

# PEACE BOAT GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS

MARCH 2012 UPDATE • PEACE BOAT DISASTER RELIEF VOLUNTEER CENTER

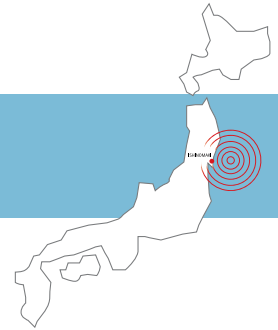


**PEACE  
BOAT**

- An NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
- Peace Boat US 501c3 registered non-profit organisation



# GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI



On March 11, 2011, at 2:46pm, a magnitude 9 earthquake struck off the Japanese coast at a depth of 24km, triggering a catastrophic tsunami that laid waste to swathes of the Tohoku region. 433 sq km of land were inundated by a wave that reached 30 meters in height, sweeping across cities, villages and farmland. In what is considered to be Japan's worst humanitarian disaster since WWII, approximately 23,000 people were killed or registered missing, and around 500,000 more were displaced. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant was severely damaged during the disaster, resulting in the worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl, which plunged the damaged country into a state of nuclear emergency. The survivors face the monumental task of rebuilding their lives in the damaged area.

Great effort has been made to ensure the recovery of Tohoku. In the year since the disasters struck, improvements are evident; evacuation shelters have closed, businesses are reopening and farms and fisheries are restarting their operations. However, in spite of the many successes, some areas have barely changed since March 11. The media coverage of this issue has declined significantly, but the needs of those affected have not similarly diminished. This humanitarian crisis is not yet over, and the people of Tohoku will continue to need local, national and international help if the area is to truly recover.

This sign reads:  
"Gambarou! Ishinomaki"  
– "Let's hold on!  
Ishinomaki"  
Photo: © 37 Frames  
Photography





## MISSION STATEMENT

Peace Boat's mission has been to provide immediate emergency relief and support for the long term social and economic recovery of the Tohoku region, focusing on the city of Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture and its environs. Peace Boat works in consultation and partnership with local communities, responding to their situation and needs, enabling and empowering them as part of the recovery process. Peace Boat's operations focus on the training and deployment of volunteers in the belief that volunteers can provide essential support in the physical regeneration of Tohoku, and that the human solidarity they provide is a vital factor in a comprehensive recovery of the region.

## PEACE BOAT IN TOHOKU

Within a week of the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake, Peace Boat had established a presence in Ishinomaki, one of the most badly affected towns in Tohoku. Peace Boat began emergency programs to deal with the unprecedented disaster, deploying hundreds of volunteers to provide hot meals, distribute relief goods and clear mud. In Ishinomaki Peace Boat continues to work in close collaboration with the local community, the authorities and other NPOs active in the region. Specifically, Peace Boat works in partnership with the local, prefectural and national governments; the Social Welfare Council of Ishinomaki; the Ishinomaki Disaster Recovery Assistance Council (IDRAC); the Mayor's Office; and the Japan Self Defense Force. With its commitment to continued assistance in the area, Peace Boat is in the process of establishing a permanent volunteer base in Ishinomaki.



Photo: © 37 Frames Photography



Ishinomaki - Photo: Yoshinori Ueno



Map of the epicenter of the March 11 earthquake

## PEACE BOAT IN DISASTER RELIEF

Founded in 1983, Peace Boat is a Japan-based international non-governmental and non-profit organization that works to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment. Peace Boat began its disaster relief work following the Kobe earthquake of 1995, and since then has provided disaster relief support in Japan and around the world. Following the Great East Japan earthquake, Peace Boat established the Peace Boat Relief Volunteer Center (PBV), to focus on emergency relief and long term support for the people of Tohoku.



