

NEWS

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INTERNATIONAL
CHILD ART
FOUNDATION



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International Child Art Foundation Youths Host Art Exhibition in Japan

KANAZAWA – The International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) concluded the "Art for Peace" Exhibition at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan which was attended by over 3,000 people.

Rune Kondo, a student at Sophia University in Tokyo, a winner of the 2nd Art Olympiad and an ICAF Youth Board Member from Japan, organized this exhibition with ICAF Japan from March 13 to March 18 to bring artwork created by children around the world and introduce ICAF's peace building efforts to Japanese children, teachers and parents.

The exhibition displayed hundreds of artwork created by Art Olympiad winners from many countries and finalists in Japan. A section of the exhibition contained artwork dedicated to the people in Tohoku area who were affected by the earthquake/tsunami in March 2011 to emphasize the mission of ICAF to nurture children's creativity and develop empathy. This included works from Trappenhuis Elementary in Belgium, paintings from Chile depicting friendship among Japanese and Chilean people who suffered from similar earthquakes, and works co-created by children in Washington DC.

Sora Nithikasem, an eighth grade student at Heritage Middle School in Livingston, New Jersey, a winner of the 3rd Art Olympiad and an ICAF Youth Board Member, displayed her artwork titled "Cranes of Hope" which was co-created by visitors of the 4th World Children Festival in Washington, DC last June. Nithikasem hosted the "Hearts of Friendship" workshop at the Museum to let people in Kanazawa fold heart origamis and write encouragement messages for people in the affected area.

One message read, "Have hope and fight on, I will be rooting all the way." Another said, "After the darkest night, there will always be the morning." And yet another said, "One step at a time together."

"I would like to encourage hope and friendship between children around the world through these cranes and hearts," said Nithikasem. "I have this idea to combine different people's individuality to co-create something significant together."

Paper hearts from the workshop will travel back to Nithikasem's hometown in New Jersey. More paper hearts will be collected from local children in Livingston and all of them will be put together to create a larger collage piece. The "Hearts of Friendship" collage will be delivered to its final destination in Tohoku, Japan to give encouragement to children who are still affected by the disaster.

"Other workshops at the exhibition included puppet making with encouragement messages from Chile led by University of Desarrollo, and a tie-dye workshop conducted by Judith Yahaya, the Nigerian winner of the 4th Art Olympiad. "This experience has helped me gain more confidence by working with other children and adults at my workshop," said Yahaya.

Alongside many participants from all corners of Japan, Teruhito Sekine, a newly appointed ICAF Youth Board Member traveled eight hours to Kanazawa from his hometown to support the event.

The exhibition ended on Sunday, March 18 with several thousands of visitors, some of whom came from China, Ireland, Singapore, Sweden, and United Kingdom as well as California, Illinois, Massachusetts and New Jersey in the United States.

"I believe that this was a very successful event. Not only were children interested in the exhibition, but parents and adults also participated in the workshops which were supported by many international organizations," said Kondo.

"I am touched by the generosity and concerns for Japan from children all over the world," said Yuji Akimoto, director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art. "I was overwhelmed by the power of children."

"We are grateful to everyone who helped make this remarkable exhibition happen," said ICAF Chairman Dr. Ashfaq Ishaq. "We thank all the organizations and sponsors, including Brother International. The positive impact of exhibitions like this to make natural disaster victims realize they are not alone can never be overestimated."

About 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art

Situated in the center of Kanazawa City, the Museum is designed like a park by Pritzker Architecture Prize winners Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa. By providing creative experiences, the Museum serves as a bridge between the region and the art of the future. Kanazawa City has been designated by UNESCO as the City of Crafts and Folk Art.

About the International Child Art Foundation

ICAF has served as the leading art and creativity organization for American children and their international counterparts since 1997. ICAF employs the art for the development of creativity and empathy – key attributes of successful learners and leaders. Once every four years, ICAF launches the Art Olympiad—the world’s largest and most prestigious art program for children, which culminates in the World Children’s Festival in Washington, D.C. as the ‘Olympics’ of children’s imagination and co-creation. The ICAF Youth Board Members, some of the most creative children in the world, are Arts Olympiad winners. The 5th Art Olympiad will be launched in 2013 and the 5th World Children’s Festival will be held in 2015.