



PLACE TO GROW

Inspiring the next generation of Tohoku, Japan



Place to Grow is a 100% volunteer-led nonprofit that strives to connect and inspire a rising generation of leaders in disaster-stricken Tohoku communities.

Founded in 2011 in the aftermath of the March 11 earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear disasters, Place To Grow has developed from a first responders emergency aid organization, to providing long term community support.

Place To Grow Volunteers visit small communities in Miyagi prefecture on a monthly basis, to hold workshops and community planning events with local families; children and the city leaders.



History

Following the triple disasters of March 2011, Oritz Global Academy, an international school in Aomori, became a base for volunteers sending aid to the devastated Tohoku coastal region. Teams of international volunteers were led into some of the hardest hit areas and operations began, beginning with delivering large quantities of food, water and emergency supplies and the development of a distribution system. Place to Grow grew from OGA for Aid in 2015 and fully transitioned as a renewed organization focused on supporting the next generation of Tohoku.

2011

In the immediate aftermath of the 3.11 disaster, we setup a Tohoku Distribution System program to provide adequate food, water and emergency supplies to survivors. Working with locals was a key component of the project. We began economic enhancement in Minamisanriku through farming via our Green Farmers Association (GFA) initiative, providing livelihoods to 5 farmers and providing nutritious produce for 1400 families living in temporary housing.



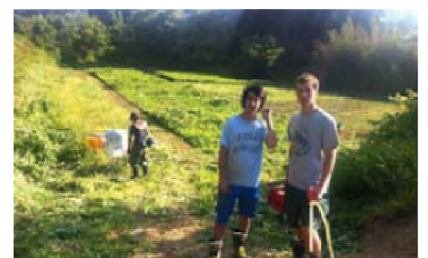
2012

English and computer education for 300 children and 120 elderly residents of MSR was held at our newly renovated Community Learning Center. We continued to work towards developing GFA into a viable agricultural force in the region.



2013

Our work with GFA expanded to provide livelihoods for 10 local farmers. The work done in 2013 led to GFA becoming Green Farmers Miyagi K.K., winning an award for its contribution to revitalising the region's farming in 2014.



2014

A new program called Temahima supported students and corporate employees to become empowered volunteers via field trips to MSR, facilitating discussions with survivors, lectures and presentations. 18 trips were made from Tokyo, Fukuoka and Sendai to MSR. At Christmas we organized the Santa Soul Train to bring smiles to the children of Miyagi.



2015

In 2015, we started our first global social media campaign for awareness and connection building between volunteers and survivors. In addition we promoted advocacy of survivors through lectures and presentations. We kicked off our "Place to Grow" and "Furusato Box" initiatives, providing further opportunities for local revitalization.



**2016
-
2017**

As interest in the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake diminished, we were able to open educational programs, exchange events, and continue our Temahima programs on a regular basis. We also collected donations for and connected the victims of the Kumamoto Earthquake and Great East Japan Earthquake. We expanded our range of activities, including volunteer and leadership training.



**2018
-
2019**

We regularly held educational programs and exchange events aimed at creating next-generation leaders from Minamisanriku. We collaborated with new partners--SOGO fitness and Minamisanriku Jr Academy--to support the well-being of children in MSR, improve their English language ability, and connect them with other school children in Japan.



2020

Despite the global pandemic we collaborated with other non-profits and groups to strengthen our future activities and worked on our next-generation leader training program and training activities for volunteers. We deployed a permanent PTG staff member to MSR to assist with online workshops and educational activities for children with Minamisanriku Jr Academy. We assisted local leaders with getting Santa Soul Train to children in MSR, as well as other schools in Miyagi, Fukushima, and Tokyo.



2021

Despite the global pandemic we continued to do online English workshops for children and held monthly Education for Sustainable Development workshops not only for members in MSR but for volunteers and others. We held our final Santa Soul Train in collaboration with local MSR leaders, celebrating 10 years of doing work in Tohoku and supporting the next generation of Tohoku!





