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“Remembering Michiko Watanabe”

Kaori Kurumaji

Last year (2021) around February 11, Michiko Watanabe, a board member, passed away suddenly. It has been nearly one year since her passing. I would like to remember her wonderful personality as we trace the path she took with WFC.

Michiko was born in Manchuria in 1934. After repatriating from China, she lived in Iwakuni and later worked as a librarian. She moved to Hiroshima with her husband around 1985, joined Fuchu Church, and later became a WFC Board member.

Since then, we worked on many things together, such as activities and trips at WFC, for 30 years. I used to give her rides on the way home after Board meetings or Peace Seminar meetings. We always enjoyed the lovely conversations we had with friends who rode with us.

Michiko and I belonged to the Peace Seminar together for about 20 years. We listened to Mr. Kihara’s lectures about nuclear issues once a month and also went on field work tours visiting nuclear power plant sites and a pumped-storage power plant in the Chugoku and Shikoku areas.



Ms. Watanabe at Peace Seminar

In addition, Michiko and I visited Shimane prefecture and Okinawa. We joined a group tour to Okinawa in January 2016. We traveled from Ocean Expo Park, which is famous for the Churaumi aquarium, to Himeyuri Monument in the southern end. I especially remember Shuri Castle Park in Naha City because it rained with strong winds. Our umbrellas were almost blown away during our visit. Shuri Castle burned down in a fire on October 31, 2019. Even now I can see in my mind’s eye Michiko trying hard to walk to catch up to the tour group.

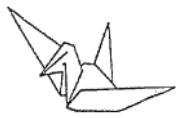


Trip to Okinawa

Michiko was a devoted Christian and a Board member of Fuchu Church. She helped the WFC directors with the process of getting a Japanese visa for many years. She was also a Board member of the kindergarten attached to Fuchu Church. The WFC Directors are supposed to dress up as Santa Claus at the children’s Christmas party.

Her husband, Masaharu Watanabe, passed away in May 2006 at the age of 80, and Michiko lived alone after that. So sometimes, on our way home before dropping her off, we would stop by the restaurant in the shopping mall and have dinner together. I have fond memories of standing in long lines at a restaurant from Tokyo that had a reputation for delicious koro-koro steaks.

Michiko was the type of person who spoke directly but had a bright personality. She was always smiling in photos. I also fondly remember her cheerful voice when we talked on the phone.



Late last February, I sent an email to her but did not get a reply, so I phoned Pastor Miyoshi from Fuchu Church. The next day, Pastor Miyoshi called me to inform me of Michiko's death.

A few days later, on a Sunday, there was a memorial service for Michiko at the church, which I attended with Michiko Yamane, the WFC Chair. A photo of Ms. Watanabe with a big smile on her face placed on the altar at the service is burned in my mind.

For a while, every time I drive my car, I will be reminded of Michiko, who used to sit in the passenger seat and will miss her.

Michiko Watanabe, I sincerely appreciate all the time we've spent together as a good friend. We will never forget your dedication and contribution to WFC. May your soul rest in peace!



The name of the rose is "Barbara," created by the first WFC Chair, Dr. Tomin Harada.

Chizuko Taguchi, WFC Board member, carefully nurtured it in her garden.

Photo / Chizuko Taguchi

"Remembering Emiko Okada"

Michiko Yamane

Emiko Okada suddenly collapsed during the WFC board meeting on April 10, 2021 and passed away. My sorrow has been lingering up to this day.

In 1987, she saw a newspaper article about WFC recruiting hibakusha to be sent to the United States as Peace Ambassadors and she applied. She always said that meeting Barbara Reynolds, the founder of WFC, while in the U.S. was the beginning of her participation in peace activities.

Since then, we had been friends for more than 30 years. She had been a good friend to me both through peace work and privately, and I had always been encouraged by her energy, cheerfulness, and positive attitude.

Personally, I also have good memories of traveling with her and our friends to visit the past WFC directors in the U.S..

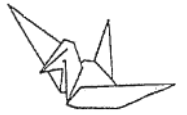


In Poland with Kanzen (friend of Ron-sensei)

In 1999, I visited Germany and Poland with the late Mieko Yamashita and two hibakusha (Emiko Okada and Fumiko Sora). Emiko Okada actively played an important role, giving hibakusha testimonies and introducing Japanese cultures like tea ceremony and calligraphy.

Then in 2010, three hibakusha, Emiko Okada, Kiyomi Kohno, and Sadae Kasaoka, went to the University of Central Missouri with three interpreters, Nobuko Morikawa, Sachiko Hiraoka, and myself. Just having Emiko Okada with us brightened up the whole place.

Mrs. Okada was a woman of "action." One example of her ability to take action was when the G8 Summit was held in Hokkaido in 2008, she sent letters to the leaders of each country inviting them to visit Hiroshima.



At the University of Central Missouri

Surprisingly, three countries (the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States) responded to the call and expressed their appreciation for her recommendation, although it was difficult to make the visit. Mrs. Okada said, "I would like to thank them for responding to a letter sent by one individual, and for taking the time to think about Hiroshima, even if only for a moment, when writing their response."

In 2016, prior to the Ise-Shima summit, there was a meeting of foreign ministers in Hiroshima City. She wrote letters to each foreign ministers at the time as well asking them to "think about what happens to human beings under the mushroom cloud if nuclear weapons were used. For the ministers not to just formally offer flowers in the Peace Memorial Park but to come in touch with the devastation that was caused. To visit the Peace Memorial Museum and see the charred lunch boxes, torn uniforms, and other artifacts and imagine what it would be like if the same thing happened to their own families."

Emiko Okada often said, "I talk about my A-bomb experiences not to blame Americans and make them feel guilty, but to make sure that the same tragedy never happens again."

"I want people to listen to the testimonies using their imagination as much as possible, and understand how inhumane and terrible nuclear weapons are."

Emiko Okada will forever live on in our hearts and be a beacon.

We pray from the bottom of our hearts that she rest in peace.

