fukushima are able to take part in carefree and full-of-energy activities at ease.