10 YEAR IMPACT

**Over 5,000 survivors
impacted by Santa Soul
Train with 760 volunteers**

**Over 7,000 families
supported through relief
aid and economic
programs**

**25 Fieldtrips and local
tours**

**1 Million raised
for disaster
relief**

**38 Community
and economic
revitalization
projects**

**1 Million raised for
community & economic
revitalization**

**30 Festivals,
community
events, and
cultural events**

**100 Children's
workshops**

**17,000 tons of
relief aid
distributed**

**Over 24,000 locals
and volunteers
impacted**

**Over 900 volunteer
trips**

25 Advocacy events and 150 Volunteer trainings



10 YEAR IMPACT SPECIAL PROJECTS

Cultural Exchange Program and OGA Kids (2014-2016)	¥ 16,340,631 Raised to support classes & workshops		
	595 Classes	1,000 Volunteers	35,500 Beneficiaries
Green Farmers Association (2011-2015)	¥ 31,172,091 Raised to support local farming		
	¥ 23,240,000 Economic impact	3,500 Beneficiaries	14 Staff, 927 Volunteers, & 60 Volunteer trips
Temahima Local Tour Program (2014-2019)	¥ 6,522,600 Raised to support exchange tours		
	25 Fieldtrips and tours	373 Volunteers	733 beneficiaries



2011-2012

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We raised ¥15,276,081 to support community and economic revitalization and supply distribution.

2013-2014

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We raised ¥29,512,642 to support community and economic revitalization, volunteer training and development, cultural exchange activities, local tour programs, and supply distribution.

2015-2016

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We raised ¥31,826,385 to support community and economic revitalization, volunteer training and development, local tour programs and local and international advocacy.

2017-2018

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We raised ¥10,527,712 to support community and economic revitalization, volunteer training and development, local tour programs, local and international advocacy, and provide Kumamoto disaster relief.

2019-2021

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We raised ¥5,844,863 to support community and economic revitalization, volunteer training and development, local tour programs, and local and international advocacy.

Santa Soul Train

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We held our major community winter celebration, Santa Soul Train, 10 times, connecting multiple, families, children, communities, and schools.



2011 - 2012 COMMUNITY IMPACT

Distribution

We created a relief aid distribution system in Minamisanriku and Kesennuma providing water, food, and other supplies to families.

- 2,879 registered families
- 1,500 tons of aid distributed

Community Learning Center

The CLC project was an educational support system. Designed as an International and Multicultural exchange Hub, the programs within this umbrella project provide opportunities for skill building

- 504 visitors
- 355 English and computer classes
- 9 cultural events

Green Farmers Association

The GFA was a project reviving the dying agricultural industry in the area. Implementing it on a commercial scale, plots of land were reclaimed by the GFA and developed into viable land.