2021 Online Korean PAX

Megumi Mozume

Translated by: Midori Yamamitsu

On Saturday, May 29, 2021 Korean PAX was held online for the first time.

How would we be able to put on the event in a situation where it is not possible to travel to or from South Korea due to the pandemic? We had been preparing for this event for many meetings. Since it was the first time for us to hold an online event, we decided to ask past PAX participants to join us so that the event would take the form of a reunion. In addition, Mr. Lee Jong Keun (93 years old) and his daughter, who were supposed to be the guest speakers to talk about their own experiences if the event were held in Hiroshima as originally scheduled, also participated. We thank them for that. There were also new participants and I was one of them. I was smiling as the participants exchanged warm greetings as they met each other again online – it was a nice atmosphere.

We also faced challenges unique to online events. For example, Korean-English-Japanese translation didn't work well from time to time, and some parts of the presentations were left unclear. In addition, there were moments the Zoom operation got stalled. Next time, we would like to do better so that, more than anything, important messages from the participants will be well conveyed. Also, while this session served very well as a reunion of the past participants, we hope that the Korean PAX will be known by many more people in the general public and that would provide all of us with a good opportunity to learn together and deepen mutual understanding. And I hope that WFC will serve as a bridge and offer such venues.



2021 Online Korean PAX Participants



【2021 Online Korean PAX Program】

- Greetings: World Friendship Center / Peace Building Community
 - Session 1 "Korean PAX so far"

Presenter: Michiko Yamane / Chizuru Taguchi / Lee Jae Young / Park Yoonseo

- Session 2 "Breakout Room" - interact in small groups
- Session 3 "Reports and Questions"

Presenter: Masue Matsumoto "What I realized through PAX" (2019 participant)

Presenter: Megumi Mozume "The Old Army Clothing Depot in Hiroshima"

Presenter: Park Sungsil "About the third generation Korean Hibakusha"

- Closing: Taking photos of all the participants holding a message

【Participants' Comments】

<From Korean participants>

On one hand, I had to take some time to prepare and I had a hard time, but on the other hand, I am grateful for WFC's initiative. It was a pity some people didn't make it to the program that day. As an afterthought, I wish all of the participants had roles to play so that they had a sense of responsibility. It was good to know about the Old Army Clothing Branch Building. The event served as a useful opportunity to not only look back on Korean PAX, but also to learn new things and deepen the relationship between the two groups. It was a program that will connect us to the next generation at the grassroots level.

Peacebuilding Community

<From Japanese participants>

During the event, the memories of the Korean PAX from 2003 rushed in. I have participated in NARPI twice, and those Korean staff and participants have been good to me. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Keiko Miyamoto (participated in 2016)

Thanks to Zoom, I was able to unexpectedly reconnect with someone I knew and rebuild the relationship. Facing the historical issues between the two countries and working together consistently to remove the dark clouds over the Japan-Korea relationship is the very way to deepen true friendship and trust for the future; and I think that is the meaning of the Korean PAX.

Thank you in advance to those who will work with us for your support and cooperation.

Chizuko Taguchi
(participated in 2003/2009/2014)

I participated in the Korean PAX in 2019. Through this "Korea-Hiroshima Peace Envoy Exchange Program 2021 Online Alumni Association," although it was online, I am happy to be able to deepen exchanges with the Korean participants. I think this event served as a new page of Korean PAX.

WFC Vice Chair Shizuo Tachibana
(participated in 2019)

Although it was a short time, I was most impressed by the "breakout room" session. It was a very meaningful time for me as I had a chance, for example, to hear from those Korean PAX participants about how their impressions changed after they actually came to Japan. The stories about the second generation of the Korean Atomic Bomb survivors in South Korea were very interesting.

WFC Staff, Mirei Tashiro

I had a very thrilling, nostalgic, and happy time to see everyone. I've always wanted to go to Hiroshima to see the members of the WFC, so I was happy to see them all in that sense as well. Please take care of yourselves and let's hang in there together in this difficult time!

Kyoko



I was impressed by this wonderful online PAX. In addition to the efficient moderation, every PowerPoint presentation by the participants was great and I enjoyed it very much. In particular, the one by Ms. Mozume was excellent, and I thought "Ah, that's it. Using subtitles instead of interpretation is a good alternative!" Her English translation and the photos were very good as well. I thought that they gave Korean participants a good idea about the Old Army Clothing Branch Building. I did not realize that the event was meant to be an online alumni gathering. It was great to see everyone enjoying it. During the breakout room session, Jim-sensei led the small talk by suggesting a topic and we had a very good exchange. It was fun.

WFC Board, Yoko Mimura

"Participating in Korea PAX
for the first time"

As the event was intended to be an alumni gathering, I was a little nervous at the outset partly because I couldn't speak English. I did try to communicate in Korean, which I had learned a little, in an attempt to put together those words I could understand. It was sometimes hard, but I was happy that there was a moment when I could feel I could somehow make myself understood a little.

In Session 3, I did my presentation titled "About the Old Army Clothing Branch Building." Since I don't speak English, I put English subtitles on my PowerPoint slides. For this, I got help from many people and I thank them all very much for their help. As for the next event, I am hoping to be able to get more people involved and deepen our understanding of Korea and Japan.

WFC Board, Megumi Mozume

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"A Hibakusha's Message of Peace"

(August 6, 2021 Zoom Event)

Ron Klein | Katsumi Takahashi



Because COVID stopped all visitors from coming to WFC last year, WFC held "A Hibakusha's Message of Peace," a Zoom event on August 6, 2021. The event lasted one hour and had four parts.

Roger started the program by introducing "WFC and our mission." Mikiko continued by talking about the "Background to August 6 and what happened immediately after the dropping of the atomic bomb." She read an account written by Mr. Yoshiteru Kosakai, director of the Hiroshima City Archives Library. Kathy explained the "Importance of the hibakusha's testimonies," followed by Takahashi-san's introduction of the featured speaker, Mr. Minoru Hataguchi. Mr. Hataguchi was exposed in utero when the atomic bomb was dropped. He is now 75 and is the former director of the Peace Memorial Museum.

