

Living Dreams

2013 Annual Report

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Living Dreams Opening Letter

2013 Saw the 7th active year for Living Dreams, organising programs to support children of homes¹ in gaining access to more opportunities, to enrich their lives and to empower them. While we have championed many causes since the founding of Living Dreams, we will be going into 2014 with more focus on fewer activities so as to make a more lasting impact.

Our activities

What we do

Through our activities, we endeavour to provide support through the L*A*S*T programs, for long lasting impacts that go beyond day-to-day support. L*A*S*T stands for the below:

Learning: e.g. tutoring services, creative learning workshops, exam cram support, and on special/limited occasions, academic guidance counselling and scholarship support

Art: e.g. donations of supplies, access to summer camps, performances, music and art lessons

Sport: e.g. access to sports events and clinics, snowboarding lessons, adventure overnight camps

Technology: e.g. new computers and software (Digital Natives program), IT skills training

For specifics and ideas on how to offer support, read sections "2013 Donation & Partnership Support" and "2013 Core Programs."

We believe that balance in the L*A*S*T areas is important to a child's development, and areas in which extra support could be given to the children at the homes. Living Dreams is unique in that we try to provide opportunities that not even other children may have access to; for example, the Designing Artists Academy is a program designed and planned especially for the children who participate in it. We hope that through these initiatives, it will help children dream of a future that they want and are entitled to.

The Homes we work with

This year, we continued to build relationships with homes in the Kanto region (Tokyo and Kanagawa), as well as the Tohoku region. In 2013 we worked with numerous homes in Tokyo and Tohoku, homes who were keen for the support we offer. The homes we work with typically do an excellent job looking after the children, and run the institutions well. Staff members often go that extra mile with their work. However, this being said, the same time and focus for individual one-to-one mentoring and care of a strong family unit is often difficult to provide in the given environment, as the staff to child ratio is just not there. To be more specific, guidelines state that there should be a minimum of one child care staff for 5.5 children in elementary school and older (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2013).

¹ Refers to children's homes, "Jidou Yougo Shisetu". There are currently 589 homes as of October 2013 with 29,399 children (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2013) across Japan.

With our mission and the determination of our volunteers, donors and homes, we believe we can do that little bit more to bring about lasting impacts and address the finer issues.

The children at the Homes, and Living Dreams' endeavours

The children at the homes have many issues to deal with. In a survey conducted in 2009 (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2013), 53.4% of the children at the homes had been placed there after experiencing some sort of abuse. As a result, many children suffer from post-traumatic stress and other issues, often leading them to resign themselves to a mediocre life.

An increasing number of children however, do want to continue with their studies after 18 and get good jobs, but unfortunately face issues with funding and surviving on their own incomes after leaving the homes. For example, even in the case where we were able to provide a scholarship to a student, in addition to three mentors for various aspects of life and studies, the student still faced difficulties in continuing with the curriculum. With many issues overlapping, the student had to repeat the second year, after which funding for an additional year that had not been planned for became an issue.

We believe that a key issue for the children is their lack of self-confidence and motivation, which leaves them stuck where they are. Solutions include providing the children with additional guidance, skills and tools that will give them the courage to dream of a better life. Living Dreams wants to help create consistent opportunities for children to help them find inspiration, build confidence and receive critical guidance and support. We hope that the L*A*S*T programs and the positive energy and experiences from them will help shape their dreams and give them the courage to follow them through.

Our organisation

Our organisation is a small and energetic one, run by the passion and hard work of the volunteers. The core team has endeavoured to continue to support our programs, reaching out to local communities, homes, volunteers and our donors not only locally, but globally too, through the GlobalGiving project page. With the need for increased coordination for the projects, we have continued with our efforts to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Looking forward

2013 Was yet another challenging year, for the children, homes and Japan. We hope that Living Dreams' initiatives continue to provide support and positive opportunities for the children. We hope to continue working with the homes that have been eager to participate in our programs, and also to keep improving the programs that we provide. Living Dreams is indebted to all the support from the homes, donors, volunteers, friends, families, and communities, who have made it possible for us to continue our activities and growth. We look forward to working on many more programs with everyone.

