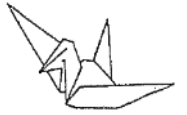


友 Yu-Ai 愛

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Foreword from the Chair

Shizuo Tachibana
WFC Chairman

What global situation have we lived through in 2023? The period of dealing with new coronavirus infections, which halted human travel, is now over; people are coming and going on a global scale. Natural disasters occurred in various parts of the world, global warming progressed, and environmental destruction continued.

The G7 summit was probably the most significant event for Hiroshima. The World Friendship Center was also involved in organizing the Citizens' Summit, from the standpoint of citizens, to deliver the voice of the citizens. However, the G7 Summit ended up as a political show far removed from the wishes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with the issuance of the "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament," predicated on nuclear deterrence.

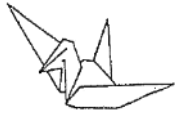
The Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference and the Second Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons were subsequently held. Hibakusha and young people continued to call for nuclear abolition. However, it was a dark year, with the ravages of war in Ukraine and Palestine and fears of the possible use of nuclear weapons.

People continue to meet, listen to the experiences of hibakusha, learn from peacemaking practices, and discuss and exchange ideas. In FY2023, face-to-face US PAX (Peace Ambassadors Exchange) and Korean PAX, suspended due to the spread of the coronavirus, were resumed.

In this edition of Yu-Ai, you can read articles about WFC activities at a broad grassroots level, including reports on PAX and the August 6th event. Underlying all activities flows our motto: "Fostering peace, One friend at a time."

I hope that this edition of Yu-Ai will be an opportunity for you to learn more about WFC's activities, and we hope that it will inspire you in your own peacemaking efforts. We hope to receive your continued support and cooperation.





Reflecting on Welcoming Guests

Malachi Nelson

WFC has a long and rich history of accepting guests and visitors from around the world. The voice of the hibakusha has international importance and WFC remains dedicated to amplifying its message through our peace programs. It has been a privilege for Matthew and I to learn how to help arrange Hibakusha Talks, Guided Tours, and to start a new Peace Program, the Coffee Hour. We're so grateful for the patience and guidance of office staff and volunteers in teaching us the ropes, and for their expertise in working with hibakusha and guests.

I thought I might write some impressions that I have had related to WFC's Peace Programs. I hope that these thoughts help you recall your own history with WFC and encourage you to invite more of your community to visit and take part in our programs.

The Hibakusha Talk program is our most important and timely offering. The bravery and resilience of each atomic bomb survivor to revisit this trauma again and again, and to answer different questions from visitors, grows more remarkable the longer I work as Director. We have seen these presentations touch the empathetic core of each listener—some are driven to ask many questions in the ensuing Q&A, others express a simple thanks before leaving to ponder what they have just heard, and still others might follow up in an email to share their thoughts after the conversation.

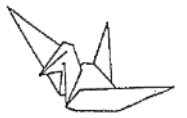


Guided Tours provide a structured environment for visitors to learn how the city and people of Hiroshima have memorialized the devastation of the atomic bomb—in the Peace Park, each monument represents a different group of victims (i.e. the mobilized students), influential activists (i.e. Barbara Reynolds and Marcel Junod), the reflections of hibakusha (i.e. the Hara Tamiki Monument), and Hiroshima's collective wish for peace (i.e. the Peace Bell). The A-Bombed Trees Tour strikingly shows the resilience of nature and Hiroshima, and the Schmoe House Tour illustrates the power of empathy to respond to human need, whether in your own country or internationally.



Coffee Hours are a chance for guests to connect with the history of WFC as it relates to Hiroshima and the world. I find that as I reflect on the history of our founder and organization, I am prompted to examine my own history, and what I will make of the future ahead of me.

We've met all sorts of people through these programs: tourists, filmmakers, community leaders, students, educators, business and government leaders, and more. We've had travelers and groups hailing from Japan, the US, France, Singapore, Germany, Northern Ireland, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Britain—I expect more countries to be added to this roster soon. Regardless of their walk of life, each visitor comes with a desire to learn more about peace and how they can pursue it.



In the early months of 2023, it was particularly heartwarming to meet the guests who have been planning their visit to WFC for years but who had been unable to visit due to COVID-19. There is a sense of joy in the initial communication we receive from them: “This trip has been a long time coming!” It has been so encouraging to finally meet these travelers whose desire to visit WFC has not diminished over these three long years of pandemic.

Sometimes, people reach out to us at the last minute or have schedules that don't work with our hibakusha or volunteers' schedules. However, we've still had opportunities to connect with such people in a meaningful way: one pair of filmmakers is working on putting the experience of the crew of the fishing vessel Lucky Dragon #5 into a film. They were referred to the World Friendship Center by a fellow traveler and we spent an evening laughing, sharing stories, and finding how WFC could help them on their project. We are excited to see their work come together!



Welcoming guests to WFC is an opportunity for each of us to ask how we have been affected by Hiroshima and WFC. How can we share this experience with our friends, families, and communities?

The remaining survivors of the atomic bomb are growing older, so the time to hear from them first-hand and learn from their experience directly is growing shorter. The need to foster peace through their testimonies feels more urgent than ever.

Maybe you haven't taken a Guided Tour of the Peace Park, the A-bombed Trees, or the Schmoie House yet. For native Hiroshimans looking to learn more history and improve their English, our Tour Training program trains volunteers to give tours of Peace Park and ensures the longevity of our Guided Tours program.

And lastly, stop by anytime for a cup of coffee, to learn about the history of WFC and Barbara Reynolds, and chat with Matthew and I. There are rich lessons in WFC's history which are waiting to be explored.

Lastly, we need your help to spread the word about the work of WFC—if you have been impacted by listening to a hibakusha or a guided tour by one of our WFC volunteers, invite your friends to visit WFC and take part in our Peace Programs. By sharing about our programs with your friends from around Japan and the world, you can be an intentional part of fostering peace, one friend at a time.

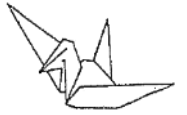


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Korean PAX 2023: 1-6 May 2023

Jim Ronald

This year's Korean PAX team was composed of Keunjeung Park, Hun Ryu, and 4-year-old Dan (a family), Jisook You, Hyungwoo Lee (Bruce Lee – who joined the first ever Korean PAX), Jiwon Park, Soyeon Kim and Hana Jung. Korean PAX started with the eight participants gathering in the lounge of the World Friendship Center, where directors Malachi and Matthew gave a brief introduction to the WFC, told us the story of the Peace Dolls, and gave each participant a Peace Doll.

At the nearby Danryu restaurant, over the welcome sushi and tempura dinner, we got to know each other. Following this, the participants went to their respective host families: Kido-sensei, Masue Matsumoto, Michiko Yamane, and Jim Ronald.

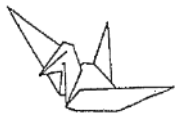
The following day began with a visit to Hiroshima Christian Social Center, and the daycare facility KARIN. The participants heard from Ms. Anh Kunju about the elderly Korean community in Hiroshima, and about Mr. Lee Jongne, a Korean zainichi hibakusha who passed away last year. After lunch, the group visited the Hiroshima Church of the Korean Christians and heard from the pastor, Yoichi Nakae, about the history of the church, the experiences of Korean people in Hiroshima, and about Pastor Kim, who was deeply involved with the Korean hibakusha coming to Japan for medical treatment, and with the erection of the memorial for Korean hibakusha.

Following this, the group was met at the Former Army Clothing Depot by the hibakusha Chieko Kiriake, who as a schoolgirl had been mobilized to work there. Kiriake-san talked about the history of the depot, one of the many military facilities around the city. At a local hall, she told the group about her life living near the depot, the Korean children in her class at school, and about her experience as a hibakusha. We finished the day with okonomiyaki.

On May 3, a workshop on restorative justice, led by Ms. Jisook You and Mr. Hyungwoo Lee, was held at Essor Hiroshima, looking over the A-Dome. About 30 people attended this session, and had the chance to not only learn what restorative justice is and how it works, but to feel its effects. Ms. Kyoko Lee served as interpreter. After lunch on the balcony of Essor, we had a time for “Fellowship and Discussion”, in mixed groups of Korean PAX participants, Japanese, non-Japanese, younger and older. We talked about ourselves, about our countries, and about some challenging issues.