【Testimony by Mr. Hataguchi】

Using slides, Mr. Hataguchi talked about his family's story. His family lived in Miyajima-guchi, 20km from the epicenter. However, his father worked for the Railway Bureau, whose office was at Hiroshima station, 1.8km from the epicenter. After four days, the rail service was restored, but his father still did not come home. His mother went to the station, and near his workstation, she found his pocket watch and belt buckle. He was 31 years old.



Mr. Hataguchi grew up hating the Americans, and when he was 21, he received his Atomic Bomb Survivor Health Book, but resented being considered a hibakusha. On the 50th anniversary of his father's death, Mr. Hataguchi added the pocket watch and belt buckle into the tomb, and reconciled with the loss of his father. A year later, he became the Director of the Peace Memorial Museum.

He ended his talk by describing the physical and emotional traumas that hibakusha have faced, even 76 years after the bombing. He concluded by describing the "hibakusha's reconciliation mind" of overcoming hatred, quoting the Buddha, "Hatred does not end with more hatred; hatred ends only by love."

More than 70 people participated in America and Europe, and after the program, many people sent their messages in the Zoom chat.

Encouraged by the positive response we received, WFC will reach out to schools and host more live online hibakusha talks during the year. And certainly, the second "A Hibakusha's Message for Peace" will take place this August 6.

American PAX (online) October 3-9, 2021

Roger Edmark

Translated by: Yoko Mimura

American PAX was held online in October 2021. For seven days people in Japan and the United States gathered from across the ocean to hear Hibakusha stories, listen to presentations, ask and answer questions, and interact together. World Friendship Center (WFC) in Hiroshima, Japan was the sponsor and host for the event. WFC has a long history of peace exchanges dating back to the early 1960s. A presentation was given on the first day by Satoko Ochi about the history of PAX. This PAX event was the first time we had connected using Zoom. We were pleased that over 200 people, including four groups of university students, were able to take part.

Preparation and Coordination

Since the PAX Committee was in Hiroshima, Japan, it was important to work with coordinators from the United States.

The PAX Committee of WFC that took the leadership in developing the week-long event was Yoko Mimura, Chair; Shizuo Tachibana; Katsumi Takahashi; Satoko Ochi; and Mirei Tashiro.

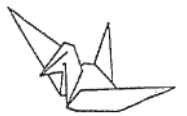
These friends of WFC agreed to be coordinators and to work with the WFC PAX committee to create the 2021 American PAX: Tanya Maus, Wilmington Ohio; Louise Matthews, Bluffton Ohio; Sandra Liechty, Bluffton Ohio; Barb Shenk & Dannie Otto, Champaign Illinois; Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Goshen Indiana; and Larry & JoAnn Sims, McMinnville Oregon.

A week-long schedule was developed to offer many opportunities for participants to find a day which fit their schedule. Roger and Kathy Edmark acted as the MC for every day of PAX, Mirei was the host for Zoom, and Megumi Mozume captured images on each day of PAX.

Hibakusha Talk

We are thankful for the generosity of their time in sharing their testimony and perspectives with all of us.

Soh Horie, Goro Nishida with Miho Ikeda as interpreter, Fumiaki Kajiya with Satoko, and Sadae Kasaoka with Sachiko Hiraoka gave their testimonies.



Presentations From Japan and America

Eight presentations were given from Japan.

- “Barbara & WFC” – Katsumi T. (Day 2 & 4); Yoko M. (Day 3 & 6); Mikiko Shimizu (Day 5)
- “History of PAX” – Satoko O. (Day 1)
- “Declaration of Interdependence” – Shizuo T. (Day 3)
- “Discrimination” – Shudo Univ. interns Madoka Akutagawa & Moeka Kawasaki (Day 7)

Seven presentations were given from America.

- “Introduction of Next Directors” – Matthew Bateman and Malachi Nelson (Day 1)
- “Nuclear Disarmament and the Arts” – Tanya Maus (Day 2)
- “Hiroshima to Hope” – Carol Stern and Hiroshima to Hope panel (Day 4)
 - Martha Brice, Shirley Shimada, Stan Shikuma
- “Yokohama Fire Bombing Survivor Talk” – Keiko Hara, Lima Sister Cities Member (Day 5)
- “Promoting Peace Through Literature and the Arts” – Louise Matthews (Day 6)
- “Under the Same Sky” – JoAnn Sims (Day 7)

- “Musical Presentation” – Michael Stern (assistance by Carol Stern) (Day 7)

Final Thoughts

Even before the World Friendship Center began in 1965, Barbara Reynolds toured the world with Hibakusha so that they could tell their stories and share testimonies face-to-face to convey the horrific experiences they went through being exposed to a nuclear bomb and radiation. Every day new people are born into this world that will know nothing about nuclear weapons unless someone tells them. So, though we all are hoping that the world rids itself of nuclear weapons; that people learn to live together in peace; and that we have war no more; there will always be a next generation that needs to hear these messages. We must continue to exchange information and establish friendships with each generation.

We want to thank all of the people that planned, presented, and participated in 2021 American PAX. You made a difference during that week which will shape the future for those that participated—for a lifetime.



Participation in International Festa Satoko Ochi

World Friendship Center took part in the “22nd International Festa” sponsored by Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation on November 20, 2021.

The event has been held every year since 2000, and its main participants are citizen groups which carry on international exchange activities.

Due to COVID 19, Festa functions such as “introduction of citizen activities” or “international charity bazaar” were canceled. There was no eating area where you can sample local foods, which was why I loved to go every year.

Most of the events were held live online this year. We, the WFC’s thrilled participants, got together in the meeting room at the International Conference Center and waited for our turn.



We started by introducing WFC’s current activities. Two of our main activities are to convey the message of A-bomb survivors, and to give Peace Park Guided Tours.

English classes, Peace Ambassador Exchange, and Pass-On Project are other activities. We explained our future plans regarding Peace Park Guides as well.



A presentation titled, “Barbara Reynolds and World Friendship Center,” used 50 slides to introduce her life, full of ups and downs, including what brought her to Hiroshima, her encounter with Hibakusha, two Peace Pilgrimages, and how it all relates to WFC.