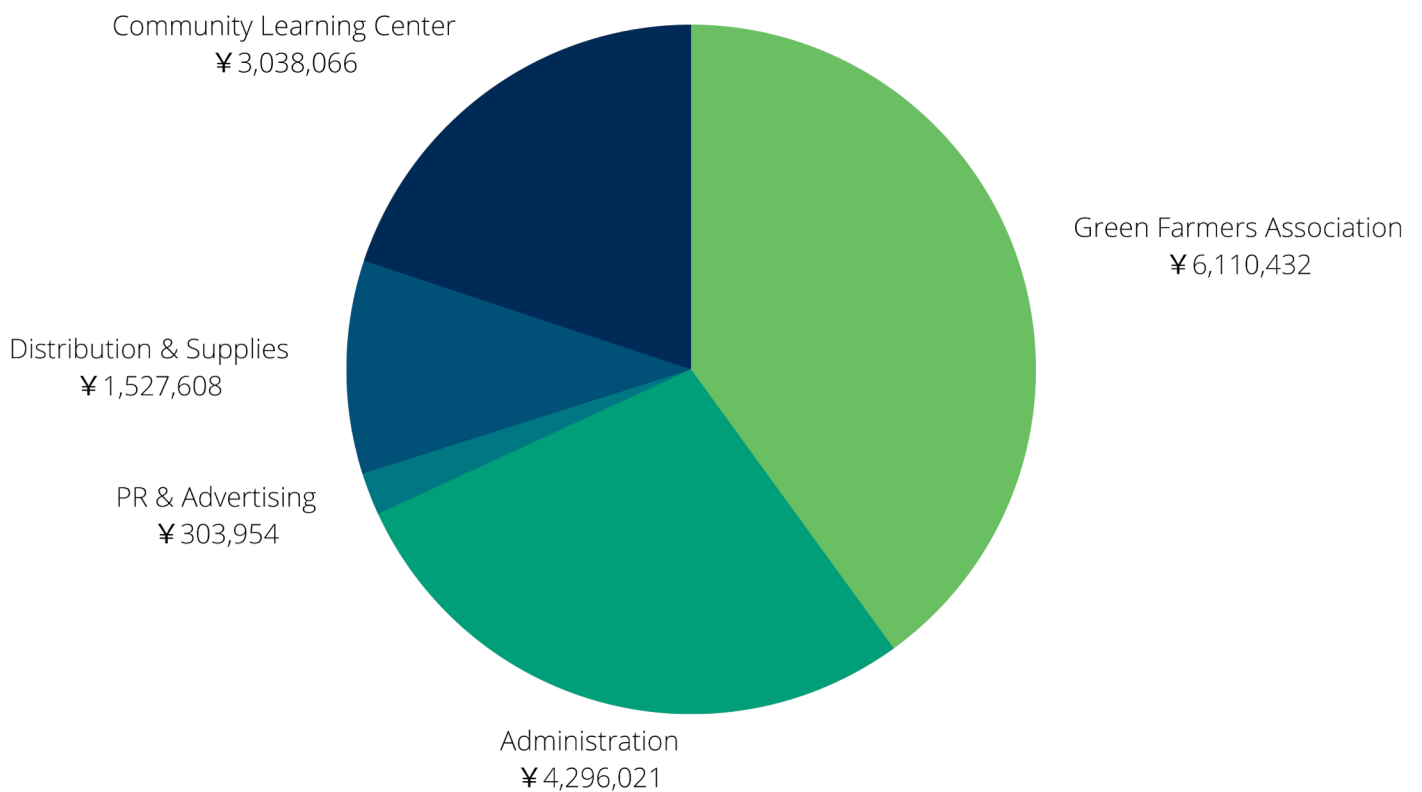
- 16 plots
- 14 staff and 100 volunteers
- 2,500 beneficiaries of fresh vegetables
- 650 families served
- 350 families served through the Save Minamisoma Project





2011 - 2012 ECONOMIC IMPACT

In our first couple of years we generated **¥15, 276, 081** in aid to support the residents of Minamisanriku that supported our relief aid, community, and farming revitalization efforts.





Community Revitalization

At the project site, the SeaSide Center in MSR, we taught and coordinated classes and events that bring educational and community bonding opportunities to local survivors and children, promoting a brighter future for Minamisanriku.

- 22 community revitalization projects
- 12 SeaSide Center events
- 6 English classes
- 2 Annual events
- 5 Cultural events
- 8 Community bonding activities
- 18 Fieldtrips
- 4 Internships

Distribution

Our local partners organized and ran the monthly distribution of supplies to families in Minamisanriku and Kesennuma. We facilitated logistics and supported the supply of shipments, reports and other project details. We supported communities in Yamagata after heavy flooding.

- 1,700 registered families
- 2,750 tons of aid distributed

Shelter Construction

Working with GlobalMedic from Canada, shelters and warehouses were built for fishers and farmers who lost all their equipment and facilities. We built a total of 50 shelters on the coast.