# PEACE BOAT'S RESULTS: 2011

**Over 53,387 days**  
of individual labour donated from  
people from **52** countries



**PEACE  
BOAT**

17 March – 31 December, 2011



**1,900** homes, businesses and other  
structures cleaned

Hot meal provision (26 locations):  
Total: more than 110,000  
hot meals distributed



Distributed over 1,780 tonnes of relief supplies in  
and around Ishinomaki

**Temporary housing support**  
Peace Boat volunteers reach 4,047  
temporary houses in Ishinomaki  
every week to provide both physical  
and psychosocial care to the residents



Supported the recovery of the fishing industry in  
Ogatsu and Ojika peninsula with **10,235**  
volunteer working days over 154 days

**Worked at 60** evacuation centers removing bed  
bugs, providing bathing services, drying mattresses



## THE REOPENING OF THE MORIYA FRUITS SHOP



The Moriya Fruits shop

On April 13, Moriya Fruits shop, a family business founded in 1931, became the first shop in Ishinomaki to reopen after the disaster. It took 45 volunteers weeks to remove the mud and debris from the building and make the shop operable again. The biggest transformation, however, was seen in the owner. After the tsunami destroyed the shop he had inherited from his parents, he could see no future for himself. He described himself as 'despondent' at the losses he had suffered and the enormity of the task in front of him. That all changed once the Peace Boat volunteers got to work. 'Seeing the efforts the volunteers put into the clean-up operations acted as an impetus for us,' the owner recalls. 'We wanted to re-open our shop, and do it fast! With the road to recovery being so long, it seems that many people are succumbing to despondency now... therefore we felt it was doubly important to re-open our shop as soon as possible! Peace Boat hopes this story will inspire and motivate others in the community who might otherwise give in to despair.'

## 'THEY GAVE ME THE COURAGE AND DRIVE NOT TO GIVE UP'

Ms Sakuma Ikuko is the 7th generation of her family to own the Shinchinrou Izakaya in Ishinomaki, which has been open since 1855. However, Ms Sakuma's experiences in the tsunami made her reluctant to return to her business. She has vivid memories of the tsunami waves and the terrible screams of people swept along by them. Ms Sakuma rescued one person, who was miraculously able to climb into the third floor of the building, where Ms Sakuma used the curtains from the restaurant as a makeshift blanket for the survivor. Even now, Ms Sakuma has nightmares about the disaster. "A darkness was beginning to consume me and I didn't think I could make it through..." she said, 'but then, I saw the young Peace Boat volunteers, with their boundless energy, partaking in sludge and debris removal. They gave me courage and the drive not to give up. That is what Peace Boat gave me.'



Sakuma Ikuko, Tsunami survivor

## TOKUJI TAKAHASHI-SHOTEN FACTORY BACK IN OPERATIONS



Mr Takahashi with a volunteer

In August 2011, Peace Boat met Takahashi-san, the owner of the Tokuji Takahashi-Shoten Factory in Ishinomaki. He and his 20 remaining employees were in despair at the destruction the tsunami had wrought on the factory. They had all but given up on reopening the business, as the machines would cost 120 million yen (1.5 million dollars) to replace. Peace Boat volunteers began to work on cleaning the expensive machines that had made delicious canned foods before they were damaged on March 11. In total, 300 volunteer days were donated to this project over the period of a month. By September, the factory was ready to reopen. A small Buddhist opening ceremony was held, attended by the employees, Buddhist monks and nuns, and Peace Boat volunteers and staff. Throughout, Takahashi-san repeated in wonderment that the reopening was a "miracle", and simply "unbelievable". He had tears in his eyes as he thanked the volunteers for their hard work, and for helping him and the employees to envision a real future in Ishinomaki.

## SAVED BY A TREE

Mrs. Abe of Ishinomaki says it was an ancient persimmon tree she inherited by her grandfather that saved her family and their home when the two-metre tsunami roared through town on March 11. Nine cars were caught in its branches, avoiding collision with the house. Tragically, only one of those cars' passengers survived. After the disaster, Mrs Abe found the body of a primary school student in what was left of her greenhouse – a heart-wrenching moment she will never forget. In June a group of Peace Boat volunteers helped Mrs. Abe remove the black tsunami sludge from the house and from the soil surrounding the tree, and within weeks, the tree had started to bloom. It continues to stand as a symbol of hope and rebirth and the strength Mrs. Abe says she needs to carry on. "This persimmon tree protects our family," Mrs. Abe says. "It is like a guardian spirit."



