

ADAIR UPDATE



A view of our neighborhood

“WHY ARE YOU IN JAPAN?”

Spending time with my friend

My friend K has been working nearly everyday for a year to renovate an older house. Her family hopes to move in very soon. To help their family and spend time with my friend, I've enjoyed taking a few hours here and there to help her paint, trim, and clean.

While we were working together one day, she asked me a very common question: “So why are you guys in Japan?” It's a question we are frequently asked, and I have a bunch of answers depending on the relationship. It's usually something about our “organization” (aka missions agency) sending us to work with a Japanese church. I also usually say that I came after the disaster and have worked with volunteers doing various projects. I even sometimes bring up the wimpy answer of “we teach some English” (it's something we do but not why we're here).

This time, the question was asked by someone I've known for awhile. She was in my English class where we spent several hours a

week together for over a year. I decided I would answer honestly instead of safely. I said that we want people in Japan to have a chance to hear about Jesus in a way that they will want to know him. I said that there are few Christians in Japan, but we love getting to work with a Japanese church trying to love the community well through talking about Jesus and loving like him.

She listened kindly and asked good followup questions. She isn't closed: she participated in the Marriage Course with her husband, she's come to a few events at church, and we read a bilingual parenting book together based on biblical principles. She also doesn't seem to be actively seeking. Yet there was a softness and openness in this conversation that I hadn't seen before.

I loved that this happened while painting, which for me is fun, measurable, physical... therapeutic. Please pray for K, her husband, and their 3 boys to meet Jesus. Pray that we will be both sensitive and bold in our witness.



This is a common sight in Japan. What are these strips of paper?

- A) Old receipts outside a restaurant
- B) Shinto fortunes
- C) Rejected love letters
- D) Prayers for fishermen

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Receiving help and kindness...and hopefully giving, too

Recently, Robert was assembling the storage unit at the end of our driveway (aka our backyard), and three neighbors came over to help (pictured). One of these neighbors then took an hour and a half moving the container to blocks he leveled on sand when we weren't home...wow!

Early on, one of our neighbors invited us in for tea and another has had me over for coffee a couple of times. Six or seven neighbors popped in for ice cream and strawberries for Joseph's 3rd birthday. It took years to develop this kind of warmth with our neighbors in our previous community - and we are baffled that it is happening so quickly this time.

The rumor is...

It seems that word got around that a pastor moved in (nope). We are happy to clarify that we work with a nearby Japanese church. Even if people don't entirely understand what we do, we are pleased that they don't seem to be too uncomfortable by our differences in worldview and are perhaps even a bit curious.

There may come a time of opposition. Yet for now, we pray that our interactions with people will be salty as, from the front page, we are often asked about what we do. This is a strategic and important time as first impressions can be quite long-lasting.

Our hope is...

As part of seeing the church established and the Kingdom of God coming to Shiogama, we desire to be and be perceived as people who are for the community - spiritually, socially, relationally, and economically. We are still in the beginning stages of discerning what God might

be calling us to in the next months and years.

One place and web of relationships where we are already connecting is at the neighborhood *jidoukan* (kids' play center), which is a 2-minute walk from our house. We take the boys several times a week for a larger and more social place to play and are developing good relationships with the staff and a few parents.

We are considering different ways to be involved. Alongside a team from CA, we will host an English event on July 21st. The staff said that 60 to 100 kids could come (keep in mind that the property isn't very large). Pray that we would make a good impression, form and deepen relationships in the community, and bless the kids and families.

Our community was inundated by the tsunami in 2011. While a lot has been cleaned and rebuilt, there are still ways to practically serve the area. With the same team, we will do some volunteering (likely weeding) with our neighbors who are community leaders. Again, please pray that we will serve well, that the love of Christ will be made known, and that our relationship with our neighbors and other members in our community will be deepened.

The point is...

A kids' event and a day weeding sound so small. Yet we've been talking about the loaves and fish with kids at church and with our boys



lately. May we trust God to multiply these efforts and to use them to be a part of seeing people turn to Jesus and a church planted in Higashi-Shiogama!

Sometimes I (Roberta) still feel like there is a dance going on with Japanese communication and relationships that I don't know the rhythm to. Being too strong and straightforward can damage relationships. Being too passive can mean a special opportunity slips by. Am I interpreting lack of interest appropriately; am I sharing prematurely? We appreciate your prayers for us as we continue to seek to live and minister in a country we are still adjusting to.

Thank you for your prayers, support, and partnership which allow us to minister alongside Japanese Christians as we seek to see the name of Jesus known throughout Japan.

- R, R, J & B

Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- For good continuing language options (and perseverance) for Roberta
- For favor with people in East Shiogama and that many people will turn to Jesus
- For the boys - health, friends, and continued adjustment to living in Japan
- For K, her husband, and 3 sons
- For 2 upcoming outreach Sundays at our partner church
- For the English event and the service day in our neighborhood

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