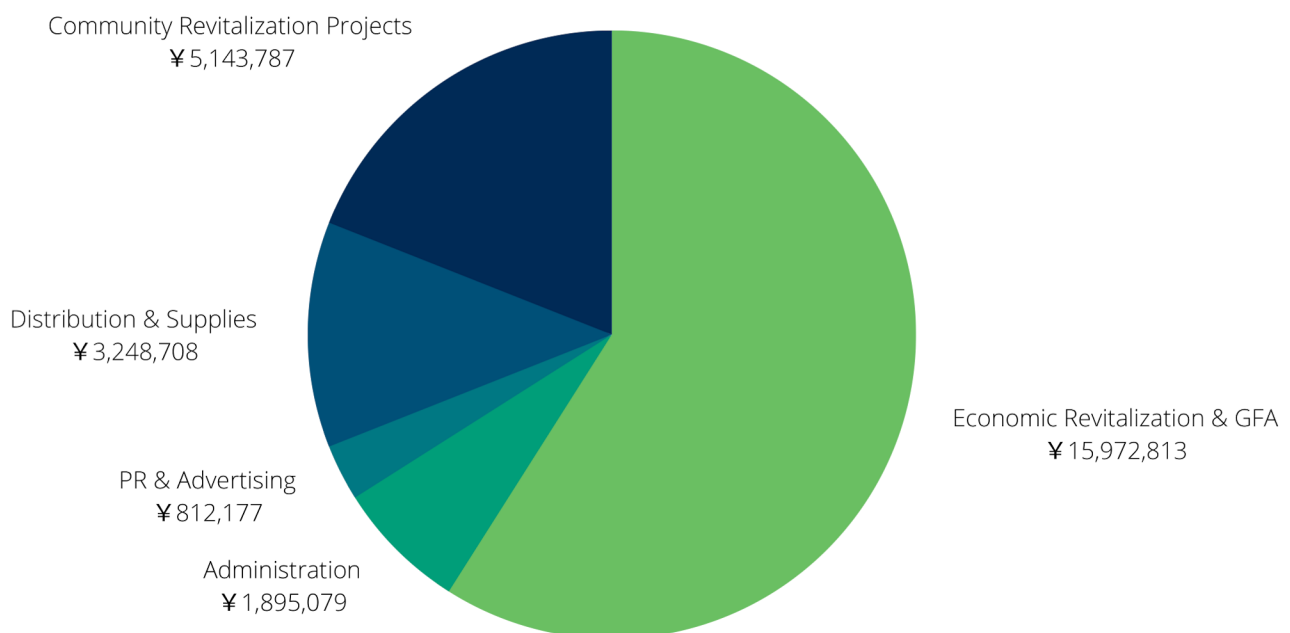
Green Farmers Association

GFA expanded rapidly once we started it, and it provided economic stability for farmers and other staff. This year we expanded into a secondary prefab processing facility in Shizugawa.

- 24 plots
- 14 staff and 307 volunteers

2013 - 2014 ECONOMIC IMPACT

We generated **¥29,512,642** in aid to support the residents of Minamisanriku that supported our relief aid, community, shelter building, and farming revitalization efforts. We spent 92% of our revenue on projects, saving 8% for the next year.





Community Revitalization

We focused on providing new educational workshops for children and large events for community bonding. We started our Place to Grow program to connect kids and their families through farming and jump started our Furusato Box initiative through a collective of residents. This year we transitioned to being 100 percent volunteer based, and removed paid positions.

- 9 Children's workshops
- 2 Large community festivals
- Place to Grow Program
- Furusato Box Initiative
- 4 Economic Revitalization Activities

Advocacy

We started our first global social media campaign for awareness and connection building between volunteers and survivors. In addition we promoted advocacy of survivors through lectures and presentations.

- 2 Events
- 2 Invited talks
- 3 University Lectures
- 6 Non-Government Organization Lectures

Volunteer Training & Development

We held special workshops, talks or training sessions for volunteers to meet and learn new skills. We also held monthly team meetings for regular volunteer information sharing and planning purposes.

