TOMODACHI Initiative
Youth Baseball Exchange

August 2 – 12, 2013  San Diego, California
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Acknowledgements

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The Japan Society of San Diego and Tijuana (JSSDT) would like to express its gratitude to the many wonderful people and organizations who took time out of their extremely busy schedules to play important roles in this tremendously successful program.

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

Important logistical and funding support was provided by the U.S-Japan Council, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Association of Japan-America Societies.


Special thanks to Josie Thomas for arranging the fields for practices and games on very short notice. Damato Field was the perfect setting for the exchange practices and games.

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.

**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

**Baseball-related Organizations**
- San Diego Padres
- Anaheim Angels
- Tierrasanta Little League
- Damato Field

**Community Organizations**
- SeaWorld San Diego
- San Diego Zoo

## 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
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.
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.

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