The morning of May 4 was spent at the crowded Peace Memorial Museum, where the participants took time to read and understand, despite the crowds. This was followed by a tour of Peace Park, guided by Yoko Mimura and Miho Ikeda. We had a noodle lunch together, before going on to learn about A-bombed trees, then on to the little peace museum of Fukuromachi Elementary School, a place where survivors wrote messages on the soot-blackened walls, in the hope of meeting up with loved ones. From there we walked to Hondori, for some shopping and relaxing, before heading for the garden of Shukkeien. Our guide there was Yasuko Yamagata. We also took much needed time to relax, reflect, and share, sitting in a shelter by the lake.



The 5th of May was a day to visit Miyajima, accompanied by some host family members, Mireisan, Tachibana-san, and Tachibana-san. The group walked along Machiya street to avoid the crowds, and enjoyed the traditional Japanese houses, shrines, and temples, stopping to enjoy lunch and talking in a park overlooking the sea. After lunch, some headed for Hiroshima City to spend time at museums and shops, and others walked more slowly, enjoying nature and a café.

In the meantime, the group's luggage was moved to Mitaki Green Chapel's Smile-kan, where they would spend the last night. When everyone arrived, either from the city or directly from Miyajima, Malachi and Matthew prepared coffee, and we prepared plates of cakes and cookies. We enjoyed these as Malachi told us about the life of the Reynolds family and their journey towards activism and peacebuilding and, for Barbara, the founding of the World Friendship Center.

Next, our Korean friends prepared a really special Korean meal for us. At first, they – and some of us – thought it might be a kind of potluck dinner, but when it became clear that we would only be having what they cooked, they added to the menu, did some more shopping, and performed wonders in the kitchen!

Soon after 7:00pm, almost 20 of us were seated at two tables laden with delicious Korean dishes, and had a lovely leisurely dinner together. The party finished and we left our Korean friends at Smile-kan at about 9:00pm. They must have been exhausted after such a long day, but we heard that some of them stayed up talking until around 3:00 a.m.!

Korea PAX finished as we waved goodbye to our Korean friends at Hiroshima Station, where most of them headed to Hakata, and then to Korea from Fukuoka Airport.

Host families' reflections

Hyungwoo "Bruce" Lee stayed with Michiko Yamane and her husband, and they got on really well! As she wrote, "The reunion with Bruce Lee (he was part of the first Korean PAX team, in 2003, sponsored by Charles Sutton's Asia Fund) made me feel Korea all the closer and realize the significance of this Korean PAX strongly." Soyeon Kim and Hana Jung stayed with Masue Matsumoto: "They are part of God's family to me because they are both Christians. For five days, I felt like I was with my daughters or grandchildren." Masako Kido hosted Jisook You and Jiwon Park. They experienced Japanese culture and explained about Korean culture, too. My family and I hosted Keunjeung, Hun and little Dani. Jim's daughter Grace and Dan loved playing together, and the adults loved talking together.



We're back from PAX 2023

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Introducing the Peace Ambassador Exchange Program (PAX)

The Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC) in Korea and the World Friendship Center (WFC) in Japan started the Peace Ambassador Exchange Program (PAX) in 2003 as an exchange program to promote peace by looking at the history of the two countries from a victim-perpetrator perspective. Through the exchange visits, teams from Japan and Korea visited the Hiroshima A-bomb site and met with hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors), and teams from Korea visited the House of Sharing, the Demand Rally, Seodaemun Prison, and the DMZ, and they also experience a homestay. After a three-year hiatus due to Covid, the program resumed this year with a Korean team visiting Japan. Realizing the importance of knowing history and peace, PAX is an experiment in the possibility of overcoming conflict through people-to-people exchanges and hospitality.

Peace is Everywhere (Park Yi Keunjung)

"Mom, the bomb hit the elementary school, didn't it?"

There are buildings in Hiroshima that have been preserved since the atomic bombing, and this is what happened when we visited an elementary school. We had just come from an informal tour of the space, which is now a museum, after hearing stories of the children who attended the school. "The bomb went off," said the four-year-old, with a certain grimness in his voice. Coming from a child who was bored with following the adults' schedules, I was even more stunned. "Yes," Dani continued, "my brothers, who were a little older than me, got hurt when the bomb fell. It was something that no one imagined could happen, not my mom, not other adults, not anyone."

A memory I'd rather forget: August 6 [sic], 1945

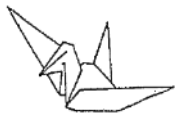
The short six-day trip was a tightly scheduled affair with excellent hospitality from our Japanese hosts at the World Friendship Center. I had the opportunity to meet a Japanese Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivor) and hear his story of that day. After staying in the vivid memories of the now elderly man who testified so vividly decades later, the lines and wrinkles on his face seemed even more wistful. The survivors of the atomic bombing who are now only a short while from their own deaths, whose stories do not end with their deaths, but continue to be told, and the efforts to train storytellers so that they can eventually be used to pave the way for peace, are all the more beautiful.

Hiroshima, where pain and peace coexist

When you visit Hiroshima, you'll notice that unlike other cities, the word "peace" is used a lot. Streets are named Peace, parks are named... Peace. Perhaps what they want to remember is not the horrific day, but the hope of enduring and overcoming the pain that followed and eventually creating peace. The many Koreans who were forced to live in Japan, many of whom lived in Hiroshima and were bombed, must have missed their homeland. These atomic bomb victims, people who lived and died with indelible marks in a strange land, will be remembered for a long time, and the Peace Park with their memorials will be remembered for a long time.

"Mom, we're taking the fastest Shinkansen, right?"

After my peace trip, I returned to Korea. A few days later, when I asked my child about the trip, all he could talk about was the Shinkansen ride. I wish I could be like him, but after experiencing firsthand the efforts and hard work of many people to keep the memory of that day alive, I feel that I should not be ashamed of my life today in front of my children and my neighbors. Although the word peace is not enough, I still send my encouragement and support to the efforts of many people around the world to end war and oppose nuclear war.

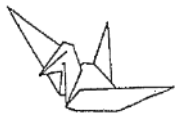


“Because you are you, I am” (Jung Hana)

How does a Korean American process a visit to Hiroshima? If this doesn't strike you as a question at odds, we must take a deeper look into the history of Hiroshima. On the morning of August 6, 1945, at 8:15 am, an atomic bomb fell upon the city of Hiroshima instantly taking the lives of 70,000 people [sic]. The specificity of data down to the date, hour, minute, and second are available through videos and statistics. Alarming, this form of massacre was the first in human history, both meticulously recorded and conducted by the United States. Data is marked as if a scientific experiment involving the death of hundreds of thousands. And shortly after this day, Korea declared freedom on August 15, 1945, from Japanese occupation since 1910. 43 Now, how does a Korean American process a visit to Hiroshima? With my vivifying identity, visiting a place so involved with both Korea and the United States furthered the challenge. I received the majority of my education in the U.S., and I have yet to hear the story of Hiroshima. This probably was not a mistake. I walked the streets of Hiroshima for 6 days along with those from Korea and Japan. It became clear to me that this pain, an understatement, inflicted upon an entire city is not one I can fully understand nor might I ever. However, as I continued to hear more about the relationship between the Northeast Asia region and its further neighbors, I came to realize that this pain was echoed by similar narratives from many, if not all, nations. And in complication, the conqueror was the one once victimized and vice versa. Although a short and partial reflection of my thoughts on this dilemma, I must reflect upon the undeniable gifts of my time with new friends: -Bright faces filled with excitement as they greeted us, complete strangers, as if we were long-seen family; -the hospitality of my host, who woke every morning at 6am to make breakfast and shared the stories collected in her photo albums neatly organized in her ceiling cabins; -kindness and care of our hosts that overcame all language barriers; -and the shared meals and conversations. I admit, that I close abruptly with a less hurried commitment to face and address the past, and remember ubuntu, a critical term used to stand against the South African apartheid, “I am, because you are.”