- 3 workshops
- 11 meetings

Local Tour Program

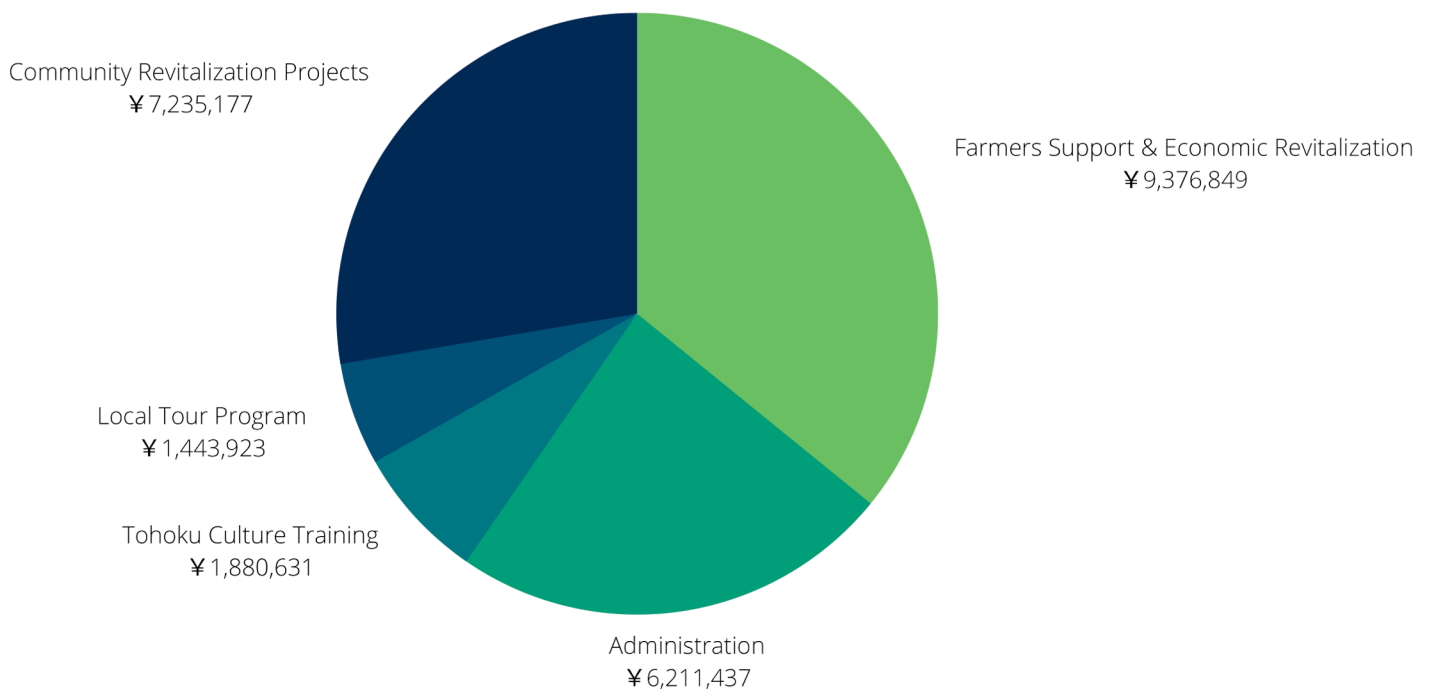
From the start of our Temahima program in 2014, we expanded every year. This time we started working with a travel agency (Kinki Nippon Tours) to develop formal tours so visiting Tokyo business employees and international school students could better participate in community events and activities

- 2 Tours



2015 - 2016 ECONOMIC IMPACT

We generated **¥31,826,385** in aid to support the residents of Minamisanriku that supported our local tour program, various community revitalization programs (PTG, Furusato, OGA kids, etc), economic activities, advocacy goals. We spent 83% of our revenue on projects, saving 17% for the next year.





2017-2018 COMMUNITY IMPACT

Community Revitalization

We focused on providing new educational workshops for children and large events for community bonding. We brought on 2 new partners--SOGO Fitness--to support the physical health of children, and Minamisanriku Jr Academy--to provide new English learning activities.

- 15 Children's workshops
- Workshop program expansion into Iwaki, Fukushima
- 6 Large community festivals and events

Advocacy

We continued our advocacy goals by continuing to engage volunteers, residents, and university students in community revitalization. Our continued efforts brought in a host of new volunteers as well as encouraged new training opportunities.

- 4 Events
- 1 Invited Talk

Volunteer Training & Development

We held special workshops, talks or training sessions for volunteers to meet and learn new skills. We brought on Sarajeon, an NGO Consultant, as a new advisor who offered monthly Develop Yourself to Inspire Others.