Thanks to the detailed presentation, we learned that Barbara worked devotedly as a peace activist even after leaving Hiroshima.



Lastly the directors gave a speech about the routine work at WFC and English classes. It was so funny when Kathy said “Since we are treated like royalty here, it will be very strange to back home as nobodies.”

Many directors have come to Japan from the U.S. over the 56 years since its foundation. At the time of writing, the present directors are our 41st. Desire for peace will definitely be conveyed to future generations.

We couldn’t see the audience reaction as the event was held online, however we were able to raise awareness of WFC activities and Barbara Reynolds through presentations and speeches. We would like to participate in the International Festa again next time, increase the number of people we meet, and expand the circle of friendship by passing on Barbara’s vision “to foster peace, one friend at a time.”💖



Photos / Megumi Mozume



Kathy's Hiroshima Reflections

Kathy Edmark

One of my first memories happened as Roger and I were walking back to WFC along the river and I said to Roger, "Can you believe we are here living in Hiroshima!" After years of expecting to come someday and two years of actually planning and getting ready to come, we were here. What a joy!



We came with very few details or knowledge of how we would be doing anything. We knew we would be leading some English Conversation Classes and hosting guests and be involved with some peace activities. We felt called to come as directors, therefore the details didn't matter so much. We believe that when God calls a person to a task, He equips that person for the task. I was working on not worrying and not needing to know the details and instead on being ready for new experiences. Few details were revealed in our days of overlap training with Barb and Danny. Which was definitely ok because it was followed with lots of on-the-job training and support by staff, Riji and coaching from class members. All of you connected with WFC are gracious and embracing members. How welcomed and appreciated you made me feel. Thank you all!

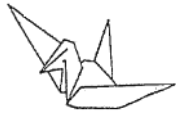
There have been a few challenges:

One big one for me was learning names. It took over two years and my brain still feeds me the wrong name sometimes. Thank you for your patience and forgiveness.

Another challenge comes from not being fluent in Japanese. It makes grocery shopping interesting. We have learned that Google translate has limitations. Cleaning and refill products are also all in Japanese with an occasional English word or two. Not to worry, just take a picture of the necessary empty container and if I can't find it on my own, a store employee or another customer can usually help me find the right product. I realized I really wanted to be able to read Hiragana and Katakana at least. After hours of learning **Hiragana and Katakana in one Hour** on line and using homemade flash cards, I now find that skill helpful. Not being able to communicate in Japanese, both understanding and speaking, sometimes causes limitations. There have been many peace activities and programs that we have not been able to participate in. I am thankful that speaking Japanese has not been required for English Conversation Classes and hosting guests from around the world, our two main activities as directors.

Breaking my ankle was an accidental challenge. Thank goodness for some help from Google Translate and lots of help from Miho and Mirei to get access to the medical system. Also, kindness and support from WFC friends with equipment, gifts of food, well wishes, and traditional Japanese gifts.

Living here for two-plus years has been such a blessing. Getting to know our class members and doing things with our classes has created strong friendships. We have come to love and value each of you and thoroughly enjoy our time together. You have taught us so much in your sharing of your lives, interests, travels and personal learnings through book reports, pictures and brochures of special places, celebrations, performances, and exhibitions, and yes, about the Toyo Carp! You have shared special foods, fruits and vegetables, and treats. My head and heart and stomach are full of good memories.



Hiroshima is a special place for me in several ways: the beauty of the rivers; looking for fish and seeing the change with the tides; hills with magnificent views and lots of stairs to climb and temples and shrines to visit; seasons with vibrant colors of illuminations in the winter, spring with flowers flowing from one variety to another in a kaleidoscope of colors, summer greens to the tune of semi and the relief of air conditioning; fall brings brilliant oranges and reds as we are reminded of the cycle of life and share in the harvest abundance.



My greatest blessing has been learning Hiroshima's story. I am so grateful to have heard the stories of many hibakusha both in person and in written or recorded form. Though they bring me to tears as I learn of their unimaginable suffering and loss. They also persuade me to pursue the abolition of the nuclear threat by their own focus on prevention of a repeat and by their not harboring anger or a desire for revenge. I am aware that where WFC is located, and I have been living, was flattened by the A-bomb; that the rivers I cross carried floating corpses; that red sunsets remind some of the burning city; that beautiful Shukkeien Garden was a place of evacuation for many burned victims who didn't make it. I am an American citizen by birth but I now choose to be a global citizen and do not want nuclear weapons to be used on anyone ever again.

I can't thank the hibakusha we have met through WFC enough for becoming our friends as they continue to share their stories and work for peace.

WFC members and friends give so much to keep the vision of WFC alive and growing as they foster peace one friend at a time. You are keeping the record of the past and changing and stretching to flourish in the future. We will continue to support WFC after we leave Japan with our prayers, donations, and participation in online events. We hope to extend our hospitality to you when you visit the Seattle or Spokane area. We do refer to our house unofficially as the **Edmark B & B**. May God bless you all.

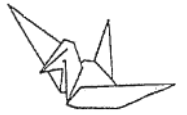


Farewell Address

Roger Edmark

Moving across the ocean for two years was a big decision in our lives, but it was one we had been preparing to make for 15 years. Our family knew we were interested because we talked about it with them. But 15 years is a long time to stay on track. When we received the call asking if we were ready to go, we initially were not sure we were ready. We had been to Hiroshima 14 years earlier for a day and a half as a guest and we had read information about WFC, but two years is a long time. After a little soul searching, we got ready and said yes!

We came for several reasons: 1) to serve as a volunteer at WFC; 2) a deep interest in Japan (Kathy lived 10 years in Japan as a child and I took 25 business trips to Japan over about 30 years); 3) the opportunity to meet others that shared a like-minded desire to foster peace not war; and 4) to learn more about the effect of nuclear weapons.