Mrs. Abe and Peace Boat volunteers



## BEFORE AND AFTER BY KAZUSHI KATAOKA

In August 2011, photographer Kazushi Kataoka came to Ishinomaki and documented how the work of volunteers in Ishinomaki transformed the city.

April 2011



August 2011



These impressive changes are testimony to the hard work and dedication of our disaster relief volunteers. This work has helped the residents of the local communities to envision a future in Ishinomaki and to stay strong in the face adversity. However, cleaning the city is only one small step towards the full recovery of Ishinomaki, and there is still a very long way to go.

## SOLIDARITY BEYOND BORDERS: INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

The March 11 disasters resulted in an outpouring of concern, support and solidarity from around the globe, and Peace Boat was moved and honored to help channel this support to the Tohoku survivors. Volunteers, donations or other expressions of support came from 52 countries, and we send our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed. The solidarity from the international community has been truly inspiring, and has made a tangible impact on the lives of people affected by this disaster. The presence of international volunteers and support from overseas has helped the people of Tohoku understand that they do not face this challenge alone, and that the world is with them in their efforts to recover.



Peace Boat's voyages since the disaster have carried with them a photographic exhibition of the disaster "Standing Together, Standing Stronger: Thanks to the World" and the interest and support from people in ports of call has proved again and again that humanitarian concerns bring people together beyond borders.

One of the most memorable parts of the week was meeting the local people and getting to understand their situation. Talking to them, it was easy to understand how much Ishinomaki meant to them. For most it was their entire life! They fish there and farm there, and so for those that survived, the disaster pretty much destroyed the essence of their lives. For that reason the support of NGOs like Peace Boat is all the more important.

*Allan, UK*



Ambassadors of the Arab nations made a solidarity visit and donation



The delegation from GRULAC (Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries) in Ishinomaki



Sri Lanka's team of rescue specialists worked for over two weeks, earning the respect and friendship of the people of Ishinomaki

### INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS:

More than 800 volunteers from 52 different countries have spent time volunteering with Peace Boat in Ishinomaki.

### SUPPORT FROM TOKYO'S DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY

Peace Boat would like to extend our thanks to representatives of the many embassies who visited the disaster zone, aided volunteers or gave generous donations to support our work. With gratitude we recognise the support of the Embassies of Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iraq, Morocco, Nicaragua, in its capacity as representative of GRULAC, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, The United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Chambers of Commerce in Tokyo, in particular the American and British Chambers, have proved a invaluable rally-ing point for support, and we appreciate their work and the generosity of the many international businesses who have sent volunteers or donated aid.



## REGENERATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

### KAWABIRAKI FESTIVAL

In August 2011, Peace Boat worked with the residents of Ishinomaki to celebrate their annual local festival, the Kawabiraki (river opening) Festival. The event featured a "Recovery Mikoshi" (portable shrine) made from debris from the tsunami, which was carried through the bustling carnival by residents and volunteers. Live musical performances were given by local children, Japanese band KGDR and famous Enka singer Ishikawa Sayuri, and visitors were treated to a range of stalls selling local goods followed by a spectacular firework display. The festival attracted visitors to the area. There were mixed emotions about whether it was appropriate to hold this festival after the disaster and in the midst of continued suffering. However, on the day of the event there was an overwhelming feeling of togetherness as the volunteers and residents worked, laughed and wept together.