20 years, Hiroshima again (Hyungwoo “Bruce” Lee)

The first time I participated in PAX was in 2003, which was also the first year of PAX, and this year, 20 years later, I visited Hiroshima again. Memories of PAX 20 years ago, which had been forgotten or buried over the years, were revived by this visit, and blurred scenes became clearer. The spaces of the World Friendship Center (WFC), where the Korean and Japanese PAX teams met for the first time on the first day of arrival; the passionate members of the WFC, who were as eager PAX activists as ever, but now in their 70s and 80s; the clear skies of Hiroshima and the scars of the atomic bomb that dotted the city... The Hiroshima Peace Museum's focus on Japan as a victim of the atomic bomb, not as a perpetrator of war, was uncomfortable then and still is now, but in the end, it was a reminder that war is not the answer. PAX has been an exchange program for many years, so there is a lot of trust between WFC and KOPI and the programs were solid, but what stood out this year was the all-day workshop on the third day. In the morning, participants were introduced to restorative justice, and in the afternoon, they were able to gather in small groups for personal sharing and lighthearted discussions about Korean-Japan relations. The workshop confirmed that restorative justice is a paradigm of justice that transcends borders and applies to everyone, and it reminded us of the importance of history education and the dangers of historical ignorance. Although every day of the five days and six nights was a demanding experience, the hospitality and service of the homestay families made this year's PAX even more PAX-like. We would like to thank 4-year-old Dan, who stuck to the schedule for the adults, and Hanasan and Jiwon for their hard work as interpreters for us.

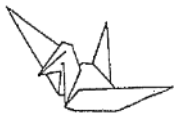


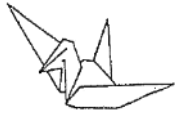
Memories of War and Hospitality (Jiwon Park)

From May 1st to May 6th, I was in Hiroshima for 5 days and 6 nights to participate in the PAX program. During the PAX program, I was inspired and touched by the many people I met, including a Korean researcher doing research on the Hiroshima community and the lives of the Korean diaspora in Japan, a pastor working to serve the Korean diaspora, people who are passionate about peace, and many people who came to learn about restorative justice. The testimony of the elderly “grandma” Hiroshima A-bomb survivor and the visit to the Peace Memorial and Peace Park were also very memorable, as I had first-hand experience of the devastation caused by war and the atomic bomb, and resonated with the narrative that war is horrible and should never happen again. The story of how young schoolchildren were heavily recruited for outside labor during the war, and as a result heavily affected by the bombing, and the guilt the now elderly lady felt as a survivor, reminded me of the structure of violence in which it is the weak who are most affected by war. The content of the Peace Memorial, which was still presented from a perspective that emphasizes Japan as a victim, caused some uncomfortable feelings, but it also reminded me of how South Korea remembers and comforts its people who were persecuted and suffered during the loss of their country, and how it bears responsibility for its heartbreaking history. The historical and political conflict between Korea and Japan remains complex. However, I think it is important for us to take responsibility at the national level and work on resolving the issues in a healthy way, and to continue to engage in exchanges at the civilian level to sincerely listen and empathize with each other's stories and learn from each other on a person-to-person basis. It also makes me think about what efforts we should make to remember those stories and pass them on to the next generation, and how we should stand in solidarity. Above all, the warm hospitality shown by our WFC host elders was unforgettable. Seeing them enthusiastically engaged in various activities and helping others, despite their advanced age, naturally opened my heart and humbled me. It was a valuable time for me to realize that peace and reconciliation start with people coming together to eat, talk, spend time together, and build relationships, and that it is important to break down our mental barriers. In addition to the WFC hosts and activists from Japan, it was also meaningful to meet and socialize with a Korean PAX team member who works for restorative justice in Korea and has a strong interest in peace.

The Hiroshima I Met (Soyoung Kim)

First of all, I would like to thank the PAX team for the rich and deep service and preparation. It was very meaningful to learn about the daily life and history of the atomic bomb victims, which I didn't know much about. My host, Grandma Matsumoto, told me that she was 3 years old at the time of the bombing. Although I couldn't understand the details of the situation and the environment at that time because I didn't speak the language well, I could feel how she must have felt. With programs like this, it seems like it's the people we meet who are the ones who end up leaving the most of them with us. Grandma Matsumoto was like that for me. At the age of 80, she was able to juggle all of her schedules, but she was still able to be involved in things that were important to her and meaningful to her, and she was very gentle with people, and I really admired her and wanted to be like her. During the PAX program, I thought a lot about what kind of meaning and value I should put into my life and how I should walk my path. It was a very special time to hear the stories of the atomic bomb victims. It was a precious opportunity to meet people who were at the center of history, listen to their stories, and share their pain with them. Through various experiences and programs, I realized that in the end, war creates pain and suffering that no one can escape, and no one can be blamed for it. I hope that many people can experience and share the PAX program, and I will continue to support and pray for those who are doing worthwhile work.





Friends Day 2023

Michiko Yamane

WFC held Friends Day at Hiroshima City International House on June 17. First, the working group (Matthew, Malachi, Kurumaji, Yamaji, and Yamane) was set up and started operation in January 2023. Its objectives are to foster peace while cheerfully deepening friendship; to meet new people, get familiar with the community, spread peace and enjoy playing games.

On the day of the event, Kurumaji and I were assigned to be receptionists and to give welcome greetings to guests. We were glad to have a wide variety of guests like students of Sotoku High School newspaper club, intern students of Jogakuin University, and a young lady from Taiwan. A father and his child got bored and left early. It was regrettable that our program was not interesting for children.

Following Matthew's opening address, the video, "World Friendship Center into the Future" (made on Nov. 4, 2014) was shown. I thought the response of the audience was good, and the video could be useful for WFC's promotion campaigns in the future. Almost half of the audience was new to WFC, so I thought the video was very useful to introduce Barbara Reynolds.

It was a good idea to suggest questions like "How long have you lived in Hiroshima?" and "List two hobbies you like most" to use in a group activity to get acquainted with each other. We had a good time with attractions like English class introductions using photo slides, games of janken (rock-paper-scissors), shiritori, and folding paper cranes. Malachi and Tamiyuki Okahara's radio gymnastic exercise was well-received by the guests. Lastly, we wrote our favorite words about peace and friendship on a large sheet of paper. I wrote "To foster peace, one friend at a time." The M.C. thanked the guests for coming, and closed the event by saying we look forward to seeing them again at the next big event on August 6. Yukiko Tanaka's peace dolls were well-received by the guests as a souvenir.

Learning Experiences in Hiroshima

Zoe Hovde

Intern: Illinois Wesleyan University

My time spent in Japan was extremely influential for me. It was an opportunity that I am grateful I was able to have. Traveling to Hiroshima provided me with new learning experiences, both academically and personally. I discovered a deeper version of Hiroshima's past and current history. My second discovery was one I willingly made about myself, my future, and my personal goals.

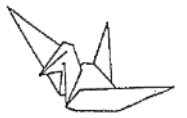
Academic Journey

My experience interning with the World Friendship Center taught me information that I was not aware of before coming to Japan. As a Political Science and International Studies student, I was interested in learning about U.S. foreign policy after the war and how the city moved forward after the A-bomb.

More specifically, I am interested in seeing how places that once experienced a large-scale human rights violation recover while also commemorating their past. I was able to explore these interests in Hiroshima, and I expanded my knowledge of them. I believe that some of my most important takeaways included that there was a clear effort by the Japanese and city governments to commemorate the bombing.

The city contains many examples of mobilized collective memory: Peace Memorial Park and Peace Memorial Museum to name a couple. At these places, I was able to see how the damage from the A-bomb was commemorated.

More importantly, I saw how shared memories of the past were represented in some of the monuments. For example, the Peace Memorial Hall represents not only the time the bomb was dropped, but also the running water represents the desire victims had for water after the bombing. I learned this from a guided tour of the park- and that tour allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of the park and the monuments standing in it.



I was unaware beforehand but intrigued by the efforts to mobilize the memories people shared. In addition to these locations, I enjoyed visiting the places that were restored after the bomb. My favorite was Shukkeien Garden because it was such a beautiful place and also a burial ground.