Growing up in the Church of the Brethren, a historical Christian peace church in the United States, I learned certain values that are at the core of church teachings. Though WFC is not a religious organization, it embodies many of those same values – non-violence (or pacifism); love and compassion for our neighbors and friends all over the world; volunteer service; and advocating for a heart of peace in each person we meet.

For the first seven months of our service to WFC, we did exactly what we expected to do – host guests in Hiroshima to study peace. We could see how WFC’s motto “fostering peace, one friend at a time” was lived out every day. Then the pandemic hit and there were almost no guests for two years. And while it is true that we had way fewer guests, we also had more time to get to know the WFC staff, volunteers, English class members and others that are part of the peace culture of Hiroshima. What a wonderful blessing that became in our lives.

Without guests, we served WFC as an organization more than we would have if guest were here. I had more time to think about WFC with its unique vision and purpose for Hiroshima and the world. Strategic planning and organizational skills I had developed became valuable as WFC formulated a vision for the future. Though many local WFC volunteers think they are not doing enough, WFC does have very dedicated, committed, and hardworking volunteers.

We also had a little more time to explore the mountains, hills, rivers and seas around Hiroshima. When Kathy broke her ankle, she was told to walk a lot to heal and strengthen it. We started walking and have never stopped. We love the beauty of Hiroshima. That was not why we came to Hiroshima or World Friendship Center. It was a bonus!

The best part of WFC are the many friends we have met. We see the same 50 students and volunteers most every month, but also have met other friends in the community. Even though all of them knew we would be gone in about two years, they treat us like they are our friends forever, and to us they are.



Every director comes with some idea of what they expect to give. For us, it was hospitality with the guests as they came to WFC to study peace and learn. We were able to do that for about 7 months and really enjoyed it. What we did not expect was how much we would be on the receiving end of the hospitality and friendships of those we lived with side by side for over two years in Hiroshima.

We heard stories of heartbreak and loss that opened our heart to the marginalized victims of the bomb – the Hibakusha. A war fought with atomic bombs will wipe out most of the human race and leave those who survive dealing with radiation sickness for the rest of their lives. The devastation will be many times magnified from the unimaginable tragedy of Hiroshima. Atomic bombs need to be abolished.

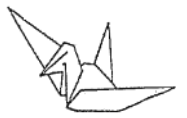
THANK YOU!

Many people volunteered their time to help WFC in various ways in 2021.

Book organization, translation, garden pruning and care, room renovation, documentation, archives, making things, etc.

In addition, while WFC has had no guests due to the coronavirus, we have received donations from many people from Japan and abroad.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



Every experience we jump into; every person we meet; every time we stretch our mind or take a chance, we change. Over the last two years, we read so many books exploring the war, the bomb, and the recovery. Each widened our perspective. All of these experiences made us think and change, and thus enriched our lives.

We have been greatly blessed by this experience and will miss seeing the many amazing friends we got to know.



Photo / Megumi Mozume

Looking Back on 10 Years as Chairperson

Michiko Yamane

Over 40 years have passed since I got involved with WFC. While raising my children, I kept on visiting WFC, and I expanded my horizon to the world by meeting wonderful guests from abroad through volunteer activities like translation of hibakusha testimonies and guided tours around Peace Park monuments. Out of 40 director couples that came from America since WFC was founded, I came to know as many as 25 couples. At the time of writing, the present directors, Roger & Kathy, are the 41st. I was appointed as the 3rd chairperson at the general meeting in May 2012. I felt tremendous pressure because both of the former chairpersons were such great leaders.

I have worked with five director couples during the ten years, and I was encouraged by all of them who were pacifists with a strong spirit of dedication. I was lucky to have worked together with those kind and thoughtful people.

During the ten years, I have experienced quite a few big projects hand-in-hand with fellow members. One was the drama “Breaking the Silence,” depicting the internment of Japanese Americans; and another was the “One World Peace Concert” which was staged in 2013.

In April 2015, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of WFC. We held a week-long memorial event including a ceremony in Shukkeien Garden where we invited 27 guests from abroad such as former directors and Barbara Reynolds’ family members. Mike Stern was invited to perform a concert at Aster Plaza again. Mr. Nagami, I.G.L. chairperson, gave a lecture on his encounter with Barbara Reynolds. The last event was an overnight trip to a hot spring, Kagura-Monzen-Tojimura together with the guests from abroad.

I attended the 40th Anniversary of the Peace Resource Center at Wilmington College with Asaka Watanabe and Miho Ikeda in September 2015. We enjoyed a reunion with Tanya, Jessica, and the former directors. JoAnn and Larry took us to the Minidoka Internment Camp, which was a moving experience.

Peace Ambassador Exchange (PAX) is one of WFC’s important programs. Fortunately, I was able to visit Germany, Poland, America, and Korea with PAX. WFC also accepted teachers from the Middle East led by Ray Matsumiya in August, 2016.

WFC has steadily been working for peace. I think there is no other organization like us that has been working for over 50 years.





I have decided to step down from being WFC's chairperson because I thought it would be good timing for me having worked as chairperson for 10 years. However, I will continue to be a regular board member taking part in WFC activities like Mutsumien Nursing Home visits with my sidekick, Shin-chan, translation of hibakusha's A-bomb accounts, and guided tours around the Peace Memorial Park.



My comment on resigning as Vice-Chair of WFC

Kaori Kurumaji

I made up my mind to resign as vice-chair, where I have served since 2014. I'd like to take this opportunity to look back on my relationship with WFC.

It started when I met Barbara Reynolds for the first time at WFC in Midorimachi in the Summer of 1977. Barbara went back to her country in 1969 but visited Hiroshima from time to time. I saw both Barbara and Dr. Tomin Harada, our chairperson at that time, sitting together in front of the alcove of a tatami room at the meeting.

After the meeting, Barbara smiled at me, although I was a total stranger to her when I went past her in that corridor. I was completely attracted by her warm charming smile despite not exchanging a word.

After that, I met Maurine Parker, the director of WFC at that time. I used to belong to the Hiroshima UNESCO Youth Club when I was younger. One day they held a picnic at the Mikumari Gorge located in a suburb of Hiroshima city.

