



CHARITY NEWS – VERY (VERY) IMPORTANT GUEST VISIT

Dear Kspace Community,

For the past 2 years we have raised money for the children of Oshika Junior High School, Tohoku. Each year our community has ensured that all students graduating into the school had brand new uniforms and supplies.

Our donations were much needed as many parents are unemployed and families have been torn apart due to the tsunami of 2011. The children and staff of Oshika promised to come and meet us personally one day - and today they graced us with a visit! The group traveled all the way from Tohoku for a special trip to Tokyo, and they were very excited (and a little nervous) about meeting us. For many of the children it was their first big trip or holiday, and it was clear that they have had an amazing trip! XX students attended and we were delighted to see them all looking very smart in their lovely uniforms! They looked very proud to be wearing the colours of their school. The principal (XXX) and some teachers and staff enjoyed a meeting with us and then officially thanked our community for the donations. After a full school tour we brought the Butterfly and Bugs children to meet their new friends, and of course they were welcomed to a mass chorus of, "Kawaii, KAWAII!!!" from the Oshika students, which was very sweet.

Our students were in complete awe of the teenagers, especially when they donned their colourful costumes and prepared to start their special performance. Every year they celebrate the 'Whale Festival': There's an old legend that Kannon, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, was seen riding on a whale around the area centuries ago. As many of the local people were fishermen, the festival and dances are believed to bring luck to the fishermen and villagers.

The Oshika students performed a 'Samurai Sodan' (dance), which was fantastically powerful. The Kspacers were completely stuck to the spot and had their mouths hanging open and eyes wide like saucers! It was very sweet and they loved every moment of the experience.

The most touching moment was when one (brave) Oshika student stood up and read a quite long and complex message from the children, in English! They expressed the intense fear that they felt on the day of the tsunami and the anxiety that they felt as the true scale of events started to unfold. It was ironic that as they spoke many countries were on tsunami alert following the recent earthquake in Chile - reminding us that reaching out to children in need is essential.

Our Super Bugs wowed us all with their performance of a Scandinavian song that is part of their current theme studies, and also a Japanese song, which clearly pleased the tweens!

This was a really heart touching and bonding experience for us as a school and gave us all such a beautiful way to see how our efforts have such an amazingly positive impact on people.

Please take a look at the beautifully colourful photos of the event and thank you all again for your generosity.

Juliet