Give now to make it **L*A*S*T!**

2013 Donations and Partnership Support

Our work at Living Dreams has had continued support from donors, volunteers and the community, as well as the homes. We are extremely grateful for the support from ALL around the world.

Our support primarily stems from three main sources; (1) Corporate, (2) Schools and organisations, and (3) Individual donors, channelled through either our GlobalGiving account or our Living Dreams account.

The below represent a fraction of the support our organisation's programs and the children of the homes have received, although we have not mentioned the many individual donors (such as the donations through GlobalGiving or under individual names) who have supported us and helped raise funds for our mission and for the children:

- American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ)
- Asahi Beer
- Barclays
- Bulgari
- Costco
- ELT
- FedEx (2013 distribution partner)
- Give2Asia
- GlobalGiving (US and UK)
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Japanese American Citizens League(JACL)
- Japan America Society Indiana
- Japan American Society Southern California
- Kemin Japan KK
- Petit Bateau Japan
- Ritz-Carlton Midtown
- Shinsei Bank
- Symantec Corp.
- Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund
- Temple University Japan
- Tokyo International School Students and PSA
- Tony Bloom Foundation
- Tokyo Mother's Group
- White and Case LLC

2013 Program Highlights

Fukushima Support Program

Donor: JASSC (Japan American Society of Southern California)

(1) Donation: ¥ 5,200,000 / WAGON CAR & FIELD TRIP PROJECT

A home was in need of a station wagon car to be able to transport the children to the facility's location at the top of the hill. The number of children with mental illnesses (ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, autism) enrolled in the home is increasing, and it helps a lot for the children who need medical care (clinic, hospital, dental, etc.). The children also had summer trips and summer camp funded, as well as the Christmas Wish Program.

(2) Donation: ¥ 4,200,000 / RADIATION REMOVAL PROJECT

After the nuclear disaster, radioactive cesium that fell into the soil and formed micro granules, was carried by water to areas with lower ground levels to create hotspots. When left untreated, these granules accumulate to measure a few microsieverts, making that area dangerous for children. Furthermore, due to the concentration of heavy rain caused by the abnormal climate during the past few years, large amounts of soil and sand had been washed away, gradually exposing areas with high

levels of radiation. The areas of radiation that were covered during the last project had begun to be exposed again.

JASSC supported with costs related to planting, sandbagging, concreting in the surrounding playground, and drainage pipes to decrease radiation emission in the facility and playground, which resulted in an effective drainage system, guarding the inner playground from radioactive elements, thereby providing a safe living environment.

Mirai no Mori/Tohoku Home Camping Programs

Donor: Kemin, GlobalGiving, Asahi Beer, ELT, Taylor Anderson

Donation: ¥ 3,300,000

Funding for students to attend summer and snow camps. These are programs which have over 60 participants. Comments from Staff: "As staff, we were able to witness first-hand the changes in the children's character and behaviour as they enjoyed the camp. We saw new sides to them develop in all sorts of ways. I want to continue to support, encourage and mentor these children from now on by building on their experiences and discoveries at this camp." *Voices from Campers* "Thanks to this camp I was able to make friends with people from other children's homes that I would normally not get the chance to meet. It was amazing. I made so many great friends at the camp and I feel really grateful for this. Thank you very much!" (from Mirai no Mori Annual report)

Tutoring Support Program – Fukushima Prefecture

Donor: Tony Bloom Foundation

Donation: ¥ 1,200,000

Tutoring fees were funded for students in Tohoku for one year. This was mainly focused on junior high school students. We received the good news that all the junior high school students passed the exams for the high schools of their choice.

Learning Support-Iwate Prefecture

Donor: Global Giving

Donation: ¥ 200,000

This home is located in an area seriously affected by the tsunami. While all of the children and staff were safe, many of their family members, relatives and friends were sadly victims. Since the disaster, Living Dreams has provided this home with material support, camp programs, gifts during the Christmas season, and learning support programs.