### RESPIRE AND RECOVERY: FUKUSHIMA CHILDREN'S PROJECT 2011



**Junior High School students from the town of Minamisoma in Fukushima prefecture spent a summer break visiting other Asian countries onboard Peace Boat's voyage**

*"I am very happy that my dream to make friends outside of Japan came true. There are many cheerful and kind people in Vietnam. I had fun and I want to come back again."*



This project was established to encourage the children of Fukushima, who are forced to confront the harsh realities of the nuclear accident on a daily basis, as they continue to live in a radiation affected area. Peace Boat supported them by providing both a temporary respite from radiation exposure and hope for the future. The town of Minamisoma is located just outside the evacuation zone 20 kilometers from the devastated Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant. People who remain in the town, particularly children and their parents, are under tremendous stress due to the risks of radiation exposure, and uncertainty over their health and future. Responding to requests by the town's parents for children to be able to enjoy a summer vacation away from the contamination, Peace Boat invited 49 students from 6 Junior High Schools onboard a portion of its 74th Global Voyage. The program, which featured both fun and educational activities, and visits to Vietnam, Singapore and Sri Lanka, was the first time for most of the children to go abroad. The students, who were able to unwind and play in the fresh air in contrast to being forced to remain indoors in Fukushima, thoroughly enjoyed their international interaction. A particular highlight was meeting young survivors of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in Sri Lanka, who assured the children that there was life beyond the disaster.

Following the success of the 2011 voyage, this project will be held on future Peace Boat voyages.



## ONGOING PROJECTS IN ISHINOMAKI:

### PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE PROJECTS

Peace Boat are supporting residents from over 4,000 temporary homes in Ishinomaki. The approximately 12,000 survivors, many of whom are elderly, have suffered through a traumatic experience, and are now facing rebuilding their lives far from their old homes and communities. Past disasters, such as the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake have shown that people in temporary housing complexes are particularly prone to isolation, depression and even suicide, and thus psychosocial care projects are crucial. Peace Boat's efforts include:

- Kizuna ("Bonds") newspaper: a community newsletter which provides vital information to residents about daily life and community activities. Peace Boat volunteers deliver the newsletter by hand, which provides a natural opportunity to look in on temporary housing residents, provide companionship and help monitor their situation and needs.
- Planting flowers and building benches in the temporary housing complexes with a view to stimulating community interaction and easing isolation.
- Establishing vegetable gardens for use by the local residents. Gardening is a proven treatment for stress, depression, grief and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Supporting Ishinomaki residents in holding traditional local festivals, including the Kawabiraki Festival and the Ishinomaki Light and Art Festival.



### FISHERIES SUPPORT

The principle economic activity of Ishinomaki prior to March 11 was fishing. Peace Boat's volunteers have provided volunteer manpower and support to projects including cleaning and repairing broken and lost equipment and establishing oyster farms and seaweed farms.

### TSUNAMI MUD AND DEBRIS CLEARANCE

The tsunami caused severe damage to buildings, and those that were left standing were mostly contaminated with a large amount of mud and debris. Streets, graveyards, parks and other public areas were similarly damaged. Responding to requests from the community, volunteers continue to clean the area so that the city can rejuvenate.



### MAKING CONNECTIONS: THE KIZUNA NEWSPAPER

Peace Boat's photographer, Nakamura Mitsutoshi, took part in Peace Boat's Kizuna newsletter distribution project in November 2011. Here is his story:

"I was greeted and invited to share some tea and sweets with an elderly couple, who told us the heartbreaking story of how they had lost everything in the tsunami. The elderly gentleman told me of his life before March 11, and about his work as a deep-sea fisherman. He said: 'I passed through the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal several times. The first time I passed through, it impressed me so much... but the pictures I took were all swept away.' His story was a poignant example of the horrors of the tsunami, and how awful it is to lose these precious memories. I was reminded of my own visit to the Panama Canal, and I thought how devastated I would be to lose my own precious photographs.

"The following week I paid them another visit, and gave them a framed copy of the photograph I had taken of the Suez Canal. The couple were very happy to receive the picture, and when the gentleman took great interest in the ship and my experiences, I felt a real connection. They told me they always look forward to the visits from the Peace Boat volunteers and they always enjoy their conversations. I think that the newsletter can be an important source of friendship and joy in adversity. The elderly couple wholeheartedly agreed with me."