- 4 workshops
- 11 meetings

Local Tour Program

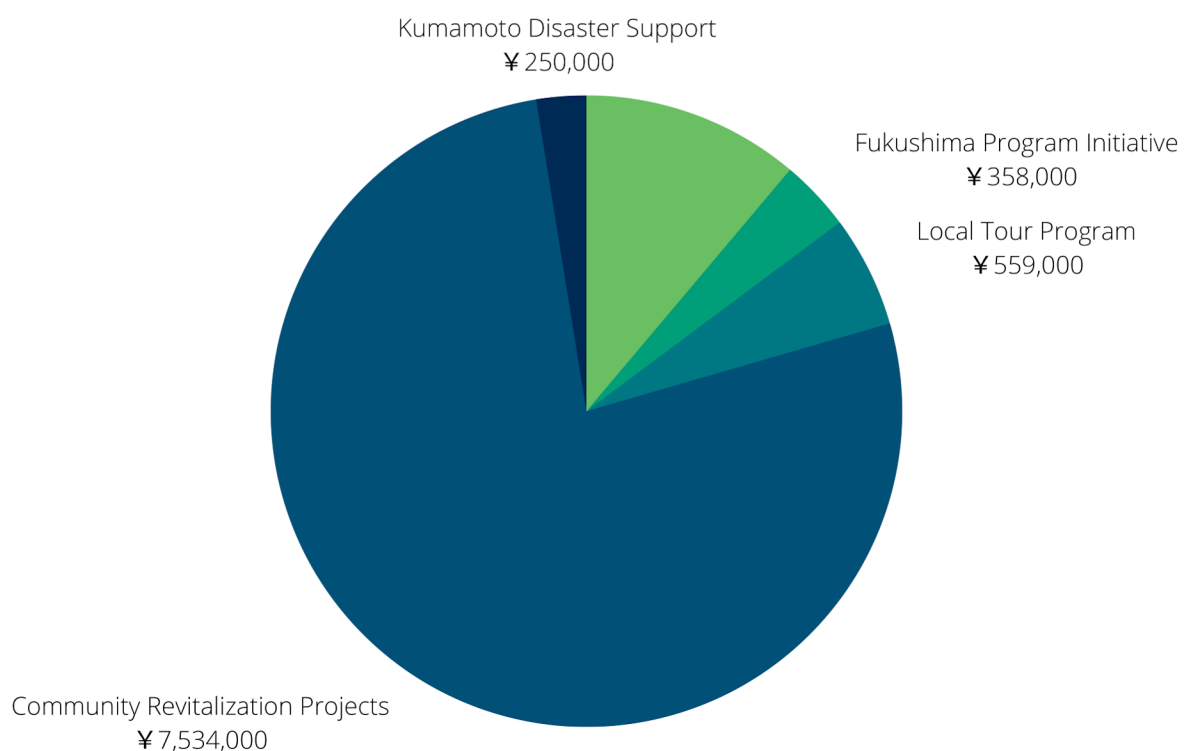
We kept our Temahima program strong with new partnerships with Johnson & Johnson employees who visited Minamisanriku multiple times and supported Minamisanriku's 2017 Tokkoyasai event at the Summer Festival!

- 4 Tours (and 1 Community Festival)





We generated **¥10,527,712** in aid to support the residents of Minamisanriku that supported our local tour program, various community revitalization programs, economic activities, and advocacy goals. We started new workshops in Iwaki, Fukushima, and provided disaster support to victims of the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake. We spent 91% of our revenue on projects, saving 9% for the next year.





Community Revitalization

Before the global pandemic occurred we were able to hold a variety of physical exercise and educational workshops for children in 2019. In 2019 we held a special summer camp with SOGO Fitness! In 2020, we transitioned to online workshops and activities for children and families to participate in. We held our last in-person Santa Soul Train in 2019 all others were remote.

- 4 Online Children's Workshops
- 3 Large community festivals and events
- 9 Children's Workshops
- 1 Fieldtrip

Advocacy

We continued our advocacy goals by continuing to engage volunteers, residents, and university students in community revitalization. We transitioned to having monthly Education for Sustainable Development workshops available for members in MSR and also for volunteers and other interested participants. We also gave an invited talk at Temple University. We also held a special remembrance event in recognition of the 10 year anniversary of 3.11.

- 15 Events
- 2 Invited Talks

Volunteer Training & Development

We held special workshops, talks or training sessions for volunteers to meet and learn new skills. We brought on Sarajeon, a NGO consultant, as a new advisor who offered monthly Develop Yourself to Inspire Others workshops.

