

## For the Society: District-wide Activities of Social Ministry

### “*Hoshikuzu no kai*”

Keiko Ozawa, Tsudanuma Church

On the first Tuesday of every month, I bring a homemade cake, apron and bandana to cover my head to *Hoshi no ie* workshop at the west side of San’ya district near the Minowabashi streetcar station. The place is small and becomes tightly packed with more than 10 people, but here we prepare close to 500 hot *onigiri* (rice balls) and miso soup with finely minced ingredients. *Hoshi no ie* was established more than 20 years ago by Lutheran and Catholic volunteers as an organization to help homeless people.

*Hoshikuzu no kai* is a group of Lutheran volunteers that support *Hoshi no ie*. Members are mostly women and they meet every Tuesday and participate in the “Evening Food Handouts,” in which *onigiri* and miso soup are handed to the homeless.



Many people are involved in various activities, and they say “the best way to volunteer is to do small things but to continue

the work.” I have been volunteering at *Hoshi no ie* for the past 10 years. One day I brought a cake I baked to *Hoshi no ie* and everyone liked it. With the many compliments I received, I was happy to keep bringing in my homemade cakes. Before I realized, the first Tuesday of the month when I volunteer had become the “Birthday Party” of the month. Even when we did not have any birthdays in that month, someone always shouted that the cake was for someone else and said happy birthday to the person who was not present. At one time, a homeless man said to me that his sister’s birthday was that month. Some of the visitors are at the point in their lives where they are not close to their families and hometowns, but they bring someone to mind when they say “happy birthday.” I bake chiffon cakes and pound cakes, but sometimes I bake unique ones like potato cakes and tomato cakes and that make people talk to me. These are the moments when I get to hear comments like, “My mom’s potato miso soup was so good!”

We think we are supporting them, but maybe it is really us who are given the chance to feel the warmth of human connection. On Tuesdays I go home after getting dark, feeling happy and content in my heart.

### Denmark *Bokujo Fukushima*, a Social Welfare Corporation

Yaeko Inagaki

Praise the Lord!

Under the concept called “Welfare Community Village,” the three institutions were established about 10 years ago. They are ‘Diakonia’, a special nursing home, ‘*Makiba no ie*’, an orphanage and ‘*Kodomo no ie*’, a special care facility for troubled children and youths.

The nursing home is always scrambling to get more workers and the administration is burdened with the effort to improve the working condition of the caregivers under

strict requirements. In the course of elderly care, there is always terminal care at the end of life. I’m proud of Diakonia’s service because with these everyday experiences the caregivers are able to provide a respectful companionship that embodies love for each individual.

The farm (*bokujo*) has just completed the repair of the barn. In the spring, they will renew the lineup of dairy products and workshops for tourists. As the orphanage becomes older and sends out more graduates,

more people come back to the farm for the Greens Fair in the spring and the Thanksgiving festival in the fall. The young who have become working adults cheer when they see the director and staff back home. I have seen a staff standing close to a young couple holding their baby. Some employees come to the events after their overnight shifts are over.

The staff welcome those who have moved out of the nest, encourage those who have become parents and are raising children, and welcome more new children into the orphanage.

### **Kamagasaki Diakonia Center *Kibo no ie***

Hideto Nagayoshi,  
Director, *Kibo no ie*

In 1963, missionary Elizabeth Strom, sent from the Midnight Mission in Germany, started a daycare near a town called Kamagasaki in Nishinari ward in Osaka city. Kamagasaki was a town of day workers. She started her anti-alcoholism work in 1974 and started a sobriety support group *Musubikai* in 1975. In January 1976, an old warehouse was purchased and in November of that year, *Kibo no ie* was born.

JELC started a nationwide support of the project in 1975 and established the Kamagasaki Committee in the West District. Pastor Nobuyuki Shigeno was sent for the mission in 1977. Pastors Ikuo Shiraishi, Yukio Muramatsu, Hitoshi Akiyama and Naoko Kokatsu and Missionary Bodo Walther all succeeded his post.

### ***Shinsoku Fukushi Sagyo Center* (Public Welfare Employment Center)**

Etsuko Yanai, JELCW West District Officer

I visited *Shinsoku* Public Welfare Employment Center in Houfu city in Yamaguchi prefecture and observed the wide variety of labor operations: making boxes for cakes and sweets, creating shop signs and printing brochures of local folk history.

The center became operational in 1976. Currently, about 40 handicapped workers who seek independent living and the staff work together on the projects.

The responsibility emerged from being “on their own” contrary to being “protected by the institution” is challenging even for the staff of the orphanage. The children eventually need to leave the orphanage and will have to have the strength to be independent. I believe the founding philosophy of the Welfare Community must be passed down to the new generations and be the testament of our individual faith. I pray that God bless the “green pasture” of Denmark *bokujo* to be a place for people to meet in His love, regardless of their religions. Through JELCW, I’d like to say thank you for your prayers and support.



The current building was founded in 1984 by the joint effort of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Brunswickian Lutheran State Church in Germany, along with support from the LWF. All of the operating cost of the mission is covered by the donations from supporters.

Through the activities of *Musubikai*, I have been involved in works concerning alcoholism. Since 1986, we have implemented a self-reliance program introduced by Missionary Bodo Walther, who is a therapist specializing in alcoholism. The program aims to substitute social rehabilitation for institutional rehab.