As is the case in many children's homes, the decline in academic performance is a serious problem at the home. Many homes tackle this issue with the help of student volunteers from their local universities. This home used to have regular volunteers as well. Since 3/11, as the railway lines remain out of service, their local station is still closed, which made it difficult for them to secure

consistent student volunteers. As a result, Living Dreams teamed up with a local cram school and arts program, providing kids with learning programs for those needing to improve basic academic skills, as well as a special calligraphy program for those children who face intellectual disabilities.

As a result, 75% of the children have improved their results, and all 5 junior high school children passed high school entrance tests this past March! Home staff members have also noticed that children are taking more notes in school, which means their focus levels in the classroom are improving! The children who attended calligraphy class were commended for their achievements in front of many people, which truly boosted their confidence. Instructors noticed how the children enjoyed each session, developing a sincere interest in this old tradition.

2013 Core Programs

Living Dreams follows the L*A*S*T principles, and plans, organises and coordinates various initiatives, with support from the homes, children, communities and donors. The programs have had much positive feedback from the participants, having given children and those who participated, a great opportunity and experience. We hope that they will translate into good memories and food for thought for the children's future.

The below is not an exhaustive list, but provides details of a few of our core programs.

1. Designing Artists Academy [Arts]

Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barclays - Herbert Smith Freehills - Shinsei Bank - Tokyo International School - Tokyo Club - Costco - DRI - Global Giving - DAA artists, consultants, volunteers
Overview and Feedback	<p><u>Number of homes / children involved:</u> 4 homes / 40 children</p> <p><u>Costs / Resources:</u> 1,650,000 JPY</p> <p><u>Overview:</u> Working with talented local and international artists, sessions are developed for various age groups. General sessions and workshops include; dance, yoga, cheer dance, photography, painting, fashion design, sketching, crafts, cooking, flower arrangement, and collage. Upon completion of the camp, children have the unique opportunity to celebrate their participation at Designing Artists Academy with an evening designed especially for them. Together artists, volunteers and children have a chance to share their work and experiences from the camp.</p> <p><u>Feedback:</u> <i>"Some of children were crying when they returned to their home after the reception. They cried because the camp was over, and they missed all their friends and the volunteers already."</i> (Home staff)</p> <p><i>"I am very grateful for the opportunity to join such a great initiative. It has proven to be a turning point for me, in that it has given me new goals and aspirations for my photography career. The experience has given me guidance towards what I want to do, including revelations on what I like and what I am not so good at. The children at the homes may feel some awkwardness or discomfort towards society. However, I hope that these pure hearted and kind children will charge ahead into their futures with confidence, knowing that what they feel, whether it be good or bad, is based on their experience. I hope that they will be able to differentiate between happy and sad events, and grow up to be able to feel and</i></p>

	<p><i>enjoy others' happiness as their own. I would like the children to hold their heads up high and make the most of their individual characters. Children are our world's gift. I hope that I will be able to meet them again and enjoy some exciting times together."</i> (Volunteer – Artist)</p> <p><i>"Prior to participating as a volunteer at the camp, I was not exactly fond of children, but my opinion has changed 180 degrees after spending time with the children at the camp. It seems that my thinking of being bad with children had unconsciously built up inside me with the lack of opportunity to be with children. Going ahead, I believe that I can be more sympathetic with children, even though they may be screaming their heads off."</i> (Volunteer)</p> <p>2014 Needs: We require funding, volunteers to help run the program, professionals to take part as teachers in the workshops, and goods (such as food and drinks). We also aim to provide an exhibition for the children's completed art works, and therefore provision of show spaces and party funding would be fantastic.</p>
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2. "Digital Natives" Technology Initiatives [Technology]

Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barclays - General funding - JASI - Individuals
Overview and Feedback	<p>Number of homes / children involved: 7 homes</p> <p>Costs / Resources: 3,000,000 JPY</p> <p>Overview: Digital Natives is a program that purchases and installs NEW computer labs at our network of children's homes based on specific needs. In general this computer lab includes per home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •5-10 new computers and computer racks •1-5 colour printers •Internet Service Provider installation •Software and security tracking/filters •IT tutorials, skills training <p>IT skills have become a valuable capability in our society today. This program aims to provide children with the opportunity to become used to the technology. Additionally, providing access to the internet can be a viable tool for children to communicate, explore and learn. With proper guidance, positive experiences can occur when children connect with those from other cultures around the world.</p> <p>A key component of the program is providing the children and staff with IT tutorials and skills training. Dividing the children into small groups, lessons are provided to cater for different levels of IT literacy. We hope that with the hardware and also these tutorials, the homes and children will be able to make the most of the program.</p>