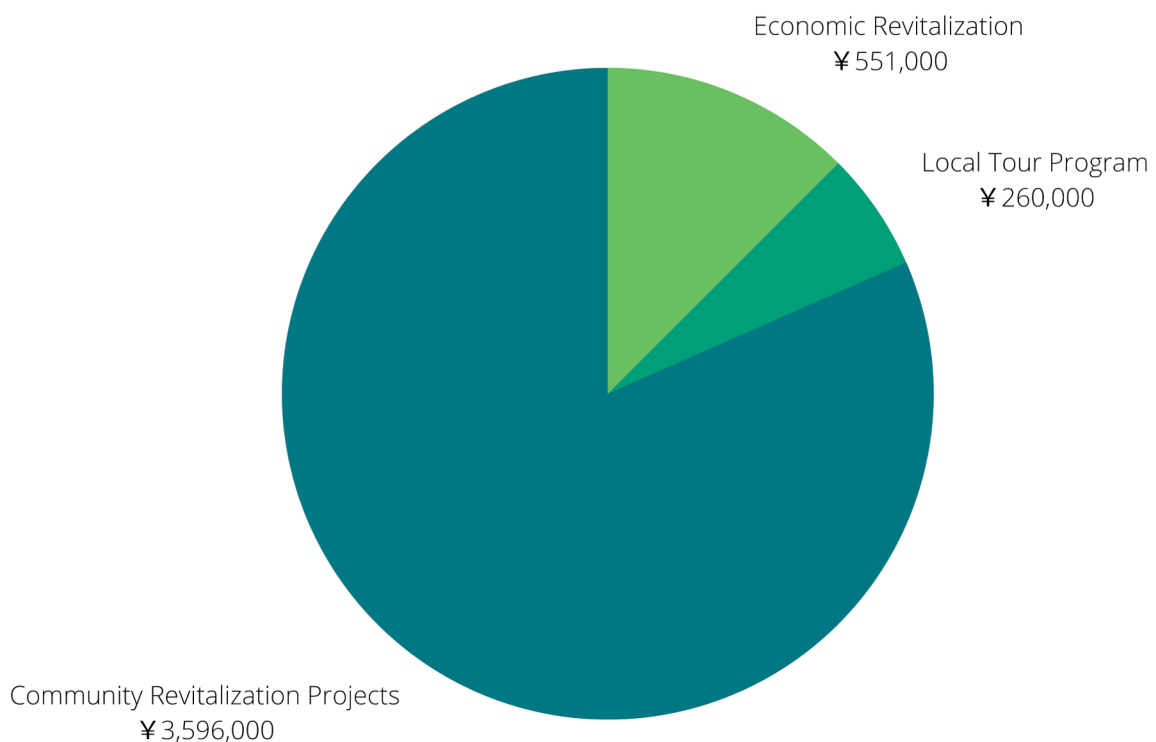
- 8 workshops
- 11 meetings





2019 - 2020 - 2021 ECONOMIC IMPACT

We generated **¥5,844,863** in aid to support the residents of Minamisanriku that supported our various community revitalization programs, economic activities, advocacy goals, and our anniversary events. We persevered through the pandemic to provide education development to children and volunteers. We spent 76% of our revenue on projects, saving 24% for the next year, which we used early in 2022 for a few more online workshops for children and advocacy events.





Santa Soul Train became one of Place to Grow's largest community events over the past 10 years. Originally, our aim was to connect people from all over Japan with the children and communities of Tohoku to remind them that they are not forgotten and to provide survivors the opportunity to reconnect. Over time, through the support of local and international volunteers, Santa Soul Train became a larger event focusing on building community solidarity and community spirit.

We held 3 days of events during Santa Soul Train in Minamisanriku each year, and held a Christmas Card Exchange between schools across Japan. We also provided Christmas stockings to thousands of children each year.

Santa Soul Train impacted over 6,000 children and their families, 17 different communities, dozens of local and international schools, hundreds of local and international volunteers, including those from the Team Misawa US Navy and Air Force.

We are thankful to our international school partners who made Santa Soul Train a success:

- American School in Japan
- Ohana International School
- Nishimachi International School
- Nagoya International School
- OGA International School
- K International School
- Fukuoka International School

Santa Soul Train also would not have been as exciting or fun for children and families without our celebrity supporters:

- TV Celebrity Stuart-O gave energetic dances that had everyone up dancing with his *Soul Train* collaborative performance. Stuart-O also helped as Santa when delivering stockings and provided interactive dances at nurseries and kindergartens.
- TV celebrity Hayami Yu donated her time to be the main host of the event, performed on stage, and inspired participants with her kind words of encouragement.
- Singer Charlie Okamura brought his charm and brilliant presence to life on stage to delight with a variety of traditional songs that everyone would join in singing.



We want to personally thank everyone who was a part of this journey and the legacy of Place to Grow.

During Place to Grow's more than 10 years of programs, thousands of Tohoku- and Kanto-area children have been inspired by connecting to each other and to enthusiastic volunteers and places far outside their homes, have been encouraged to follow ambitious dreams, and to hope for the future and more.

In line with our vision and due to the hard work of volunteers and supporters, leadership in Minamisanriku has taken local ownership of programs. This is the legacy of Place to Grow, and it has only been possible thanks to the warm support of our generous volunteers, sponsors and partners.

