

Let's Enjoy the Winter Break: The 2nd “Drawing Workshop”

(February 5, 2013)

Save the Children Japan (SCJ) has been providing support activities in after school childcare facilities (Gakudos) so that children affected by the earthquake and nuclear power plant accident are able to spend their time in a safe and secure environment.

SCJ held “[Drawing Workshops](#)” in Gakudo clubs in Ofunato City, Yamada-machi and Otsuchi-cho in Iwate Prefecture with the cooperation of the [Felissimo Fund \(Great East Japan Earthquake Motto Zutto Kitto Fund\)](#) and the Japan Clinical Art Association in July 2012. Following on from this, the second workshop was held in three Gakudos in Ofunato City and Kamaishi City in Iwate Prefecture, as well as four Gakudos in Aizuwakamatsu City in Fukushima Prefecture, in late December. The purpose of this activity is to allow children spending their time in these Gakudos to enjoy their winter breaks, while at the same time teaching Gakudo staff new methods of playing that they can put into practice. There was participation from 94 children and 11 Gakudo staff in Iwate Prefecture and 100 children and 16 staff in Fukushima Prefecture.



As with the previous workshop, clinical artists living in Tohoku participated as volunteers and taught drawing using the “500 Color Pencils” of Felissimo. The theme of this second workshop was “fallen leaves and stones.” This is a Felissimo color pencil program in which the colors of these pencils are added together using a “colorful puzzle” that makes you feel the season.



The children find their favorite color from selected leaves and stones, and then choose the colors they feel from there. The children choose their colors seriously while verbally anguishing with a “hmm.” There are no “mistakes” or “correct answers” in art! The children discover new colors by choosing their favorite colors and adding them together with color pencils.



The children completed their pieces with their own individuality!

The clinical artists gave the children specific praise about the good points in their works, such as “The space between this light color and here is good” and “This line looks really good.” If you use the word “skillful,” children who have not been told this word will have an awareness that they are poor at art and think they must draw more skillfully. Therefore, in art workshops, teachers place emphasis on individuality and praise so that children can enjoy freely expressing themselves. Children may be embarrassed to be praised, but everyone enjoys being praised. This also leads to improving the self-esteem of children, and cherishing individuality promotes mutual recognition.



The workshop held on December 22 in Aizuwakamatsu City, Fukushima Prefecture was on a Saturday, so parents could also take part. On this day, parents and children took on the challenge of oil pastel drawing and paper craft design. The children painted their drawings with serious looks on their faces, but their fathers and mothers worked intently with childlike innocence.

Moreover, together with the art workshop, members of the Fukushima Dodgeball Association were invited as instructors to the Gakudos in Aizuwakamatsu City to let children play ball sports inside. In cold regions like Aizu, heavy snow hinders children from playing outside as much as they would like. However, it is very important for them to move their bodies a lot in winter when there is a tendency for children to suffer from a lack of exercise.



The children started with warm-up exercises. The participants formed pairs with their feet together and then stretched their arms. There were some children who shouted “It hurts!” and “My arms don’t reach!”



The children rolled or bounced the balls.



The children and staff played bowling using PET bottles. At the end they played dodgeball and got very excited. Although there was a snowy landscape outside, everyone was sweating profusely.

The children made various comments such as: "I was glad to be able to experience using various colors." "Adding colors together was interesting." "This was the best day." "The dodgeball was fun." In addition, the Gakudo staff also gave their thoughts on the day: "The children demonstrated their individuality and that made me discover something new." "I learned how to give individual specific praise from the clinical artists." "I could see that the children were deep in concentration." "Usually, everyone produces the same kind of piece when drawing, but this time there were none alike."

SCJ will continue activities to provide support for children attending Gakudos, as well as their parents and

Gakudo staff.