	<p>Feedback: <i>“The program benefited not only the children in the program, but the home as a whole, in that they have five new computers that can be used by all residents, not just the participants in the program. The children now are equipped with new skills that they can use in their own lives and pass on to others in the home.”</i> (Coordinator between the home and donor)</p> <p>2014 Needs: Constant funding for the Digital Natives programs, as we aim to provide children at all the homes we have contact with, with basic technology and internet access.</p>
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3.Christmas Wish Program

Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taylor Anderson Memorial Fund - Tokyo Mother’s Group - White and Case LLC - Barclays - GlobalGiving - Andy Anderson -JASSC -JASI -T.R. with fellow employees at JP Morgan Chase
Overview and Feedback	<p>Number of homes / children involved: 9 homes (5 in Kanto and 4 in Tohoku)</p> <p>Costs / Resources: 2,646,373JPY</p> <p>Overview: The holiday season can be a very difficult time for the children in children’s homes. Our Christmas Wish Program is a unique program to make the holiday season rather fun and full of love for those children. Many homes appreciate this extra budget for Christmas presents and holiday foods for a party, while the children always enjoy time together with the volunteers.</p> <p>Feedback: <i>“Although our Christmas Wish Program was limited because of budgets and sponsors, we are very pleased to see some continuing and closer relationship between corporate donors and homes through this program. We are also glad to match our new donor with a home which was very successful to both companies. Our new donor had a great time spending time with children at Christmas party and they are interested in raising money again for 2014.”</i> (Christmas Wish Program Leader)</p> <p>2014 Needs: We probably be able to continue this program by matching donor with home and assisting donors by making contacts and finding needs with home.</p>

Opportunities and Benefits

Living Dreams is a small organisation, but continues to be built and driven by the big warm hearts and energy of the volunteers. Moreover, it is powered by the amazing communities, donors and volunteers who pose interest in our organisation and mission. Donors or partners, include individuals, corporations, other NPOs and business organisations. Our aggregate efforts have enabled us to continue programs for the many children's homes in Tokyo and the Tohoku region. This has helped us initiate programs based on our L*A*S*T principles, which we strongly believe can help brighten the children's future, by helping them with their self-confidence and empowering them. However, in order to increase the scale and impact of our relations and initiatives, we require increased funding and volunteer coverage. With this, we hope not only to strengthen our programs and outreach, but also to increase social awareness and exposure related to our cause.

Opportunities to support our programs include an individual's time and sometimes his/her special expertise. We also look for product donations (e.g. clothing, computers, sporting goods, musical instruments, etc.), as well as donations of special services for these children (e.g. tutoring, mentoring, lessons, coaching, etc.). Finally, we also rely on funding through grants, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events, and individual donations. We strive to communicate with our donors as many times as required, in order to ensure that the resources are effectively used, and used for a program that meets the needs of the homes.

Key focus areas for 2014

This year, our key programs will be the following:

- Designing Artists Academy
- Digital Natives
- Christmas Wish

Our focus regions will continue to be Tokyo and Tohoku.

For other specific examples of needed support across the L*A*S*T* categories, please review the "2014 Core Programs" section of this report and visit our 'Take Part' page at www.livingdreams.jp.

Organisation Overview

URL: www.livingdreams.jp

Founder: Patrick Newell (also co-founder of Tokyo International School)

Number of children's homes in our core network (as of end March 2013): 28 homes

Number of core volunteers (as of end March 2013): 10

Leader: Yukie Takei

Director of Partnerships in 2014: Michael Clemons

email: michael@livingdreams.jp

Target # of new volunteers for 2014: 5 - 10

Current volunteer needs: Please see our website for up to date volunteer needs
www.livingdreams.jp