She participated in it and I made friends with her as I interpreted for her. I happened to know that she lived alone without any assistant at WFC because a Japanese staff member got married to an American man and quit her job. I decided to become a live-in staff and help her since I liked her personality very much.

This is how I started working for WFC day and night in an old but prestigious Japanese-style house in Midorimachi. I remember that working and living with Maurine was exciting and so much fun. There were neither personal computers nor smartphones at that time, so we were not as busy as today. Dr. Harada faithfully attended the board meeting every month although he was very busy as a doctor on active service. He left the management of WFC to Maurine and myself. I think he trusted us.



Maurine Parker and Kaori Kurumaji
(around 1980)

The most interesting thing about working as a live-in staff was interacting with the overnight guests. I enjoyed chatting with them. The conversations with them were stimulating. I assumed that WFC guests have been friendly and peaceful. Some of them traveled all over the world and stopped at WFC on their way. WFC in Midorimachi was an old Japanese style house, so we couldn't lock up properly. However it had never been burglarized.



I quit the staff job in March 1980 but continued to work for WFC as a volunteer board member. My position in WFC has changed a few times but my loyalty towards WFC won't change. I'd like to serve for WFC as long as my health allows me. Thank you.



The 25th Anniversary of WFC (August, 1990)

Introduction of New Director Matthew Matthew Bateman

In 1999, starting another chapter in my search for a great learning environment, I found myself staring at the new door to my new third grade classroom in a new school. On the other side of that door was a room full of mostly unfamiliar students, and a teacher about which I knew nothing. At that age, it was scary, and it was only with the reassurance of my best friend at the time that I found the courage to cross that threshold. The teacher who welcomed me was one who truly listened to the students, made sure everyone felt included, and taught us how to understand those around us.

This was my introduction to JoAnn Sims (WFC Director 2012-2013 with husband Larry), and the start of the path that brought me to the World Friendship Center in her footsteps.

In the summer of 2013, at JoAnn's invitation, I came to Hiroshima for the first time to learn from the hibakusha and stay at WFC.

I lined this up with the Rotary International Peace Convention going on at the Peace Park at the same time, but quickly found that WFC provided much more meaningful engagement—in fact, we managed to squeeze nearly 20 young Rotarians to listen to a hibakusha story in the living room. Later that year, we coordinated the PAX visit to include a presentation on my college campus, and this was later followed up by an event on Japanese-American internment during WWII.

When I was accepted as the new Director in early 2021, we had no way of knowing when the borders would open back up, and this went on for seven months. I continued my work in technology, primarily regarding how we communicate knowledge and ethics. I enjoyed SCUBA diving, board games, pickleball, family time, reading, getting to know Malachi, and more and more hobbies as time went on.



You can see the moments that inspired me to plan for volunteering here during retirement, but with the pandemic I now find myself here 40 years ahead of schedule. That I can seize the opportunity now is baffling, but the way forward is clear: bring a learner's mindset and my energy to support the work of the WFC towards peace and nuclear abolishment.



Introduction of New Director Malachi

Malachi Nelson

In early 2021, my friend JoAnn Sims invited me to learn about work with the World Friendship Center as a Director. I've admired her for her responsible and inclusive faith, and her assistance to those in society who are less fortunate. Additionally, she is a former Director herself, and in leadership with WFC today, so I was able to seriously consider work with WFC and ultimately pursued a position as Director in the next months. After I was accepted as Director, I spent the rest of 2021 and into 2022 learning about the hibakusha, preparing my visa, and getting to know my co-Director, Matthew.



From its beginning, WFC has sought peace and has argued against the use of nuclear weapons. We do this by providing hospitality to guests, introducing them to hibakushas' stories, and helping them create peace in their corner of the world—it's harder to fear someone and work against them when you know them personally. I have experienced this personally in my various encounters with people different from me through my travels, work in healthcare, public health, in religious circles, and by volunteering. While globalization and interdependence are on the rise, the proliferation of nuclear weapons reflects a deep distrust still entrenched between peoples and their nations.

The stories of the hibakusha and the stories our communities create today have the potential to overcome our prejudices and move us all toward lasting peace.

I consider it an honor to serve with Matthew as a Director, and am enjoying facilitating and expanding the ongoing work of WFC. We have an amazing community around us which gives us confidence and guidance in the work we do. The stories of the hibakusha and the spaces which the WFC creates to collaborate on peace work are unique offerings to a world in dire need of them. As Japan opens its borders to tourists, I look forward to welcoming you to a place where together we can "foster peace, one friend at a time."

Report on the Activities of the Future Committee

Katsumi Takahashi

Translated by Mikiko Shimizu

The ad hoc Future Committee was created by a vote of the Board at the riji meeting in October, 2020.

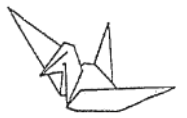
In order to clarify what the future of WFC should be and what we want to achieve as a government-authorized NPO, we held 22 committee meetings over a year and a half. This progress report will identify and resolve issues and provide information on committee activities.

1. Initial Status of Committee

There have been no foreign visitors since early 2020 because of COVID-19, and their absence has presented serious challenges for the WFC. The directors, Roger and Kathy Edmark, and a staff member, Mirei Tashiro, realized this serious financial condition. They proposed that the Executive Committee survey all board members about the future of WFC via email immediately.

2. Issues Revealed

The starting point of the NPO was Barbara's spirit, and our greatest issue is that our focus on this mission is severely weakening.



Before the pandemic, we were fortunate enough to have received many guests from abroad, and being so focused on them, we mainly followed precedents without having time to check our “mission” or reflect on our activities.

(Result)

Little by little, we lost opportunities to transmit our information, and the visibility of the WFC, which existed as “an entrance to Hiroshima” from abroad, became poorer than in the past. Also, the growth in number of members became stagnant, the financial base became weak, and the number of active members became fixed and aging.

In fact, this issue was not recognized until now. Current Honorary Board member Steve Leeper pointed out in the “Yu-Ai” 50th anniversary report that the Center (WFC) would be in grave danger in 50 years.

