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Japan earthquake survivors to travel to U.S. to learn about 9/11 and Katrina reconstruction efforts

A group of ten Japanese students adversely affected by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami will travel to the U.S. for two weeks to learn how New York and New Orleans rebuilt after disaster

TOKYO, Japan (July 27, 2012) – BEYOND Tomorrow, an organization based in Tokyo established to support youth severely affected by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, will take ten Japanese students on a trip to four U.S. cities to learn about reconstruction and city planning in the form of a two-week program in August.

The program, entitled “TOMODACHI Summer 2012 BEYOND Tomorrow U.S. Program - Reconstruction and Planning –”, is co-sponsored by the TOMODACHI Initiative, a public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S.-Japan Council. Participants of the U.S. Program will visit New Orleans, Boston, New York, and Washington D.C. to learn how the U.S. has responded to disaster, particularly 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. The two-week program will include visits to the disaster areas, as well as organizations active in ongoing reconstruction efforts.

“We believe that giving these kids an opportunity to learn from America’s example of rebuilding after Katrina and 9/11 will help them in rebuilding their own devastated communities,” said Minami Tsubouchi, co-founder and executive director of BEYOND Tomorrow.

One of the ten students is eighteen-year-old Ayaka Ogawa, who lost her parents, older sister, and grandmother to the disaster. She is currently studying abroad at Leelanau School in Michigan under BEYOND Tomorrow’s High School Study Abroad program. She hopes that through the U.S. program, she will be able to communicate with 9/11 and Katrina victims to know how they are feeling years after the disaster.



“I’ve received so many opportunities from various people this past year. Someday, I’d like to become one of those people who help others,” Ogawa said.

In New Orleans, students will investigate the ongoing post-Katrina rebuilding effort by visiting organizations active in the area, such as Foundation for Louisiana and Market Umbrella. Students will learn how New York rebuilt after 9/11 by visiting organizations key to the restoration of Lower Manhattan, including the New York City Economic Development Corporation. By attending lectures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, students will learn about post-disaster reconstruction from an academic perspective in Boston. In Washington D.C., students will present what they have learned in front of various American and Japanese leaders active in politics, media, and academia .

BEYOND Tomorrow, founded in June 2011, is organized by the Global Fund for Education Assistance.



About BEYOND Tomorrow:

BEYOND Tomorrow is an educational support and leadership program aimed at nurturing young victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake, so that despite immense adversity, they do not lose sight of their hopes and ambitions and can become valuable contributors to society. It was founded in June 2011, and is organized by the Global Fund for Education Assistance.

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For further information, please see the attachment