

# ADAIR UPDATE



Enjoying a jazz festival with friends

## BABY VS. NEIGHBORS

### How Joseph is helping us get to know our community

In the first two years of living behind Geba train station, our relationship with our neighbors consisted of pleasant hellos and occasional apologies for noise. A highlight for me (Robert) was last winter when the elderly gentleman next door and I did a fair bit of shoveling snow together. We have tried at various times to deepen relationships with people in our neighborhood, but no one seemed to be too interested in getting to know us.

We started to notice a difference towards the end of Roberta's pregnancy. Our neighbors started to comment in passing about how excited they were about the baby and asked us to bring him over after he was born. Once we brought Joseph home, their interest in us seemed to completely change.

The elderly couple who live down the hill from us would walk up and start smiling and talking to Joseph. The grandma even holds him a fair bit. They always tell us how they are

surprised that they can't hear him crying at night (although I think that is because they have 80+ year old ears). We have also been able to have several long conversations with their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren as a result of their interest in our little guy. The reaction of the multigenerational family on the other side of our house has been similar.

After returning from a five day training for our mission, several neighbors were hanging out in the street. We spent the next hour or so slowly unloading and talking. It was fun to get to know them a little more and to realize what a regular thing this is becoming. We never want Joseph to become or to feel like a tool for ministry, but we are grateful for the doors he has opened up for us to deepen our relationships with the people living closest to us. Please pray that these new relationships will grow and that we would find appropriate places to share the love of Christ with our neighbors.



### Quick Trip to America

We will be in the US from September 26 through October 12 (PA: 9/26-10/2, CA: 10/2-10/4, TX: 10/4-10/12). While we will be spending a fair bit of time with extended family, we would also love to see you if schedules allow. Please email us if you have time to get together.

# KIDS EVERYWHERE

## Playing, teaching, and hoping to reach families

While still in Wheaton, IL and attending Blanchard Alliance Church, I (Robert) was approached by the children's ministry director about helping out. Roberta and I were busy preparing for Japan so I didn't have time, but there was a part of me that was thinking, "I don't need to be doing children's ministry."

I still believe that our primary call to Japan is to be directly involved in planting churches. Currently our church is praying about when and how our small group can transition into being a church plant. We desire your prayers that God would provide the right co-leader, team, and location for the future plant.

As we prepare for this, however, a large portion of my regular ministry life has been focused on children. Though I fought it at first, God really seems to be blessing this portion of our ministry. Here is a snapshot of some of these child-related activities.

### Sakuragi

The Sakuragi neighborhood (about a mile from the church) was inundated by about 6 feet of water during the 3.11 disaster. Our church developed a relationship with a government housing complex while helping with clean up efforts. Out of this relationship, I was asked to start teaching English at the adjacent pre-school.

Another one of our staff members started something called Sakuragi Smile. Every Tuesday from 4-5, we go to the park and play with kids. This has become a part of the community's rhythm over the last 3 years. Every week 20 to 40 children and another 5 to 10

parents come out. Sometimes we just play games, and other times we make popcorn or shaved ice. It has been such a positive thing for the neighborhood that City Hall has taken notice, and we have been featured in the newspaper a few times. Also two retired men, an elementary student, and her aunt have begun to attend activities at the church.

### English

Our church also has a fairly large children's English program. Around 50 students come to our classes every week. Each class is about 45 minutes of teaching including a five minute Bible lesson. We also hold Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and other events throughout the year to spend more time with the students and their families.

### Sunday School

As a part of our church's children's ministry, I was asked to lead a kids service in English once a month. There is translation for the children who don't understand, and it is a great chance to invite our friends from the community. Every time we have games, songs, and a short talk in English. It is also not uncommon to see me dressed up like a samurai or Roberta leading a silly song.

Our last event was an ice cream party with dozens of kids and quite a few parents as well. Roberta was encouraged to see many of the families from her English class participate.



Two of our new friends

### The door to families

I have heard our pastor say that when he was a boy, he and his friends would go to all sorts of events alone but now parents are almost always with their children. This cultural shift means that frequently when we have an event aimed at children, mothers and fathers come as well.

In a country where it is very difficult to find opportunities to connect with men, children's ministry is surprisingly effective. Children themselves are a valid focus of ministry. That said, one of the things I am most excited about is how focusing on children is giving us a relationship with several young fathers. In the last month, one family in particular has been spending a lot of time at our house and out in the community with us. During a special Sunday service, 3 fathers came for the first time. Please pray that our interactions with children would lead to families coming to know Jesus.

Thank you for your support and friendship.

- R&R

### Partner

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### Specific Prayer Points

- Good time connecting with family in PA, TX, and CA.
- Growing in our roles as Mom and Dad
- Japanese language acquisition
- Guidance on the location of our church plant.
- The families of the children in Robert's English classes to encounter Jesus.
- Roberta discerning what to focus on and what to let go of for this season

### Contact Info

Robert [radair@asianaccess.org](mailto:radair@asianaccess.org)  
Roberta [roberta@asianaccess.org](mailto:roberta@asianaccess.org)

Address: Robert & Roberta Adair  
985-0835  
Miyagi-ken, Tagajo-shi  
Geba 1-11-18, Japan

Web: [www.adairupdate.com](http://www.adairupdate.com)