

Recent News of Fukushima



Journalism school participants with Lecturer Mr. Akira Ikegami in the center

News Reports by Fukushima students

Journalism School

31 July to 2 August 2018

National Bandai Youth Friendship Center, Aizu Keikodo

Seven and a half years after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tokyo Electric Power Company Fukushima No.1 nuclear power station accident, a number of Fukushima students came together to visit sites around the prefecture to report on the steady progress and tireless efforts of its people on the road to revitalization and to create newspapers based on their observations. The experience provided the students the opportunity to think about how they can convey the present situation in Fukushima after the disaster in an accurate, easy-to-understand way and helped them appreciate the ability to communicate information and ideas effectively.

Introducing revitalization efforts

A journalism school was held for three days, from 31 July to 2 August at Inawashiro Town's National Bandai Youth Friendship Center and other locations to help students learn about and report on the current situation in the prefecture. Usually held during the summer holidays, this year marked the sixth workshop. A total of 33 students from the prefecture, from fifth-grade elementary to second-grade high school, took part in the journalism school. During the workshop, students received guidance from newspaper journalists, engaged in news gathering activities, created news articles, presented their articles and had their articles reviewed by journalist Akira Ikegami.

The students were divided into

six groups. On the first day of the workshop, each group visited a different site in Inawashiro Town and Aizuwakamatsu City. Sites included the Inawashiro Water Environment Center, the Aquamarine Inawashiro Kingfishers Aquarium and Hinodeya, a Japanese confectionery with 60 years of history. The topics covered by the other three groups included an interview with AIQ, a group comprising of women from Okuma Town who evacuated to Aizuwakamatsu City, where they use Aizu cotton to make handicrafts, an interview with two mogulists belonging to Team Listel, which calls Listel Ski Fantasia home and an interview with Mr. Hideyuki Anzai, former manager of the team representing Fukushima Pre-

fecture in the All-Japan Inter-Prefectural Ekiden Championships.

On the second day, while receiving advice from local journalists, students wrote the articles, selected pictures to go with each article and completed editing their newspapers. They learned about some of the best practices in journalism, such as using the inverted triangle method, in which the most important details are placed at the top; making sure the headline contains the highlight of the story; and that the best photos are prominently placed. Following the advice they received, they used creativity in arranging the articles and photos and in choosing the headlines to effectively communicate their experiences.

Newspapers reviewed by Mr. Akira Ikegami



On the day of the presentation, Journalist Mr. Akira Ikegami (photo on left) acted as a special instructor and reviewed the newspapers created by each group.

Paying close attention to students presenting their newspapers, he gave them advice, speaking in a style everyone was familiar with, like

how he spoke on TV. In his conversation with the students, he covered various topics, from how to conduct an interview to tips on introducing oneself.

Mr. Ikegami told the students, "Do not forget the dreams you have when you are an elementary school student. In future, you will notice they somehow have a connection to who you are."

Addressing younger students who don't have a clear memory of the disaster, he encouraged them to learn all they can about Fukushima, their hometown, and try to master foreign languages to communicate its fine qualities to foreigners as well.

Later, during lunch with the students, Mr. Ikegami spoke about what inspired him to be a journalist and recounted some of the hardships he experienced as a reporter. During their conversation, the students were delighted to hear him utter his now-familiar "That's a good question."

On the last day of the workshop, the venue was changed to Aizu Keikodo in Aizuwakamatsu City. The students in their respective groups presented their newspapers to an audience that included family members and the local community. Making comments such as "Reporting and writing the articles was a great experience" and "I realize now how difficult it is to create a newspa-

per," they confidently spoke about their impressions and expressed the desire to apply what they had learned in other contexts as well.

The Journalism School was organized by the Fukushima Prefectural Government and the Study Fukushima Executive Committee in collaboration with Fukushima Minpo News and The Fukushima Minyo Shinbun.