At the time of the 50th anniversary, there was already a vague anxiety that WFC could not continue like this in light of the aging population both inside and outside the WFC, including the A-bomb survivors.

Suggested Remedies:

- Re-establish WFC’s mission (Barbara’s spirit)
- Appeal to the outside
- Strengthen the financial base

We have focused on above measures and proceeded with a series of concrete measures.

Further highlighted during our proceedings was a series of measures to change the way of thinking by the board members.

1. Activities and Outcomes

- Reaffirming and re-establishing of the WFC’s mission (Barbara’s spirit)

The discussion of the WFC’s mission (Barbara’s spirit) was wide-ranging, and awareness of the board members also changed through this discussion.

<What was confirmed>

WFC’s first mission (Barbara’s spirit) is to “convey the reality of the atomic bombing to the world and to appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons.”

<Conclusion>

The two pillars are “a place for the testimony of A-bomb survivors” and “provision of Peace Memorial Park guides.”

<Action>

“A place for the testimony of A-bomb survivors”

- the “Online A-bombed Testimony Team” was formed.
- “Hiroshima Day” (on August 6, 2021, the anniversary of the A-bombing, WFC first sent an online message of peace from the A-bomb survivors to the world) (2021.8).
- “American PAX” (2021.9.3~9) Testimonies of the A-bomb survivors were delivered to the world in English for 5 consecutive days.
- “Providing a place for A-bomb testimony in schools” (Shimane University, Yokohama Municipal Oda Elementary School, etc.)

<Action>

“Providing of Peace Memorial Park Guides”

- Creation of new systems for enhancement of the contents of the tour for Peace Memorial Park and nurturing new guides.

- Appealing to the outside

<What has been confirmed>

What is the World Friendship Center? Who was Barbara Reynolds?

What kind of history does WFC have? In order to let people know about the WFC itself, we will better advertise what the WFC does.

<Action>

Edit and publish the booklet “Barbara Reynolds and the World Friendship Center.

Wide distribution of materials (A5 paper, 8 pages, in Japanese & English. Also available on the website Autumn, 2021)

- Appearing in Chugoku News Paper (2022.1.12)



Read the booklet>>
shorturl.at/kyAP6



<Action>

Propose and implement annual events

→ Barbara's Day (tentative name)

→ Hiroshima Day (2021)

→ International Festa Participation (2021)

<Action>

Preparation of presentation materials (Japanese & English PowerPoint)

<Action>

Public relations activities, etc.

→ Publication of the WFC "Newsletter"

→ PR activities using SMS

→ We applied for the "Hiroshima Peace Grant"(PIIF Hiroshima Creation Fund, but unfortunately were not successful.)

● Strengthen Financial Base, Increase Members

<What has been confirmed>

For many years, the WFC's weak financial position has always been a challenge. The same problem was always brought up in the "Yu-Ai" report. There was a chance to take action to solve the problem, but the financial base has not been strengthened yet.

As an NPO with a long history and good reputation, the WFC must be proactive in encouraging other to become member of the WFC, thus leading to membership expansion. This expansion, in turn, will naturally lead to the strengthening of the financial base.

<Action>

→ "Supporting Members" was newly approved in the Article of Incorporation. (General Meeting 2021.5)

Printing of "Membership Recruitment Flyers" and the booklet "Barbara Reynolds and the World Friendship Center" to create an environment fostering membership growth.

→ In response to Director Roger's presentation, "Aspiration, Dreams, and Visions", board members will become more aware of challenging issues.

→ Decision to aim for promotion to a higher-level government- authorized NPO with many benefits for donors. (2021.6 Board meeting)

<Summary>

Although we are still only halfway through the process of becoming more aware of the challenges, board members themselves will act on their own initiative, building on what has been established by the Future Committee. Additionally, we will act to pass the baton to the future generations at the WFC as a peace organization in Hiroshima, which will soon celebrate the 77th anniversary of the A-bombing.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Future Committee who have always worked together selflessly: Satoko Ochi, Mikiko Shimizu, Mirei Tashiro, Megumi Mozume, and Michiko Yamane.

Thank you all very much.

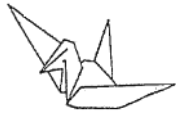
Two Archival Projects

Shizuo Tachibana

Two archival projects are currently underway at the WFC. We are working with Tanya Maus, Director of the Peace Resource Center at Wilmington College, and Yayoi Tsutsui, an archivist, to preserve the materials so that they can be used effectively by future generations, not only in Japan but also internationally.

The first project relates to WFC materials. We have materials on peace pilgrimages before the founding of the WFC, and various other materials covering more than half a century, and we are in the process of organizing and cataloging these materials.

Another project is the Morishita Papers, which is what we call the collection of primary sources and artifacts owned by WFC Honorary Chairperson Hiromu Morishita; whereas the WFC collection is about 20 cardboard boxes, the Morishita Papers are enormous. The broad range of his activities can be seen in the wide variety of materials in his collection (A-bomb-related, peace education, overseas peace missions, calligraphy, etc.). We are working to open up the huge number of boxes and write down what materials are stored in them, and to make a list of the many books in his collection. He hopes to donate these materials to institutions that will make good use of them for future generations.



Here are the comments from two of the volunteers who are working on the archives.

"I have been organizing Morishita-sensei's materials for about six months now, and each time I am overwhelmed by the variety and quantity of his materials. I am always excited to see what kind of materials are in there. When I found a postcard in the handwriting of the poet Sadako Kurihara and a document written by Toshiko Saeki, the keeper of the memorial tower, I couldn't help but stop my work. I took notes, thinking that each of the materials must be a treasure for someone. Why don't you participate in this project and find your own treasures?" (Atsuko Yasutake, working on the Morishita Papers)

"There are unexpected discoveries when working on the archives. Since its founding in 1965, the WFC has been a place where people from Japan and abroad have come to learn about Hiroshima by first visiting the WFC in Hiroshima. When a guest from the U.S. wanted to meet with Sadako Kurihara, the board members showed their hospitality by showing her around with her.

