

Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation

A Collaborative Program by Japan's Rotary Districts



The Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation is a scholarship foundation jointly supported by all the Rotary districts in Japan. To date, the Foundation has awarded scholarships to more than 16,000 students (Yoneyama

Scholars) from 120 countries and regions to support their study in Japan. Providing a matrix for heart-to-heart communication, the program also seeks to help the young scholars understand and emulate the Rotary spirit.

The Foundation's Scholarship Program

The Rotary Yoneyama Scholarship Program uses funds donated by Rotarians across Japan to provide scholarships to overseas students who self-finance their educations in Japan. The program's mission is to foster a large cadre of young people who, imbued with the Rotary spirit, will play active roles in international society while building bridges of understanding and cooperation between their countries and Japan. In sum, the program's goal is the same as the Rotary's—to advance international understanding, goodwill and peace.



Japan's Largest Private-Sector Scholarship Program

With approximately 800 students receiving \$15 million worth of scholarships each year (FY2010 figures), the Yoneyama Memorial Scholarship Program is the largest private-sector scholarship program in Japan. As of July

2011, a total of 16,389 students from 120 countries have received scholarship support under this program.

Creating Heart-to-Heart Understanding between Scholars and Rotarians

In addition to the financial assistance provided to Yoneyama Scholars by way of their scholarships, the program has another uniquely Rotarianesque feature: a system of *sewa* clubs (host clubs) and counselors that gives the scholars moral support and caring assistance during their tenures. Each Yoneyama Scholar is assigned



a *sewa* club chosen from among the Rotary clubs in his/her area. One member of the host club serves as the scholar's counselor, who helps to deepen the relationship between the scholar

and the club members and endeavors to make the scholar's stay in Japan a rich and rewarding experience. While imbuing the scholar with the Rotary spirit of service, the system also works to deepen the Rotarians' own understanding of the role and value of the Yoneyama Memorial Scholarship Program. For further information, see the foundation's website at <http://www.rotary-yoneyama.or.jp/>



Yoneyama Alumni in the World Today

1. Top 10 Countries or Regions of Origin for Yoneyama Scholars

1	China	4,952
2	South Korea	3,925
3	Taiwan	3,295
4	Malaysia	820
5	Vietnam	541
6	Indonesia	337
7	Bangladesh	285
8	Thailand	259
9	Sri Lanka	234
10	Nepal	165
Cumulative Total(as of July 1, 2011)		16,389

2. Number of alumni obtaining PhDs: 3,265

By country or region

1. South Korea 1,246
2. China 1,115
3. Taiwan 602

(Total number of alumni as of July 1, 2011: 5,562)

3. Clubs established centering around Yoneyama alumni

- Rotary Club of Taipei Tokai (D-3480)
Charter ceremony: April 14, 1995
- Rotary Club of Taichung Wen Shin (D-3460)
Charter ceremony: May 4, 2007
- Rotary Club of Tokyo Yoneyama Yuai (D-2750)
Charter ceremony: May 30, 2010

An Alumnus's Story: Bringing the Rotary Spirit to Palestine

The Palestinian flag appeared for the first time in the flag ceremony in June 2010 at the RI Convention in Montreal, Canada. After three decades Rotary made a comeback in this area, and the very first club chartered was located in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. One Rotary Yoneyama Alumnus by the name of Jeffrey Behr devoted himself to this accomplishment. (See "Rotary in Ramallah" on P.37-39 in the December 2010 issue of "The Rotarian")

The new club established in Ramallah, the de facto capital of Palestinian Territories, celebrated its charter ceremony on May 30, 2010. Recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow by then RI President John Kenny for his distinguished contributions beginning in the early planning stages of the club, Behr spoke to those attending the ceremony.

"During my studies at a university in Japan, I was fortunate to receive a Yoneyama Scholarship. This enabled me to complete my degree and begin my career, and it was the main motivating factor inspiring me to work to enable Palestinian youth to receive the same sort of opportunity. Now that a Rotary club exists in Ramallah, I look forward to seeing Palestinian youth have the opportunity, through Rotary, to study in Japan and elsewhere, and become active in bridging continents and building their communities."

Efforts to establish the new club were generally met with disbelief, and in such circumstances Behr played a guiding role leading toward final accomplishment. When

asked what motivated him most, he always answered, "I personally consider the generosity bestowed upon me by Japanese Rotarians as a motivating force in my life to help others in a similar manner."

Behr enrolled in the University of Tokyo Graduate School in 1992, and the next year became a Rotary Yoneyama Scholar hosted by the Rotary Club of Tokyo-Higashimurayama. "I remember well how at the meetings I attended each month members would always take time to welcome me and talk with me about how things were going for me in Japan. Prior to becoming a Rotary Yoneyama Scholar, I of course had known about Rotary, but I had not really understood what it means to be a Rotarian. After attending Rotary meetings and getting to know several Japanese Rotarians personally, I began to understand the importance of the Rotarian spirit of "service above self" as I was able to see this in action at the Rotary Club of Tokyo-Higashimurayama."



Jeffrey Behr

(Scholarship Period: 1993-94 / Host Club: Tokyo-Higashimurayama RC)

Born in Alabama, USA, Jeffrey received a master's degree in Urban Environmental Engineering from the University of Tokyo Graduate School in 1992. After serving as Georgia's economic development officer in Tokyo, he established the Center for Environmental Diplomacy (CED), which promotes a number of environmental projects. In 2009, he joined the Rotary Club of Colorado Springs as an honorary member.