# PEACE BOAT DISASTER RELIEF VOLUNTEER SYSTEM

Peace Boat's relief efforts centre on the deployment of volunteers. Peace Boat provides these volunteers with the training and coordination to undertake projects in Ishinomaki safely and efficiently, with sensitivity towards local residents and their needs.

Peace Boat believes that the deployment of volunteers assists both the physical regeneration of the disaster areas and the psychological recovery of the survivors.

## THE MEANING AND IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERS

volunteers have been crucial in the following ways:

### • SCALE OF WORK

Volunteers have made a tremendous difference in the number and speed of tasks which have been accomplished.

### • TYPE OF WORK

Human work has been crucial as most work could not have been done by machines. For example, mixed up in the tsunami mud are precious momentos of peoples' former lives, such as photograph albums, family documents and toys, which can only be retrieved by hand.

### • ENCOURAGEMENT AND SOLIDARITY

Survivors have been encouraged by the constant presence and hard work of volunteer teams. The volunteers are ordinary people, young and old, Japanese and non-Japanese. Their presence shows that the rest of the country and the rest of the world is standing in solidarity with the survivors through this difficult time.

### • HEALING FROM TRAUMA

Putting a traumatic experience into words is a crucial part of the recovery process for survivors. However many people who have been through this disaster feel unable to talk to their friends and neighbours as everyone who lived through the disaster has suffered. The volunteers, although they do not seek to "counsel" the survivors, have become an important part of the psychological recovery of the survivors, as they provide a safe, neutral and natural audience for people to talk about their experiences as they work alongside each other.

### • OUTREACH - SHARING THE REALITY

The testimonies of volunteers who have returned from the disaster areas, whether by blog, social media or word-of-mouth, have helped shape a greater understanding in Japan and overseas of the needs and realities on the ground. As we grow to understand more about the benefit of the volunteers' presence, we are determined to continue dispatching volunteers to work on the tasks requested by the community.

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## THE PEACE BOAT SYSTEM

Based on 28 years of experience of volunteer operations, Peace Boat believes that volunteers should be well-trained, self-sufficient and able to work with sensitivity, safety and maximum effectiveness. Peace Boat has developed and refined a system for the recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers as follows\*:

### 1) ORIENTATION

All potential volunteers attend an orientation in which they are briefed on the reality of the disaster area, safety and on the volunteer conditions and tasks. Volunteers are divided into small groups, and "Group Leaders" are appointed.

### 2) TRAINING

Those volunteers assigned as "Group Leaders" undergo a further intensive training session, covering first aid, risk assessment and management and leadership.

### 3) DEPLOYMENT

Volunteers work in closely supervised small groups on specific tasks in the disaster zone which meet the needs and desired outcomes of the local people. Tasks are assigned on a daily basis, with the strengths of the group being considered during assignment.

### 4) RETURN

Peace Boat operates a one-week dispatch system to protect the mental and physical health of the volunteers. Follow-up events are held in Tokyo, at which past volunteers are encouraged to return for a further stint if they can, and/or to recruit others to volunteer.

### 5) DEVELOPMENT

Peace Boat is working to provide training in "Volunteer Leadership" for those who have been in the field, thus developing a body of well trained leaders ready to respond to changing needs in this, or other, disaster.

*\*Note: This process may be modified for corporate or other group volunteers*



**Recruitment:** To volunteer with Peace Boat on the relief efforts please visit <http://peaceboat.jp/relief/volunteer/> for the latest information.



## INTERRUPTING THE DISASTER CYCLE: THE PEACE BOAT VOLUNTEER LEADER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Regretfully, Japan's geography means it will never be free of the threat of natural disasters - from earthquakes and tsunamis to typhoons and floods. The need for volunteers to take part in relief activities is ongoing, and it is crucial that we take steps now to ensure that the effects of future disasters are mitigated by the more rapid and effective use of volunteers.

