June 27 to July 4 Young American Journalists visit the Disaster area to hand over 7000 “Genki Mail (Hope Messages)” from American Children

“Let’s send ‘Genki Mail’ to people suffering from the Great East Japan Earthquake.”

In response to the above message by graduate school students majoring in journalism or young journalists, the number of “Genki Mail (Hope messages)” from elementary school students across the US has reached as many as 7,000. Five people representing the US journalists are scheduled to visit Japan late this month, and hand over the messages to people in the disaster affected area.

The leaders of this project have visited Japan through the Japan Foundation’s “US-Japan Journalism Fellowship”. During the stay in Japan, they were impressed by a “Genki Mail” project by a NGO group of Asia Africa Cooperation Environment Center (ACEC) based in Kobe, Japan, which gathered encouragement messages from both inside and outside of Japan when the Great Hanshin Earthquake occurred in 1995. “Genki Mail (Hope messages)” from the American elementary school students were translated into Japanese by ACEC this time.

Five people to come to Japan for this project will visit Ishinomaki city and Kesennuma city of Miyagi prefecture, and Rikuzentakada city of Iwate prefecture from June 28 to 30, and research the disaster area.

(Ref.: URL:http://genkinotes.org).

● “Genki Mail” project : Ceremony to present the letter of appreciation

The ceremony will be held to present the letter of appreciation by the Japan Foundation to the journalists who have gathered “Genki Mail” and ACEC translation volunteers before a visit to the disaster affected area.

■ Date: June 27, 10:00 to 10:50
■ Venue: The Japan Foundation JFIC 2F Hall Keyaki
  4-4-1 Yotsuya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

Schedule to visit Japan by the young American journalists

The Journalists will visit Miyagi and Iwate to hand over “Genki Mail” and learn the support activities there.

■ Sites to visit: Ishinomaki city and Kesennuma city, Miyagi prefecture, and Rikuzentakada city, Iwate Prefecture, Tokyo and Kobe
■ Participants: Sandra Garcia (Kyodo News), Kathleen Massara (Popular Science, Flavorpill), Kerry Davis (News 21 Fellowship), Stephen Nessen (New York Public Radio), Paul NIWA (Associate Professor of Journalism, Emerson College)
  * Please see the profile on the attached sheet.

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Profile of Participants:

Sandra (Sandie) Garcia
Sandra (Sandie) Garcia works as an assistant correspondent for Kyodo News covering the United States Department of State. Her passion for writing and reporting has been fueled through various internships and unique opportunities such as working as a flash quote reporter in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and as a 2009 fellow to Japan. She received a Masters Degree in Broadcast Journalism from Emerson College, Boston, Massachusetts in 2009.

Stephen Nessen
Stephen Nessen is a digital producer and reporter at WNYC (New York Public Radio), where he reports stories for on air and the Web, shoots photos, edits, and manages the Web site. Prior to that, he was a general assignment reporter for the New York Post, he produced podcasts for the New York Times and he was a producer at the NPR show StoryCorps. In addition, he’s freelanced for various local newspapers, the New York Times, the British music magazine Record Collector, and the public radio show Pacific Time. Nessen first traveled to Japan in 2010 as a fellowship recipient of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.

Kerry Davis
Kerry Davis is working as a multimedia reporter in the U.S. as a News21 Fellowship recipient, researching food safety issues within the U.S. importation system. She graduated with her master’s degree in journalism from The University of Maryland, College Park, in May 2011. Davis first traveled to Japan in 2010 as a fellowship recipient of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership. Davis works as a photographer as well. Before graduate school, Davis worked as a TV reporter at KVLY-TV in Fargo, N.D. and WPRI-TV in Providence, R.I.

Kathleen Massara
Kathleen Massara is a recent graduate of the Cultural Reporting and Criticism program at New York University and is currently a fact-checker at Popular Science, as well as the literary editor of Flavorpill. She received her B.A. in International Politics from McGill University in 2004.

Paul NIWA  (Associate Professor of Journalism, Emerson College)
Paul Niwa instructs students in broadcast, online and financial journalism at Emerson College in Boston. He has won national awards for his innovative teaching, research and professional works. Niwa is the founding organizer of the US-Japan Journalism Fellowship, a grant program of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership. He created experimental storytelling projects like BostonChinatown.org, The New Normal Project, EmersonInBeijing.com and apps for iPad, Android and ePub. His documentaries have been shown on PBS, NPR and at film festivals nationwide. Niwa is also a board member of the US-Japan Council, the Pacific Citizen Newspaper and the Asian American Journalists Association New England Chapter.