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**JAPAN
SOCIETY**

**TOMODACHI Initiative
Youth Baseball Exchange**

August 2 – 12, 2013

San Diego, California



**JAPAN
SOCIETY**

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We offer our sincerest gratitude to our local corporate sponsor, **Little Mendelson P.C.**, for providing critically important funding for all three Major League Baseball games.

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Ten San Diego families opened their homes and hearts to the ten visiting players and two coaches from Ofunato: **Bonnie & Ross Alexander, Mark Bialock, Pam & Jesus Covarrubias, Colleen & Michael Ferrell, Sue & Ed Earl, Janet & John Engle, Teresa & Victor Liong, Kathie & Robert Lovato, Denise & Rich Strang, and Chris Viegas**.

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We offer our special thanks to the **San Diego Padres**, especially **Chelsea Dill**, who provided discount tickets to two Padres games for the entire group, a first-pitch opportunity for Yudai Chida, and pre-game exchange recognition for all players on the field.

The San Diego Zoo and SeaWorld San Diego each donated 25 tickets for our group, providing for a great day at each of these world-famous San Diego attractions.

Finally, **Takatoshi Oda** from **Japan Airlines** assisted with all flight arrangements and airport service.

Collaborating Organizations & Participants

Corporate Sponsors

Toyota Motor Corporation
Mitsubishi Corporation
Hitachi, Ltd.
Littler Mendelson P.C.

Baseball-related Organizations

San Diego Padres
Anaheim Angels
Tierrasanta Little League
Damato Field

Ofunato Players

Kiwamu Chida
Yudai Chida
Kai Furuuchi
Yasuki Hirata
Shuya Ishikado
Yosuke Kikuchi
Hikari Konno
Kazuteru Kumagai
Suguru Maeno
Yoshito Sasaki

San Diego Players

Chris Alexander
Andrew Bialock
Kevin Covarrubias
Evan Earl
Jonathan Engle
Connor Ferrell
Nick Liong
Adam Lovato
Landon Strang

Ofunato Coaches

Ryuei Sato
Akihiko Shirasaki
San Diego Coaches
Mark Burdick
Dave Tuites
Volunteer Umpires
DJ Viegas
Tanner Kauffman

Government & Non-Profit Organizations

U.S.–Japan Council
U.S. Department of State
National Association of Japan-America Societies
City of Ofunato
City of San Diego

Community Organizations

SeaWorld San Diego
San Diego Zoo



Executive Summary

In March of 2011, the city of Ofunato in northeastern Japan was devastated by an earthquake and tsunami. In 2012, the TOMODACHI Initiative was created to encourage and promote youth exchanges between northeastern Japan and the United States in order to build strong and lasting bonds of friendship and peace. The Japan Society of San Diego and Tijuana (JSSDT) was privileged to host a team of middle school baseball players from Ofunato in August of 2013 as part of this important initiative.

The TOMODACHI Initiative Youth Baseball Exchange received major financial support from the Toyota Motor Corporation, Mitsubishi Corporation and Hitachi Ltd. Littler Mendelson P.C., the U.S.-Japan Council, the U.S. Department of State, the National Association of Japan-America Societies, the San Diego Padres, Japan Airlines, the City of Ofunato, and the City of San Diego also provided financial and/or logistical support. The primary purpose of the exchange was to provide an intercultural experience for American and Japanese youths and to encourage them to learn more about each other and their respective cultures through the game of baseball. The JSSDT has been involved with baseball exchanges between Japan and San Diego since 2006, and these exchanges have changed the lives of all participants in very positive and lasting ways.

Ten Japanese baseball players along with two coaches were selected to participate in the exchange by the City of Ofunato. The selection criteria included baseball skills and an interest in intercultural experiences. Ten American baseball players were selected from San Diego by the JSSDT. The JSSDT selected players with above average baseball ability from families that were willing to host the Japanese boys for eight days in San Diego and allow their sons to travel to Japan the following summer. The character of the San Diego players and their families was considered to be more important than mere baseball ability in order to ensure a positive home stay experience for the Ofunato players. The Japanese players stayed in pairs with five host families for the entire duration of their stay in San Diego. Players and home stay families participated in nearly all of the program's activities together. Baseball practices or games were held on most days and five major activities were held during the week.

The first year of the TOMODACHI Initiative Youth Baseball Exchange was a great success, with players from both countries making new friends and learning about each other's customs and lifestyles while competing in baseball, a sport so popular and important to the traditions and histories of both the United States and Japan. We look forward to continuing the successes of this important program in 2014 in Ofunato.

Baseball Practices & Games

One practice was held at Tierrasanta Elementary School in preparation for the three games. Two of the three games were played with mixed Japan – USA teams as the level of the Ofunato players was slightly higher than that of the San Diego players..



Games were very competitive and the players demonstrated great sportsmanship.



Home Stays

Home Stays

August 2 - 10, 2013 in San Diego



The busy schedule for the entire week required extraordinary commitment and tremendous energy on the part of the volunteer host families. The home stays were by far the most memorable experiences for both the Japanese and American players, as well as for the host families. Three BBQ/Pool parties were held during the exchange.



The program was extremely fortunate to have ten very committed host families who provided constant care for their Japanese guests. Each day, host families drove players to the baseball games and activities and took them on shopping and beach excursions as well.

Angels vs. Rangers at Angel Stadium



Two Padres Games at Petco Park



San Diego Zoo & SeaWorld



Quotes from participants

“It was a life changing experience that will stay with me forever.”

“Thanks for such a wonderful experience. It was the highlight of our year. In that short week, our boys developed such a tight bond with our guests. They had tears in their eyes when they left and keep saying how much they miss them. We would definitely participate again as a host!”

I - Program Format Summary

Program Title: TOMODACHI Initiative Youth Baseball Exchange

Program Time frame: August 2 - 12, 2013

Location: San Diego, CA, USA

Participants: 10 Ofunato players, 14 to 15 years old

9 Tierrasanta players, 12 to 15 years old

30 host family and participating family members

2 Japanese coaches

2 San Diego Coaches

2 Volunteer umpires

2 JSSDT staff, volunteers, and interns

Collaborating Companies and Organizations: 15



9 | Appendix II – Schedule

Fri, August 2	Morning	Depart Ofunato
	Afternoon	Arrive San Diego
	Evening	Welcome Party at Viegas Home
Sat, August 3	Morning	Baseball Practice at Tierrasanta Elementary School
	Afternoon	Free time with host families
	Evening	Padres vs. Yankees at Petco Park
Sun, August 4	Morning	Game 1 at Damato Field
	Afternoon	Free time with host families
	Evening	BBQ/Pool Party at Strang Home
Mon, August 5	Morning	San Diego Zoo
	Afternoon	San Diego Zoo
	Evening	Free time with host families
Tue, August 6	Morning	Game 2 at Damato Field
	Afternoon	Free time with host families
	Evening	Japanese Community Night at Petco Park Padres vs. Orioles – First Pitch and Pre-Game Ceremony
Wed, August 7	Morning	Free time with host families
	Afternoon	Tailgate Party at Angels Stadium in Anaheim
	Evening	Angels vs. Rangers Game at Angels Stadium
Thu, August 8	Morning	Sea World
	Afternoon	Sea World
	Evening	Free time with host families
Fri, August 9	Morning	Game 3 at Damato Field
	Afternoon	Free time with host families
	Evening	BBQ Party and Farewell at Earl home
Sat, August 10	Morning	Depart San Diego
Sun, August 11	Evening	Arrive Tokyo
Mon, August 12	Morning	Arrive Ofunato