Out of all my learning experiences in Hiroshima, I believe that some of the most impactful were the testimonies I heard from hibakusha and the information I learned from the community involved with the WFC. Listening to hibakusha testimonies, I realized how significant the stories of survivors are. I was able to learn about personal experiences, which I believe are the most important thing to give regard to when analyzing the aftermath of a war crime and large-scale human rights violation. In addition, the information I learned from the people involved with the WFC was very useful for me.

I was introduced to much information about the U.S. occupation following the war. I have been utilizing this information in my research project for my school, so I am very glad that I was able to receive a brief overview of topics I was able to explore more on my own. Besides my academic journey and learning many new things about the city and history, I learned more about myself and my goals.

Self-discovery Journey

My time in Japan was a personal turning point. It helped shape my short and long-term goals and stabilize my perspectives on human rights and incidents of mass violence. A personal discovery I was joyous to make was that interning at the World Friendship Center confirmed my passion for non-profit work.



My career goals over the past couple of years have continuously changed. I started wanting to attend law school and become an immigration lawyer or public defender.

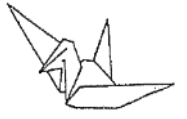
However, I had a somewhat recent idea that maybe I did not want to practice law, and that I just wanted a career where I felt like I was making an effort to help people in some way. Because of my passion for human rights, peacebuilding, and social justice, I decided that maybe my preferred avenue of work would be in non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations. However, I was unaware of what the work environment looked like in those places.

The WFC provided a welcoming space for me to learn more about non-profit work that specifically focuses on peacebuilding. This played an integral role in my self-reassurance that my career goals are what suits me best.

Although WFC is a different reflection of non-profit organizations, it led me to realize my preferences and favorite aspects of those preferences. Compared to some more commonly known non-profit organizations in the United States, WFC is small-scale and the operations may differ because of this. However, I believe that those are some of the aspects I appreciated most about the center. The community involved is close-knit, thus seemingly very welcoming.

The people involved with the WFC that I met seemed to willingly help me feel acquainted. They worked together on various projects and kept Hannah and me involved as well. We quickly became a part of their close community. The English learning classes that I attended exemplified this.

I was able to talk about my interests and learn more about the people involved with WFC. Other activities such as Peace Doll making and Peace Choir also provided me with a similar opportunity. I believe these events essentially helped me come out of my shell and become comfortable with not just being in Japan, but also meeting new people with similar interests.



One struggle of mine that I worried about before coming to Japan was my ability to make connections with others and become less introverted in a work environment. Working in a smaller environment, although it challenged me, allowed me to adjust and move forward from the struggles I worried about. Because of this, I gained a preference for work environments and operations similar to those of the WFC.

My career goals shifted in another way. I now know that I not only prefer non-profit work but also smaller nonprofits in smaller cities. This is another reason that I believe interning at the WFC led me on a journey of self-discovery and I realized many important aspects about myself.

To conclude, the WFC and traveling to Hiroshima in general was a unique learning opportunity for me in many ways. It helped me learn things that I never knew about, not only the city but also myself. Without the help of the WFC, I would not have been able to discover more about the city and its history from different methods and perspectives. I also would not have been able to learn more about my goals.

The influence of my internship was what I believe to be monumental and life-changing.

IWU Internship Reflection

Hannah Nguyen

Since the very first day, this experience has been filled with constant learning and unlearning.

What once were stories I could only read in books and scenes that could only be seen on a screen became real-life people I met and formed essential memories. Is this why I'm here? So that the stories come alive? I thought to myself, more than once.

From Barbara Reynolds's evolving peace activism to the current efforts of many hibakusha and activist groups that voice their opinions, especially at the G7 Summit and the August 6th Ceremony, seeing their effort in person was particularly eye-opening for me.

I was also very intrigued by Floyd Schmoie's work and his community-oriented approach to peace work. His decision not to take full credit for his housing project but rather build a community and give full credit to his fellow workers speaks a lot to his ethics.

Another experience that sparked my interest was the A-bomb tree tour. These tenacious trees weren't just silent witnesses. Their branches reached out as symbols of hope and rehabilitation, touching the lives of many survivors.

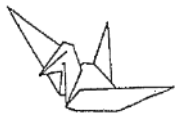
A theme that arose during our internship was the occupation of Japan by the US, evident through different established organizations such as the ABCC/RERF, the deployment of the US military in Japan, and the integration of American culture.

It is not hard to recognize the US influence in Japan, especially in historically significant cities like Kyoto and Hiroshima. Although the RERF is now a binational organization, the ABCC's infamous reputation led to the RERF's recent effort to confront and attempt to right its past.

However, during our tour of the facility, it became evident that there were still some underlying issues. It was an experience that I really looked forward to, but I left hungry for more information.

Cultural exposure also contributed to my learning experiences. I'm grateful to have experienced daily life with our lovely host families, had authentic Japanese dishes, and learned more about Japanese customs and traditions. I appreciate their welcoming and generous hospitality toward us; it made our transition to Japan so much better. Satoko-san and Mariko-san's families were friendly and helped us understand more about Japanese culture and daily life.

We also enjoyed delicious food, learned calligraphy, and went to the museum with Yoko-san. I really enjoyed the tea ceremony that we had with Kido-sensei. The generosity and hospitality of the WFC community genuinely know no bounds!



Welcoming the Jogakuin Interns

Matthew Bateman

We continued our internship program with Jogakuin University this year, and welcomed twice as many students from Bobby's class as last year: Ayaka Miyamoto, Momoka Koguni, Momoka Saito, and Tomoka Katsube. They all expressed great interest in the work of WFC and the message of the Hibakusha.

Koguni-san: I learned the history and spirit of your organization. I felt sympathetic to Barbara and the Hibakusha and thought about how they wanted to spread awareness of the danger of atomic weapons and the reality of what Hibakusha went through and continues to go through.

Katsube-san: Before starting my internship, I read about the history of the WFC and Barbara Reynolds. I got a strong impression of the relationship between hibakusha and Barbara. Even Japanese people find it difficult to completely understand hibakusha's depth of feeling, but Barbara, a foreigner, is trying to understand it. Also, she had a strong feeling that the atomic bomb was terrible and worked hard and settled in Hiroshima even after breaking up with her husband, to try to make a difference. It is so difficult to find appropriate words to tell the story of what happened in Hiroshima to people from other countries, so I want to learn about it.

Saito-san: I want to learn about the kind of work that the WFC has done over its history of 58 years, and I hope to make a contribution to the current activities. Before sending this mail, I read the history of the founder of WFC, Barbara Reynolds. I thought she had courage and kindness and a great sense of responsibility. I think it is a challenge to try to work towards nuclear abolition in other countries at that time. The point I really respect about her was the kindness of people who are neither Japanese nor from Hiroshima but have worked so hard for Hiroshima.

As for our other excursions outside of work, despite some hiccups, we made it our goal to make the most of our time traveling and exploring. I found myself fascinated with the amazing Dotonbori Street and Osaka Castle in Osaka and remarkable temples in Kyoto, such as the Fushimi Inari and Kinkaku-ji.

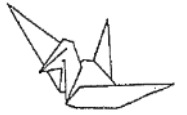
The trip to Miyajima was a much-needed experience, a quiet time to allow myself to feel. Although we didn't get to explore Miyajima until the end of our internship, it was such a peaceful and culturally-rich breath of fresh air.

Especially when the week before this was filled with very heavy activities (but super interesting) such as hibakusha testimonies and the August 6th Memorial Ceremony.

Hiroshima was such a sobering experience that put many things into perspective. The bomb left lives shattered, humanity's pleas ignored, and opened an entirely new level of human rights violation and global security instability.

Being able to experience Hiroshima in person helped me better grasp its impact. This journey was filled with so much growth and gratitude. I didn't just learn a lot about the history and culture of Hiroshima; I also discovered so much about myself! The revitalization of Hiroshima as a city and the hibakusha resilience are living testaments to the power of hope.

In times like this, when there are so many conflicts around the world, this is a great reminder for each of us to continue advocating for a better future. With peace and love - Hannah



Miyamoto-san: I have had fewer opportunities to discuss and express my opinion on peace, or to get hands-on experience working in an organization related to peace. Also, I have never had the opportunity to discuss peace with international people. So, through some peace activities at the World Friendship Center, I would like to learn how to express peace in English and learn what is peace from many other perspectives.

