

TOMODACHI Initiative Youth Baseball Exchange – Ofunato & San Diego

Program Summary

Dates: July 31 – August 9, 2014

Locations: Tokyo, Sendai, and Ofunato

Participants: 10 Middle School & High School baseball players

Chris Alexander, Andrew Bialock, Kevin Covarrubias, Evan Earl, Jonathan Engle
Connor Ferrell, Nicholas Liong, Adam Lovato, James Reece, Luke Reece

4 Adult Chaperones/Coaches/Photographers/Interpreters

Mark Burdick, Kathy Lindley, Keiko Suzuki, Dave Tuites,

7/31 Parents drove the group to LAX for the Singapore Airlines flight to Tokyo Narita at 3:45pm

8/1 Arrived at Tokyo Narita Airport

Picked up JR East passes and exchanged money, checked into the Narita Excel Hotel Tokyu

8/2 Breakfast buffet at the hotel, Narita Express train to Tokyo Station, Shinkansen to Sendai Station, checked into the Hotel Metropolitan Sendai

Toured Miyagi Baseball Stadium, met with Rakuten Eagles foreign players on the field, attended the Rakuten Eagles/Seibu Lions baseball game, bought breakfast foods at a convenience store on the way home

8/3 Breakfast in hotel rooms, boarded a highway bus for Ofunato

Arrived in Ofunato, welcome reception/lunch at the Physical Education office, met and went home with host families to change for baseball practice

Baseball practice in the afternoon, attended welcome BBQ party in the evening

8/4 Baseball practice in the morning with “Bobby V Baseball Camp,” participated with players from Ofunato
~ and Connecticut, community service projects in the afternoon, home stays at night

8/6 Toured the “Miracle Pine” area in Rikuzentakata on 8/4

Met with Ryori Middle School students for a presentation about their 3.11 experiences on 8/5

Toured Ofunato Bay by sailboat to see the construction of the new seawall and to hear stories of 3.11 on 8/6

8/7 Baseball tournament round robin games

~ Attended Tanabata Festival on the evening of 8/7

8/8 Attended farewell BBQ party on the evening of 8/8

8/9 Farewell reception at the Physical Education Office, boarded a highway bus for Mizusawaesashi Station, Shinkansen to Tokyo Station, Narita Express train to Narita Airport, departed on Singapore Airlines at 7:15pm

Arrived LAX, parents picked up their kids for the 2+ hours drive home to San Diego

This was an incredible experience for players and adults in so many ways. The kindness and generosity of all Ofunato residents was inspiring and truly appreciated. Learning about 3.11 first-hand and through the stories of those who were there was powerful. Baseball was the framework and common language for the program, and our boys were fortunate to participate in the “Bobby V Baseball Camp” with both Japanese and American players. We look forward to hosting the good people of Ofunato in San Diego next year, and to returning to Ofunato in 2016.