"There were letters and newspaper clippings from that time, and I was surprised to find an article in the Chugoku Shimbun about 'WFC looking for relocation from Minami Kanon', and a newspaper of Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1945, but it was a copy newspaper published in the 1980s. Kathy, the [41st] co-director, has been helping me with the legible handwritten letters and I am enjoying the process." (Yoko Mimura, working on the Morishita Papers, and WFC Archives)

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude to the volunteers who are involved in this project, and to invite readers to participate in this project.



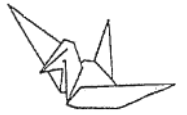
Pamphlet for the 2nd Peace Pilgrimage

A year of the WFC Pass-On Lecture Shizuo Tachibana

Two years ago, COVID-19 spread around the world, and since 2017, we have been meeting almost once a month in the Japanese-style room of WFC, sometimes outdoors, which we had been continuing to learn with the participants through fieldwork, but that all changed. We were unable to do anything for a few months, but in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, we took a new step forward, conducting an online course. Since then, we have experienced several waves of infection, but we have been able to continue our online courses and face-to-face fieldwork.



By offering the lectures online, we were able to include people from outside of Hiroshima City and the prefecture. At times, we even had participants from the United States and France. In addition, the number of participants increased through social media, networking, and word of mouth. Before the Covid-19 spread, the number of participants was limited due to the space available at the venue, and the total number of participants since the start of the course was only a few dozen. However, the total number of participants since 2017 is now over 130. We have also started recording the sessions so that they can be viewed at a later date, and we feel that the sessions have grown into a useful course for those who want to learn about the atomic bombing and peace. We have asked the speakers to take video of the fieldwork when we visit the site for viewing purposes. We have received positive feedback that the videos are very helpful and can be viewed again and again as reference material for the day.



This year, we have planned the following sessions.

- April 24 "Fieldwork around Hijiyama to learn about the military area of Hiroshima and the A-bombed city of Hiroshima" Speaker: Mr. Shunsuke Taga
- May 22 Walking with Tamiki Hara's "Summer Flowers" online fieldwork
Speaker: Ms. Yoko Takehara
- June 26 "The former Army Clothing Depot"
Speaker: Mr. Shiishi Asoma and members of the newspaper club of Sotoku High School
- July 24 "Peace Education in Hiroshima"
Speaker: Mr. Hisaharu Matsui
- August 28 The A-bomb account of Mr. Lee Jong Keun
- September 25 "Deepening Hiroshima as a reporter and teacher"
Speaker: Mr. Hiromitsu Tokunaga
- October 23 Fieldwork "Visiting A-bombed trees"
Speaker: Ms. Kuniko Watanabe
- November 27 Fieldwork "Ninoshima Island, Another Hiroshima"
Speaker: Ms. Shoko Nakazawa
- December 11 "Learning from the World Peace Study Mission: The United States"
Speaker: Mr. Hiromu Morishita
- January 22 "Postwar Reconstruction of Hiroshima and the Construction of a New Identity"
Speaker: Mr. Masazumi Yugari
- Feb. 26 The A-bomb account of Ms. Michiko Furuya
- March 26 "Learning from the World Study Mission: Europe and the Soviet Union"
Speaker: Mr. Hiromu Morishita

I would like to thank all the participants, staff, and working team members of the WFC Pass-On Project for their participation. I would like to thank the speakers for their cooperation, not only on the day of the lecture, but also in the pre-meeting and preliminary visits.

We would like to continue to plan learning opportunities to pass on the hibakusha's wish for nuclear abolition and peace.



You can sign up for past lectures from our website – Pass-On Lecture Page
(available only in Japanese)
shorturl.at/biksB



Peace Seminar

Chizuko Taguchi

Translated by Masako Kido

The Peace Seminar is held every month except for August and December, and its motto is "Talking face to face." Last year it was held only four times because of the new type of coronavirus prevention measures.

The membership has increased from 8 to 12 in these three years and we have had informal discussions. Mrs. Michiko Watanabe, who supported the seminar as the leader, suddenly passed away last spring. We miss her very much.

The theme of the seminar:

We picked the following four themes as broad meanings of peace.

- How do we think about Shimane Nuclear Power Plant No. 2 from now on?
- After watching the movie "Fahrenheit 9/11", we thought back to when it occurred 20 years ago.
- We reflect on the events of 2021 and also think of the future.
- How do we judge the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

Summary of the seminars

Along with the global target of "Reduction of Carbon", nuclear power plant operation problems happened again. There are risks which the national government, local governments, and power plant companies agree to, including the problems of polluted water the nuclear power plant sends out into the ocean.

In Afghanistan, where the US Army withdrew, the Taliban provisional government was established and there is a possibility of it becoming a terrorism hotbed again. Afghanistan people are living in extreme poverty every day. Japan, as a country allied with the United States, has to worry about enlarging the military budget.

Russia, under the pretense of protecting Ukraine's eastern district which is a familiar Russia group, invaded Ukraine, and enacted a civilian massacre. Russia attacked nuclear facilities, and as an intimidation tactic, it threatened to use nuclear weapons.

Russia's thorough offensive is a big factor in Ukraine's independence from the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Many problems are developing. We need united action by the world through these talks.

Peace Doll Making Group

Kaori Kurumaji

We started up the Peace Doll Making Group a few years ago in order to revitalize the Peace Dolls which Ms. Chiyo Takeuchi created as a reply to Barbara Reynolds' request at the founding of WFC.

However, the group had to stop its activities last year since Ms. Yukiko Tanaka, who was teaching us how to make peace dolls, had an operation on her shoulder. Ms. Tanaka supported us to restart group meetings, although she was still in rehabilitation. We had a meeting after a long interval in the living room of WFC on May 24.

We are looking forward to having overnight guests again in the near future and would like to give our handmade peace dolls to them as a token of their stay. In order to do so, we are going to have regular meetings and make more peace dolls. That's all for this time. Thank you.



Please check the monthly WFC Events Calendar for time/date of each activity.

If you would like the WFC Events Calendar sent to your email every month, please email office@wfchiroshima.org.