We had the good fortune to meet the interns at Friends Day, where they volunteered and began to learn more about the WFC community. To study more before beginning their work, I asked them to read some of *City of Silence*, a book that has an entire chapter dedicated to Barbara Reynolds and the creation of WFC.

During their internship, they assisted ongoing projects, primarily helping Malachi with organizing the Peace Library, as well as with SNS posts.

There were many opportunities for them to make important connections: with the Hibakusha, who shared their testimonies of August 6th; with the visitors, who shared their wishes for peace and desire to learn; and with the IWU interns who shared laughter and friendship.

We appreciate the time we spent with these new members of the WFC community!



Reflecting on a Day of Remembrance: The August 6 Event at WFC

Matthew Bateman & Junko Hattori

This past August 6th was the 78th anniversary of the destruction and misery that hinted at a new and potentially final age for humanity marked by horror and flame. In defiance of that possible future, these past 78 years have seen a very real and growing call for hope. Hibakusha's messages of nuclear abolishment continue to be a guiding light for humanity's future, and the calls for peace are the most important guiding messages in today's world.

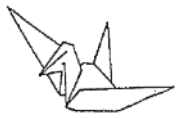


Our first activity of the day was attending the annual memorial event at Peace Park, where we were joined by seven visitors who were able to visit Hiroshima on this memorial day. It made for a unique way to connect with international visitors in a way we were not able to last year!

The Mayor's Peace Declaration called for sanity never to repeat the evil drawing the tense parallels to today's conflicts, introducing the words of a Hibakusha who was 8 years old at the time:

I want the leaders of all countries with nuclear weapons to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, using their own eyes and ears, learn the realities of the atomic bombings—the lives lost in an instant, the bodies charred by heat rays; lives lost in agony from burns and radiation, tended to by no one.

Following the memorial, we set up for our morning event at Aster Plaza, a gathering that welcomed 30 attendees in person and several participants online in Japan and overseas. Our event at Aster Plaza was the testimony of our honorable chairman, dedicated peace educator, and archival collector Hiromu Morishita-sensei.



The presentation, supported by the diligent preparation of slides and translations by Junko Hattori sparked insightful questions from our audience. His story and wishes for planetary peace were widely delivered to those seeking peace via a recording of the event afterward.

After running back to WFC, we hosted an open house to provide a space both for respite from the heat as well as for hearing the final reports by our Illinois Wesleyan interns.

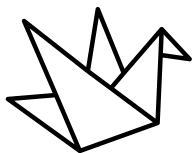
The day continued for joining the group to Sing "Life of the World = the Spirit of Hiroshima" led by Asaka Watanabe at the Atomic Bomb Memorial Mound followed by our traditional memorial event at Barbara's monument in the Peace Memorial Park.

This year's ceremony was strongly rooted in creativity, featuring new songs and poems that resonated with our theme of remembrance and hope.

Collaborating with Hiroshima Coventry Club whose members recited an anthology of poems written by A-bombed poets taking turns, all attendees read each paragraph of the poem one at a time in a circle. Balancing the languages of the poems presented a challenge, but we all found meaning in spending time together.

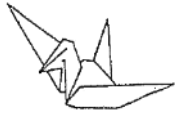
The evening lantern floating event was the classic beautiful and reflective moment that, although scaled back post-COVID, allowed us to send off our wishes collectively for peace. The single lantern, dedicated to all our sincere prayers and aspirations for a better world, was a powerful symbol of unity and hope.

The August 6 event embodied WFC's commitment to remembering the past, engaging with the present, and inspiring action for the future.



Members of our community met every month from July to October, folding peace cranes at WFC. These, and cranes folded at events like Friends Day, were strung and hung in the English class window, and many cranes were donated to the Peace Memorial Park. Thank you to all who donate, fold, and hang these cranes!





Fostering peace is a very good thing—U.S. PAX 2023: 5-24 October 2023

Roger Edmark

On October 5th we welcomed four Pax Team members from Hiroshima Japan to the Pacific Northwest of the United States. For the next 19 days they would tell stories, give talks, presentations and read books to over 1100 people interested in knowing more about what happened in Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945, as well as what affect the bomb and radiation had in the aftermath.

The planning for the events started several months before they stepped off the ANA airplane. Where would they stay? How would we transport them? Who should we contact to plan events? What else would they like to see? What do they like to eat? The team of Roger and Kathy Edmark, Mike and Carol Stern, and Larry and JoAnn Sims, along with their son Kyle worked hard to answer all those questions and provide a full schedule of events and activities for the PAX team as we hosted them in the Edmark and Sim's homes.

Kathy and I knew three of the four members, Soh san, Tami san and Mariko san. We had been their teachers in conversational English classes at World Friendship Center from August 2019 thru March 2022. We were co-directors of WFC during those years. It was great to see them again. From the moment we met the fourth member of the team, Yuko san, we quickly got to know her and enjoy her pleasant and joyful attitude as well.

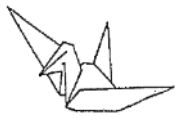
We came up with a full schedule for their nineteen days which included visiting parts of both Washington and Oregon state.



Though they had fun going to a football game; to the top of the Space Needle; to parks and viewpoints; and seeing urban art and museums, the purpose of the PAX teams' trip was to provide opportunities for them to send a clear message about the effects of the nuclear bomb on the people and place where it was detonated. Each PAX team member was able to tell age-appropriate stories from their personal life along with presentations and books which got that message across in many ways.

For many people listening, this was the first time they had heard about what happened in Hiroshima. After hearing about it, they often do not know what to say. One lady came up afterwards to say that her mother was Japanese, but that she had not known what happened under the mushroom cloud until she heard it from the PAX team. With tears in her eyes, she said "I am so sorry". This was a somewhat common response from adults. But from children that were being told the story from books for the very first time, we heard many inquisitive and rich questions. At several school classes, the team was able to talk with children or youth after the class and had some very interesting and engaging conversations.

Though the coordinators made some cold contacts with groups we had no previous connection with, most events and classes came out of friendships and connections we already had. To me, this is an example of the value of relationships which is embodied in the motto of WFC, "fostering peace one friend at a time." Each time a PAX team member met a group, even if on that day they did not give a talk or presentation, the seeds of a friendship were sown through that hour or two we had together. For the children, listening to and talking to four people from the other side of the world, opened up their world and planted a seed of peace in them. That is a very good thing!



Stories of Survival Shared in Oregon

JoAnn & Larry Sims

It was a pleasure to host Soh Horie, Tamiyuki Okahara, Yuko Osawa, and Mariko Sunawaki. It was extra special to also host Roger Edmark who drove the WFC guests to Oregon. We all stayed at our home, we call, Trollhaugen. Our son Kyle assisted in translations when needed and enjoyed visiting in Japanese. He said it was great to use conversational Japanese again!

Meeting Soh-son once again reminded us that we first met when he came to Seattle in 2006. What a personal treat to greet him and once again hear his passionate story and heart of peace. We laughed remembering watching Ichiro play with the Seattle Mariners and getting Hiroshima Carp hats at a game when Soh took us to a Hiroshima baseball game. Larry was delighted to see Tamiyuki and they exchanged memories of "The Men's Class" at WFC.

Meeting Mariko and learning of her personal experiences of Hibakusha discrimination was a story that opened the eyes of many. Yuko's experience with television and the Hiroshima City's Library Review Committee helped all listeners learn of children's stories at the time of the bombing. Her expertise allowed University education students to see how such a topic is possible to share with even young students.

The motto of WFC is to "promote peace, one friend at a time. Besides sharing the short versions of their prepared texts, they spoke with many from the audiences after they shared their stories. It was especially at those informal times that friendships began to form.

The seeds of peace were planted. At Linfield University library several exchange students from Japan were delighted to hear their stories and speak with them during the question and comment session. WFC PAX also spoke to two different church congregations. They were warmly received.

The Church of the Brethren video program interviewed PAX members and will produce a program in the near future about the WFC PAX visit.