Yoneyama Alumni around the World Aid Japan's Recovery

Generous donations from alumni associations both in Japan and abroad

"I was shocked to hear about the terrible earthquake in Japan. I am very concerned. I pray that things are alright."

"If there is anything I can do, please call on me. I definitely want to help."

Following the Tohoku Earthquake on March 11 the Yoneyama Memorial Foundation received a flood of messages from Yoneyama scholars and alumni both in Japan and all around the world expressing their concern. One after another alumni associations here and abroad offered to send donations as well.

Immediately following the earthquake alumni associations in Taiwan, Korea and China began calling on members for donations. In addition to this, alumni associations in Japan, as well as individual Yoneyama scholars and alumni sent in their donation, making a total of over 7.4 million yen in contributions.

This money was distributed to three affected Rotary Districts, D-2520 (Iwate, Miyagi), D-2530 (Fukushima), and D-2820 (Ibaraki)

Donations made through sponsor clubs

A number of scholars and alumni sent their donations by way of their sponsor club. One of these, Dr. Young-Cheul Kang (1995–96 / the Rotary Club of Kamakura Chuo) working at a Japanese firm in Korea, sent his donation of roughly 1 million yen to his sponsor club saying, "Japanese are a people who usually remain calm on the outside even though inside they feel deep sorrow. But the present calamity saw many tears shed, and I could not hold back my tears." Dr. Kang had long been out of touch with his

sponsor club and counselor, but he says he never forgot his intention to someday return their kindness.

Then there was Dr. Na Li (1991–92, 1999 / the Rotary Club of Gifu) who works at a university in New York, who sent a check for \$10,000 to her host District 2630 (Gifu, Mie) by way of a friend. Enclosed with the check was a letter in which the following was written:

"I was sponsored twenty years ago as a Yoneyama scholar by the Rotary Club of Gifu. I am grateful to them

and to my counselor, Mr. Takahashi. I know in my heart that it is thanks to all of you that I was able to earn a PhD in medicine. I will never forget your kindness. I am sending this donation as an expression of my gratitude. I pray that everyone will work hard to recover from the disaster."

Other alumni donations reached the stricken area in a variety of shapes and forms. Some alumni took up collections at their place of employment in their home

country; others sent their contributions by way of the Japanese embassy in that country; still others sponsored charity concerts and donated the entire proceeds.

Volunteer efforts in the disaster area

Many alumni groups volunteered their services as well. Ram Giri (Nepal/ 1998–2000 / the Rotary Club of Muroan), who served on the committee responsible for establishing in 2010 the alumni-centered Rotary Club of Tokyo Yoneyama Yuai, teamed up with fellow countryman and former Yoneyama scholar Jigyan Kuman Thapa (2008–09 / the Rotary Club of Yokohama Tama), who serves as secretary of the Nepalese Association of Japan, and in addition to sending relief funds donated by over 150 Nepalese living in Japan, organized several visits to stricken areas to aid disaster victims.

Their first visit was on April 1 to the city of Iwaki in



Dr. Yuan Shen (2010–11/ the Rotary Club of Narashino-Chuo), Yoneyama alumnus who is currently a professional organist in China, played a charity concert in Tokyo in July 2011

Fukushima Prefecture. People there were without running water and were receiving no outside aid due to rumors about the danger from the accident at the nuclear power plant. Giri and his compatriots prepared a chicken curry for 1,000 people sheltered at evacuation sites. They also brought a supply of drinking water with them, as well as baby diapers and children's toys.

On April 23 some of the Yoneyama Alumni Associations of District 2780 (Kanagawa) and District 2520 (Iwate, Miyagi) visited two evacuation centers in the heavily damaged town of

Natori in Miyagi Prefecture, where they made dumplings and delivered 1,000 pairs of socks, a load of vegetables and handcarts for hauling supplies.

Alumni participants were shaking hands with evacuees and telling them to be brave and hang in there. The person who originally proposed the visit, then president of the District 2780 Alumni Association Gang Wang (2005–07 / the Rotary Club of Ebina), stated decisively, "I don't want this to be the end of our involvement, but the beginning."

It is now time to think about what we can do

In a message to the Yoneyama Memorial Foundation Wang wrote as follows:



Yoneyama Alumni Associations of District 2780 and District 2520 made dumplings for evacuees at Natori in Miyagi Prefecture

"I will never forget how many Rotarians, Yoneyama scholars and Yoneyama alumni made charitable for the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, and that with the money we were able to support two children in China.

Many scholars and alumni, including myself, are concerned and pained that such a disaster happened in Japan. I believe it is now time for each of us to think about what we can do for Japan's recovery. And not merely think about it, but go into action."

Japan still faces a long path to recovery. Yoneyama alumni, who have been spiritually enriched through their interaction with Rotary, will walk the path with us and lend their support.

See You at 2012 Rotary International Convention in Bangkok!

Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation will sponsor a booth at the annual Rotary International Convention to be held May 6–9, 2012. To get preparations underway, sixteen Yoneyama alumni now returned to Thailand gathered at a hotel in Bangkok on April 30. This was the first time for most of them to meet, but one thing they all shared in common was their desire to cooperate to their fullest in preparing for the convention out of gratitude for everything that was done for them while they were studying in Japan. The group decided to contact other alumni now returned to Thailand to help with preparations. The Yoneyama alumni in Thailand are looking forward to seeing many Rotarians from all over the world next year in Bangkok.