As of April 1, 2022, Place to Grow rolled back leadership and staff work in Kanto to let the sun shine on leaders in Minamisanriku. Place to Grow has given way to a by-local, for-local organization, and the functions operated from Tokyo, such as social media and volunteer activities, have ceased.

We have always been a grassroots organization aimed at filling the gaps in support for the survivors of 3.11 as they rebuild their lives. While this spirit lives on, the leadership and volunteers of Place to Grow, will continue on their own personal paths of growth and social impact.

Tohoku, and the many families we have worked with over these 11 years will forever be in our hearts. We will continue to show up for them in the years to come. Minamisanriku in particular has become a special place to many of our volunteers and team members.

We hope you can celebrate with us, as we welcome in a new era of growth for local communities and the next generation of Tohoku.

Thank you again for being with us on this decade-long journey.



While we appreciate each and every single person, a special thank you goes to our key supporters of local impact over the years, including:



Reia Oba &
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Noriko Abe



Yoshinori
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Peter Watabe



Yuko Watabe



Miwako Suzuki



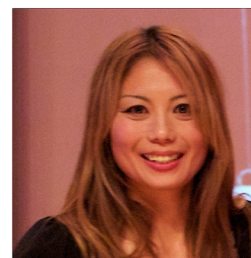
Belva Kotlarczyk



Nobuko Suzuki



Yuko Hoshi



Yukari
Hatakeyama



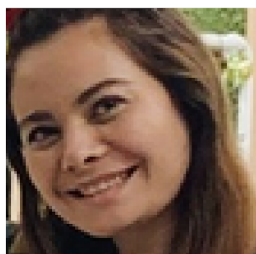
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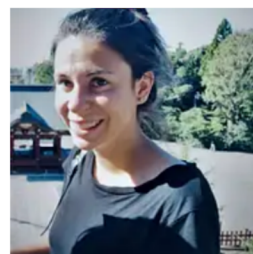
Not pictured:
Kai Goldstein
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Lori Forsyth



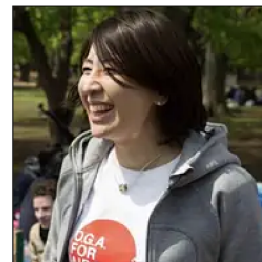
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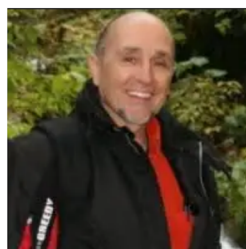
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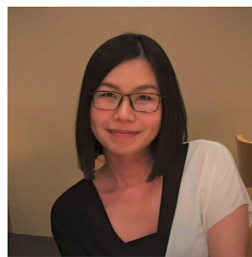
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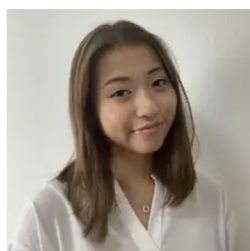
THE TEAM



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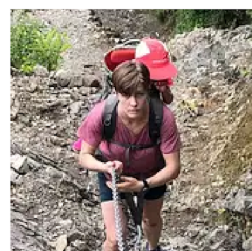
Not Pictured:
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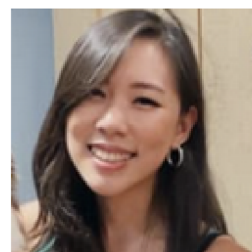
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**THANK
YOU TO
ALL OUR
SPONSORS**



PLACE TO GROW

Inspiring the next generation of Tohoku, Japan

2011-2021 Sponsors

2011-2012

Major support was provided by Mitsubishi Corporation, Nishimachi International School, Apache, Capital Services, Australia Society, and Johnson and Johnson K.K.



2013-2014

Major support was provided by Give to Asia, Refugees Empowerment International, Japan Society, Knights in White Lyrca, British American Tobacco, Mozaic, The Tokyo Club, and Johnson and Johnson K.K.



2015-2016

Major support was provided by Knights in White Lyrca, KIBOW, JIC, Robert Half, Taiho Pharma, Nishimachi International School, Ohana International school, and Johnson & Johnson K.K.



2017-2018

Major support was provided by Taiho Pharma, Hogan Lovells, Nishimachi International School, Ohana International school, and Johnson & Johnson K.K.



2019-2021

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2020-2022

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2020-2022



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