The time in Oregon was not all work. There was time to visit a metal sculpture artist and view lovely paintings done by his wife. We had hoped to see the 80% eclipse, but alas, the skies were cloudy. We did get to attend a Linfield University football game. It was fun to try and explain the rules, actions, and scores.

A beautiful time was had by all. Memories of laughter, learning, and the planting of seeds of peace will remain in Oregon thanks to the 2023 WFC PAX visit.

2023 U.S. PAX Report

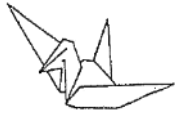
Soh Horie

Firstly, I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in PAX for the third time. Thanks to the support and kindness of many people, I could return home safely.

Staying with Roger and Kathy, then JoAnn, Larry, and Kyle, all of whom I had met in Japan as hosts, made my stay comfortable. Among them, I was impressed by Kyle's cooking skills. I usually cook breakfast every morning, but it doesn't compare. It was very delicious. Thank you very much.

At Haneda Airport, I went to the bathroom and forgot where everyone was waiting for me. I then went to the departure area, causing everyone a lot of worry. I apologize for that. Upon arriving at the airport in the U.S., the inspection was much simpler than before.

On the way to my first homestay, Roger's house, I saw many makeshift tents built by the roadside, where homeless people were living. I had seen this before in Tokyo, but there, it was inside a park. There were toilets and water. I saw another side of wealthy America.



It was before Halloween, so there were various decorations in front of houses, but the skeletons seemed strange to me.

Indeed, in the car-based society of America, the wide roads were full of cars. Among them, I saw many Japanese cars: Toyota, Nissan, Subaru, Honda, and Mazda. But someday, fossil fuels will run out. What will happen to transportation in America then? It worried me even though it's someone else's problem. The railway is only for cargo, and the tram was under construction.

I was amazed by Carol's organization when I shared my testimony. They organized many opportunities, such as kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school, university, church, and various other places, one after another. Thanks to that, all the cherry tree pencils I brought as gifts were gone, but I was able to have additional copies printed for a document that talked about why we have to stop war and conflict, which Malachi checked for me. So I was able to hand it out to all the participants.

I concluded by asking everyone to add their own opinions to my thoughts and share them with their families and friends. I think just talking about the tragedy of atomic bombs will not end wars and conflicts.

The first PAX had 4 participants, the next had 12, and this time 4. I think about 4 participants is appropriate. This time, two A-bomb survivors talked about their experiences, and two women read picture books for young people. I thought it was very good.

By chance, I had a birthday during the trip, and Mike and Carol held a celebration for me, which touched me deeply. My childhood was poor, and I never had a birthday celebration.

This summer, PAX members from America are coming, right? I'm looking forward to what stories they will share. I'm also thinking about what kind of hospitality would make them happy.

Reflecting on the 2023 American PAX

Tamiyuki Okahara

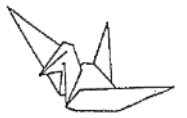
I'd like to look back at our PAX program from October 5th to 24th, planned by Roger, Carol, and Joann. The daily schedule was sent to the Hiroshima WFC as it was confirmed.

1. The schedule they set was perfect. Firstly, the target for the testimonial activities appropriately covered all elementary, middle, high schools, and universities. In addition, church and community meeting groups were also included. Next, the schedule at schools had two presentations set in 50 minutes, which meant no time was wasted. Thanks to their schedule coordination and guidance, we were able to visit 17 places, including elementary, middle, and high schools, universities, churches, and communities, and were able to give over 30 class presentations. I am not confident whether a 20-minute limited presentation was sufficiently effective.



2. Regarding the effect and reaction to our presentations, I will introduce a message received from Roger on November 7th as an objective summary.

"Though it was a very busy 19 days, it was such an important opportunity for you and the other team members to tell stories and meet people. Most of those you talked with will never get to Hiroshima, so this was their one opportunity to hear about the devastation of the atomic bomb and the effect of radiation on people's lives. It is a message they will not forget and will hopefully lead them to understand that nuclear weapons have no place in our world."



3. My personal impression (Seattle)

① On October 19th, we were invited to participate in "The Ploughshares Conference Public Event in Seattle." After Soh-san's 20-minute presentation, us four members were invited to a dinner and panel discussion. We were able to talk with the committee members from all over the United States.

② On October 15th, at the Japanese Cultural Community Center, the Washington Physicians and Japanese American Citizens League meeting invited us, PAX members, to present with time for Q&A. A member asked us, "How would WFC Hiroshima act forward in the future?" I replied as follows.

"Our hope and our target is the abolition of Nuclear Weapons. But in today's world, circumstances are very difficult. There are threats of the use of nuclear weapons by Putin, China (Xi Jinping), Israel, and North Korea. Many leaders in the world often lie. There is no justice. I think how to stop the use of nuclear weapons is the most urgent matter. Citizen power and citizen activity are critical in situations of political chaos. Let's work hard together."

4. My memories in Oregon

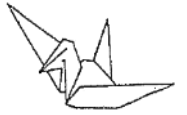
① On October 15th, we visited two churches. Four members spoke at the First Presbyterian Church and the First Baptist Church. It made an impression on me that several ladies from the church hugged us and parted with tears in their eyes.

② On October 16th, after the four of us presented at Linfield University, the university president, Dr. Michel Davis, invited us to the campus cafeteria for a meal with Larry, Joann, Roger, and Kyle. The president is a "Karate" champion in California and understands well "Aikido," which I enjoyed as one of the Japanese martial arts. We resonated with "the importance of justice in everyday life." Parting with a hug was memorable.

Lastly, I thank the WFC staff and the PAX committee. Thanks to the five workshops and advice, we prepared well. Also, I would like to thank everyone for the hospitality at the American homestays and the perfect schedule coordination.

I express my gratitude again to Roger & Kathy, Joann & Larry's family.





2023 U.S. PAX Report

Yuko Osawa

Even after it was decided that I would participate in PAX, my journey was not a smooth one. I chose "Barefoot Gen" as the theme for my presentation, but I struggled with how deeply I should delve into the content. Additionally, I stumbled over explaining the trip to my husband. The biggest problem was that I couldn't properly explain the World Friendship Center or PAX myself, and even showing him the website did not lessen his skepticism. As I wondered what to do about this, an event transformed my husband overnight. An article introducing the activities of the World Friendship Center was featured prominently in the morning paper.

After reading it, my husband began to say, "You absolutely must go." Meanwhile, the preparation for the presentation dragged on until just before departure. Still, thanks to the help of the WFC staff and my husband, who had become uncharacteristically cooperative, I managed to make it in time.

Landing in America for the first time in 30 years made me feel like Urashima Taro. At the same time, I was moved by nostalgia. However, thinking that I was not there simply to live but to carry out the important mission of being a peace ambassador made me very nervous.

During my stay of about three weeks, I traveled to Seattle, Washington State, and McMinnville, Oregon. Thanks to the former directors, Mr. and Mrs. Edmark and Mr. and Mrs. Sims, my days were as comfortable as they could be.



Above all, what made me happiest was receiving passionate wishes for peace from the local people at each place I visited, such as schools, universities, churches, and community centers.

I would like to express my gratitude again to the staff and many people from both Japan and the United States who supported this exchange, and also to the best fellow PAX members who accompanied me on this journey.

Thank you very much.

2023 U.S. PAX Report

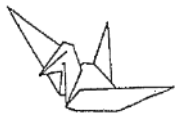
Mariko Sunawaki

As a member of the 2023 American Peace Ambassadors Exchange, I spent 20 days in the U.S. in Seattle, Washington, and around Oregon.

The school that left the biggest impression on me was Hamilton Middle School. Schools in America have strict safety management, and you must receive a visitor permit at reception. It seems there was a discussion among teachers and students about whether to wear masks for older people coming from Hiroshima. It seems that the opinion of "let's wear masks" came from the students. Teacher Takako entrusted the students' feedback to the coordinator, Carol. I would like to share parts of the letters from 87 students and their teacher, Takako-sensei.

It was very good to learn about things I didn't know. I thought it was very sad that many people died when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. I understood the importance of peace. I think atomic bombs should absolutely never be used in the future. I wanted to tell others about atomic bombs. I watched the movie "Barefoot Gen."