Peace Boat began supporting the relief work in Ishinomaki from March 17, 2011. Evaluating the operation has shown that one of the biggest barriers to mobilising human resources rapidly was a lack of adequately trained individuals capable of acting in coordinating roles. Peace Boat has designed and implemented a new Volunteer Leader Training Programme to address this issue. The programme, launched on November 5, 2011, provides participants with the skill set needed to help run and manage disaster relief centers, liaise between various organizations and bodies, and manage teams of volunteers safely and effectively. Graduates of the programme will remain in contact with Peace Boat, ensuring ongoing teamwork and a rapid-response dispatch of volunteers in future disasters.



Participants of the leadership training programme in a safety briefing

Additionally, agreements are being put in place between Peace Boat and various local authorities in vulnerable areas so that the ground is already laid for deployment in the event of disaster.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Leader Training Programme lasts one week and courses are held every two weeks. They are currently only available in Japanese, but this may change in the future. For further details, or to book a place on the programme, please visit: [http://pbv.or.jp/leader\\_training.html](http://pbv.or.jp/leader_training.html).

### TYPHOON TALAS – AID IN WAKAYAMA

In September 2011, Wakayama prefecture in the south of Honshu was hit by the strongest typhoon to affect Japan in four years. Trained Peace Boat volunteers and Volunteer Leaders took part in the clean-up efforts. The damage was severe, but the area received limited aid as many of the resources had been directed to Tohoku. The typhoon demonstrated the importance of the Leader Training Programme, and the continued significance of volunteers.

"In the field, every single day counts. Local authorities and communities must re-evaluate the system of accepting volunteers. In such times of jeopardy we must come together and know what to do... One can never know when or where a natural disaster will hit, so that is why we need to create a more effective system in major cities to gather young people to provide aid in the future."

*Takano Motoyuki, Peace Boat Volunteer Leader, Wakayama 2011*



# PEACE BOAT'S HISTORY IN DISASTER RELIEF

## ABOUT PEACE BOAT

Founded in 1983, Peace Boat is an international non-governmental and non-profit organization with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The organization works to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment through global educational programs, cooperative projects and advocacy activities on global peace voyages. Our associate organization Peace Boat US is a 501(c)3 registered organization based in New York, and we have representatives in Europe, Latin America, South Asia and the Middle East. In 2008, Peace Boat Director and Co-Founder Yoshioka Tatsuya was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

## PEACE BOAT'S EXPERIENCE IN DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS

As part of our wider peace building activities, Peace Boat has carried out emergency relief operations for the past 15 years, delivering emergency assistance and raising funds, as well as coordinating the dispatch of experienced logisticians, interpreters and volunteer teams to affected areas all over the world. Peace Boat's first disaster relief efforts took place in 1995, following the Great Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe, Japan when teams of volunteers provided assistance for months supporting community access to food, water and other basic supplies as well as humanitarian support. Since then, Peace Boat has organized emergency relief support in disaster affected locations around the world, including in Turkey (Aug. 1999), Taiwan (Sept. 1999), Algeria (May. 2003), Mid-Niigata, Japan (Nov. 2004), Sri Lanka (Dec. 2004), Pakistan (Oct. 2005), in the US (Hurricane Katrina, Oct. 2005), Indonesia (Jun. 2006) and Korea (Aug. 2007).



## SUPPORT PEACE BOAT'S EFFORTS

**DONATE:** Donations can be made directly to Japan, or through Paypal via Peace Boat US: Donate online or see bank/post office transfer information at <http://peaceboat.jp/relief/donate/>

**VOLUNTEER:** Peace Boat is recruiting volunteers to assist with the relief work. Opportunities are also available for international volunteers who do not speak Japanese. Please see <http://peaceboat.jp/relief/volunteer/> for more information.



### Peace Boat Partners



For a full and up to date list of our partners and corporate sponsors, please visit our website at <http://peaceboat.jp/relief/about/supporters/>

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