Feedback and requests to us were as follows: Thank you for coming to talk to us all the way from Japan to Seattle. Please tell the world even more that atomic bombs should not be used.



Kimono

When going to Seattle, I brought a kimono. It was heavy and took up one-third of my bulky suitcase. However, it is convenient to wear to semi-formal parties. It is nice attire and could also be a topic of conversation. In the city, everyone looked at me with a smile. Sometimes, they would speak to me, saying, "My mother used to wear a yukata." In Oregon, Joanne and I were discussing "What should we wear to tomorrow's church presentation?" I said, "I'll wear a kimono," and Joanne said, "I'll wear a kimono, too." I was stunned. Who will dress her? What she brought was a one-piece made from a black formal kimono. "It was a present from Japan, and I'm happy because I hadn't had the chance to wear it," she said with a smile. The next day, she wore a casual beige jumper over the one-piece. I thought, "So that's how it is."

High Cost of Living

When we went to Seattle, the yen was weak, and 1 dollar was 151 yen. The admission fee for the Space Needle and Chihuly Garden and Glass with a senior discount was 8283 yen, and I was surprised that a small-size fish and chips cost over 3000 yen. Moreover, it was so big that I threw away a quarter of it.

Halloween

The Sunday of the week after we left Seattle was Halloween. The gardens of homes near our homestay were decorated. For the first time, I learned that children can visit homes with decorations to get treats. I also learned that they should not go to homes where the outdoor lights are turned off.

Boeing "Future of Flight"

The coordinator, Roger, had worked for Boeing for many years. When we said, "We want to visit," he took us there. It was very close, about a 10-minute drive from home. The 747 we took from Haneda was to retire in 2023, and starting in 2024, the route will upgrade to the larger 777. They are also making sustainable planes that fly using vegetable oil and waste oil. Attention is paid to the air conditioning filtration to prevent the spread of infections. During World War II, women made fighter planes as men went to war, and a legendary female worker appeared ["Rosie the Riveter"]. The American fighter jet, the Mustang, had far superior maneuverability, a top speed of 703 km, and more attack power than the Zero fighter.

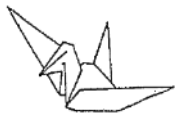
On the other hand, the Zero fighter was made lightweight and thus fragile, neglecting defense. Its speed was 565 km. Indeed, a country with resources is different. I wondered why Japan fought against such a vast country.

Space Needle

An 184m high tower was built during the 1962 World's Fair.

On the day we visited, it was windy but very clear. We could enjoy a 360-degree panoramic view of Seattle's landscape, Mount Rainier, the sea, and stylish buildings. There was also a building with a Halloween spider painted on the roof. The floor below the observation deck was made of glass and rotates 360 degrees. The Tokyo Skytree has glass only in parts, but here, the entire floor is made of glass, which was terrifying.





International Festa 2023

Yoko Mimura

At International Festa 2023, like last year, we participated in the food stands from all over the world and, for the first time, in the activity presentation corner. The WFC Food Stall offered "Sloppy Joe," a classic American homestyle dish consisting of ground meat and onions seasoned with ketchup and Worcestershire sauce and served on a bun.

The day before, we chopped onions, fried ground meat, and kneaded it... It was a lot of prep work, but on the day of the event, we baked the buns, sandwiched the prepared and cooked ground meat, and decorated them with a small flag with the WFC logo (imagine a children's lunch...). We served it to our customers. Students from Hiroshima Jogakuin University also came to support our sales and contributed to our sales.

At the activity introduction corner, Director Malachi talked with visitors, some of whom were interested in the English conversation classes. Photos of past directors were also displayed, and the board members in charge of the event introduced the history of WFC and its activities.

Since the U.S. PAX delegation had just toured last fall, we showed visitors photos and explained our testimonial activities in the U.S. and other activities.



The "Impact on the Israeli-Palestinian Crisis" in 2023 and WFC

Junko Hattori

"The Islamic organization Hamas, which effectively controls the Gaza Strip in the Palestinian Interim Authority, 'suddenly' launched an attack on Israel." On October 7, 2023, this news shocked the world.

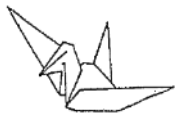
Israel launched a counterattack the same day, launching a massive air strike and a major land operation. Core hospitals in occupied Gaza, such as Al-Shifa Hospital, already poorly-equipped before October 7th, became a target of the attack because "it was believed" to have an underground Hamas base (attacking a hospital is prohibited by international law), and many patients and medical personnel were killed, the majority being children.

The CSO "Stop the Genocide!" was launched in Hiroshima, and a public rally was held on Fridays in front of the A-bomb Dome.

On November 11, the CSO in Hiroshima Alliance was launched, and WFC became one of the organizations calling for its support.

What is happening on the ground? To resolve this crisis and stop the genocide of Palestinians, we must learn about the factors and crisis of the crisis, to think, dialogue, and act as WFC and as individuals; to understand what is happening there; and have a place where citizens can listen and discuss what is needed for peace. WFC can provide such a place for citizens.

The first project was a lecture for citizens to hear the background and current situation of the current crisis from an expert in the Middle East region, from Dr. Masaki Mizobuchi of Hiroshima University, from whom we learned, among many other things, that this crisis driven by colonial and racist powers has been ongoing for over 100 years, not 'suddenly'. Fifty citizens and international students attended.



During the winter when it was especially cold, WFC members prepared and distributed hand warmers, warm food, and drinks to the citizens and foreign residents who gathered regularly in front of the Atomic Bomb Dome (by then named HPVC, or the Hiroshima Palestine Vigil Community), which were well received by Vigil participants.

The second project was held on January 24 for the WFC community to provide an opportunity to hear directly from a Director, Malachi Nelson, who is one of the HPVC coordinators and attends the vigil almost every day. 20 WFC community members attended the event in the WFC living room, which was filled to capacity.

Except for the four-day truce that began on November 24, the destruction and mass-killing has continued since then and continues to this day despite the citizens of the world movement and protest. We would like to continue our activities for weaving peace threads together so that humanity can gain insight from history out of this decades-long conflict, and build a situation that will never return to violence again.

Visit to Schmoe House

Sumiko Kanetsuna

I have visited Schmoe House several times, and this time was also meaningful. This time, on August 18, six of us participated: WFC Director Malachi, Mikiko, Michiko, Yoko, Mariko, and I.

Our group of WFC guides first saw the exterior walls, which have been preserved, showing the same material as when it was first built. I think young people today would be surprised to see these old-fashioned walls made of bamboo and dirt. Inside the museum, Mikiko explained Floyd Schmoe's achievements.

Floyd Schmoe, an American, was so distressed by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that he raised funds and built 21 houses in Eba for the people of Hiroshima who had lost their homes.

In 1949, Mr. Schmoe and his team arrived in Hiroshima, hired a master carpenter, and, with the help of working adults and student volunteers, built the "Hiroshima House." The community house built on Mt. Ebayama is now preserved as the "Schmoe House."

Also on display in the house are panels of people other than Mr. Schmoe, who extended a helping hand to the A-bomb-ravaged city of Hiroshima. Visitors can learn about Norman Cousins' Moral Adoption movement, the treatment of 25 Hiroshima Maidens who went to the United States for treatment, and Barbara Reynolds' Peace Pilgrimage and the founding of the World Friendship Center.

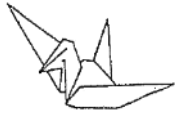
I started guiding when former Directors of WFC, Larry and Alice Petry, invited me to join the Volunteer Peace Guides.

I thought that if I could talk to foreign visitors to Hiroshima about the history of Hiroshima's exposure to radiation and the campaign against atomic and hydrogen bombs, it would be good for peace and also for learning English. But we usually guide them through monuments in the Peace Park and don't take visitors all the way to the Schmoe House. But I hope that more people will visit the Schmoe House and learn that there was a philanthropic person like Mr. Schmoe.

The picture book about Mr. Schmoe, "Mr. Schmoe Came to Hiroshima," with its gentle green cover, teaches the importance of peace.

I hope we can convey the importance of peace to youth and children as well.





2023 WFC Holiday Party

Mikiko Shimizu

On Sunday, December 10, 2023 from 14:00-16:00, WFC's annual holiday party was held at the Ryugakusei Kaikan. Attendees shared a relaxing and enjoyable time, and everyone had fun!

Initially, it was expected that many communities and visitors from overseas would attend, but on the day of the event, each organization had its own year-end event, and many people were unable to participate. Despite that fact, just under 50 people, including WFC members, the general public, and children, gathered to have fun singing, playing games and other activities, and cultivating friendships with each other.

This year, Christmas trees in the style of ikebana (flower arrangements) with origami ornaments were displayed in several places. There were instructions on how to fold origami, as well as a Rakugo performance. These programs were offered not by a Japanese person but by an American, WFC Co-Director Matthew Bateman, so they attracted a lot of attention overall.

For Christmas carols, the Peace Choir first sang one song. As there were few choir members, three people from the audience joined the Choir promptly, which was touching to see. Then, attendees tried a new style of singing all together. The party ended with "Auld Lang Syne," and many shared opinions that it would have been better to have the Peace Choir lead the carols.

Everyone took part in a game of rock-paper-scissors, and it was fun to see everyone moving around the room.

The performance of the Taisho koto by Tuesday English Class students in traditional Japanese clothes was wonderful and made the room's atmosphere brighter, and there was a great group effort on the quizzes.

The children were very happy to hear humorous ukulele playing by our other Co-Director, Malachi Nelson. The US PAX delegates gave a brief report, and will give a longer public briefing session at a later date.



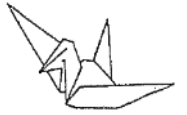
At the party, Chizuko-san's usual handmade cookies and Yukiko-san's handmade accessories were given out as attendees left the party. The party was especially successful due to the wonderful MCs, Malachi and Satoko-san.

Before departing, guests were given the opportunity to donate to Palestinian peace efforts through CPT (Community Peacemaking Teams).

Guests went on their way home happily, and cleanup afterward went smoothly. Thank you to everyone for your cooperation!

Holiday Party working team members: Michiko Yamane, Yoko Mimura, Masako Kido, Matthew Bateman, Malachi Nelson, Mikiko Shimizu





“Portraits of the Hibakusha” Project

Matthew Bateman

In late September, WFC assisted Gina Langston and Patrick Boyd from Westminster, UK, in a fascinating, high-tech portrait photography project introduced to us via Steve Leeper.

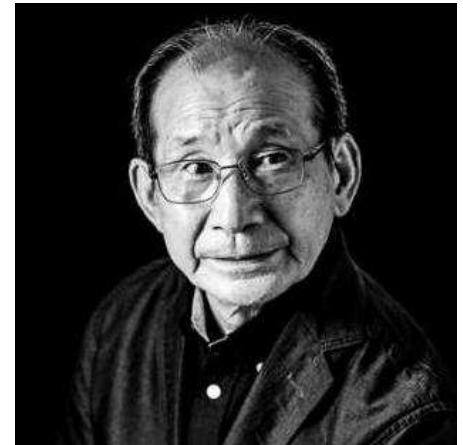
Their project is described as follows:

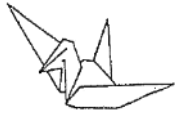
In 2023, we travelled to Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Kobe and Toronto for our project "Portraits of the Hibakusha: 80 Years Remembered" and we have plans to continue creating projects highlighting more survivors of Nuclear Testing from across the world. A massive people-powered, positive message is going to be sent out that we must rid this world of nuclear weapons before they get rid of us.

About Gina: She visited Hiroshima for the first time 2013 when studied at a Hiroshima Peace Studies course for graduates at Hiroshima City University, which changed her life.

About Patrick: Working with pulsed lasers at the Royal College of Art and with multiplex lenticular holography systems at Loughborough University under Dr Nick Phillips, he made some of the most famous pulsed laser holography portraits in the world.

The photos are used here with their permission.





Peace Guide Tour Training Season 3

Mikiko Shimizu & Matthew Bateman

On March 30th, we concluded Season 3 of our Peace Guide Tour Training program, and we have continued to learn much—and meet many wonderful potential guides that are new to the WFC community. This has been a great way to welcome people to WFC and to introduce them to Barbara's story.

Some comments from the participants:

- *On site trainings were very good experiences.*
- *I was keenly aware of my lack of study.*
- *I would like to try on site trainings again.*
- *The actual on-site training was very meaningful.*
- *Thanks to you, I have become increasingly familiar with. The manuscript is very well structured and informative.*
- *It's hard to remember, but I'm glad that I was able to get a feel for the actual atmosphere by practicing outside today.*
- *It was fun. I realized that it is important to see the faces of the visitors.*

At the conclusion of this program, we have now had over 25 participants over 3 seasons and have written and shared scripts for 29 of the monuments in Peace Park. We are still working to bring them into the WFC guide group.

Season 4 will begin on July 6th—please invite your friends to learn more and join the WFC community!



Translation Class

Hisano Hatamoto & Matthew Bateman

The bi-monthly Friday morning Translation Class has a 32-year history of translating various Japanese materials into native English. The amount of work put in by all the people who have been involved is so impressive.

From our student Hatamoto-san:

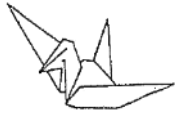
We have translated various kinds of stories, or books about A-bomb survivors, picture books, a story of Barbara Reynolds, and many stories about peace education and stories for Hiroshima Peace Calendar. Some of the books were difficult and took us a few years to translate.

Each of our group members rotates being in charge of some pages and translates them at home and prints out her assignment for the other members. When we meet, she recites both Japanese and English, and the other members check and discuss them. Needless to say, the most helpful person is the Director, who guides our group in revising the English translations, if necessary, and has comments that are always to the point.

Originally, the translations were sent to Wilmington College as a sort of volunteer project to share the stories more widely. We are currently working on translating first-hand testimonies from A-bomb survivors. Students' questions, and the level of detail required to answer them, truly push the boundaries of what I know and can explain as an English instructor.

The content, these stories of parents searching for their children in the hours and days after the bombing, are haunting and some of the deepest engagement I've had with the stories of that day.

It feels like an incredibly important part of my experience here and I hope our students feel similarly.



My Reflections on the World Friendship Center

Ron Klein

Departing Board Member

I can count the years of my involvement with WFC by the directors I knew, going back to the Minami-ku house with Edward and Beth. Recalling the names of each of the couples or seeing their photos lining the walls of the living room evokes memories of conversations and shared times. Let's conservatively say 25 years. I joined the Board ten years ago, just in time for the 50th anniversary celebrations and fund-raising committee. My reflections linger over what has changed and what has stayed the same during that time.

Certainly, the most important change was moving into the present Higashi Kanon-machi house. While maintaining the same homey atmosphere of a traditional Japanese house, the new facility pointed out how cramped the old building was. Adding the Annex expanded our ability to offer classes and host guests. Until as recently as the outbreak of the coronavirus, we were hosting 1000 guests a year!

The 50th anniversary celebrations in 2015 allowed us to look back and see how remarkably we had survived all those years since Barbara first called on us "to foster peace one friend at a time." In recent years, we became more computer savvy, reaching out on social media. We got more professionally organized with updated Articles of Incorporation and Handbooks. Then COVID struck and we were forced to reassess our mission in the face of decreasing income, while at the same time, questions arose about offering lodging to our guests. The future of WFC will depend on how the Board resolves these issues of change.

On the other hand, the strength of WFC has always been its dedicated Board members. Some members knew Barbara and have been carrying her passion. Some members are no longer with us, having served WFC to the end of their days. Although the times may have changed, directors have come and gone, the spirit of the World Friendship Center has not changed. It is still a place where people from all over the world can come to learn about peace, directly from hearing hibakushas' testimonies and Peace Park tours. It is a home where for the day or two that they stay, they can feel the warmth and fellowship of being part of the Hiroshima experience.

As we approach our 60th anniversary, I will be watching WFC find its new role and new location. Although I am leaving the Board, I will maintain a strong interest in WFC and will contribute as much as I can for as long as I can.



THANK YOU!

In 2023, many people helped WFC in various forms as volunteers. Additionally, we received donations from many people both domestically and internationally. We sincerely thank you.