

Wrapped Up in the Scent of Lavender

The Hustle and Bustle at “Herb Festa 2017”

June 25, Mineyama

Herb Festa 2017 was held on June 25th, in the herb garden GreenSmile near Mineyama Baseball Stadium.

This is the 14th time the event has been held. Participants of the “Herb Garden Lecture” run by Mineyama District Community Center, as well as herb garden guides, showed off herb seedlings they had raised and sold handmade crafts. Attendees were able to enjoy herb-picking and making lavender sticks, sampling tea made from fresh herbs, strolling through the garden enjoying the scents, and listening to the staff and lecture participants’ passionate explanations of all the different herbs.

The speaker at the ‘Herb Garden Lecture,’ Hiroko Inoue, said “In addition to the lecture, this garden was started about fifteen years ago from memories of actually raising herbs, and having fun harvesting them. Even now, it has been able to continue thanks to the cooperation of many people. I will be happy if this herb garden becomes a community space for the local people.”

The herb garden GreenSmile is on a plot of 650 m². There are herbs, flowers, vegetables, and fruit trees being grown there, and every season you can enjoy the scent of flowers and herbs. The garden is usually open, and you can freely have a look or take a stroll there. (Please do not pick the flowers!)



The green sign marks the entrance.



Visitors enjoying strolling through the garden and picking lavender.

The Long-Awaited Sweetfish Fishing Season!

Sweetfish Fishing Fans Gather in Ukawa

June 25, Tango

In Ukawa on June 25th, sweetfish fishing season began. Many sweetfish fishing fans had been impatiently awaiting its start, with their long rods on standby at their favorite fishing spots. The fishing began right at 6am, as soon as the season started. Kazuyuki Kuraoka, who visits Ukawa every year for the fishing season, said “The real thrill of sweetfish fishing is the sensation of a catch pulling on the fishing rod,” and he was catching fish one after the other from the moment the season began. In Ukawa, in addition to the natural sweetfish heading upstream, the river is also stocked with juvenile fish before the season by the Kami Ukawa Fishing Association (Chairman: Mitsuo Sakai). Chairman Sakai said “I want many people to enjoy the sweetfish fishing in Ukawa to their heart’s content.” Sweetfish fishing season will continue until September 30th. For questions, please contact the Kami Ukawa Fishing Association (TEL 76-0648)



↑ A nine-meter rod for catching sweetfish.

A Chance to Learn About Braille and Visual Impairment

Fourteen Participants Join a Braille Experience Class

June 29 & 30, Amino

On June 29th and 30th, an Easy Braille Experience Class was held at Tango Welfare Center for the Visually Handicapped (a.k.a. Ai Tango). The class, which has been held since 2016, gives participants the chance to learn about visual impairments and Braille.

Under the instruction of lecturer and staff member Mr. Kondo, participants experienced using Braille writing equipment, a slate and stylus, to “write” on Braille paper.

There was also a lecture presented by visually handicapped person. Mr. Yoshioka, who was invited to act as lecturer, talked about how white canes are not used like a walking stick, but as a person’s “eyes” to find obstacles or uneven ground.

One participant, a visually handicapped woman, Ms. Inoue, talked about her own experience of visual impairment brought on by illness, her family’s emotional support, hearing from other people with the same illness that “Not being able to see is a disability, but it doesn’t make me unhappy” and being able to face her illness head-on. Participants exchanged experiences and listened, and were able to deepen their understanding of visual impairment.



↑ Mr. Kondo explains how to use Braille writing equipment.

Restoring the Pine Forest that Protects Residents' Lifestyles

Twenty-six Kumihama High School Students Do Maintenance Work

June 20, Kumihama

On July 20th, 26 2nd and 3rd year students from Kumihama Prefectural High School's Industrial Science department came to the coastline of Minatomiya, Kumihama to do maintenance work planting seedlings for the pine forest that protects buildings and farms from the sea, tides, and sand.

The school started the Local Pine Forest Restoration Project in 2013, and in February 2016, 3rd year students transplanted 500 black pine seedlings they had grown on the school's farm. This year in January, 100 more were transplanted as the project continues.

On the 20th, students looked at the development of the pine trees, and then spent about an hour cutting back weeds. A participating 3rd-year student, Sakuya Odani, said "We can only do these activities for a finite period of time, but we're doing the best we can to protect everyone's way of life."

These efforts are being advanced by the Tango Area Promotion Bureau as part of their Education Implementation Partnership activities, in order for children to foster a love for their hometown.



↑ Kumihama High School students cut away weeds around the pine trees.

Hospitality Using Tea and Flowers

Amino High School Students Perform Tea Ceremony

June 18, Yasaka

On June 18th in the Tango Kingdom “Shoku-no-Miyako” tea ceremony room, Amino Prefectural High School’s Tea Ceremony Club made tea for guests and invitees.

Floral decorations made by students from the school’s Ikebana Club adorned the room, so that guests could appreciate the students skillfully making tea in a gorgeous atmosphere.

2nd-year student Ms. Takamura, who performed the *ryuurei* ceremony in which tea is made while seated at a stool, looked nervous beforehand, but was able to entertain guests with the skills learned from practicing every day during club activities.

The club’s president, a 3rd-year named Haga, said “This was Takamura’s first time performing a tea ceremony in front of people, and for the 1st-years this was their first tea ceremony. I think today was a very good experience.”



↑ Left: Ms. Takamura making tea. Right: The room decorated with the Ikebana Club’s flower arrangements.

I Found a Diving Beetle!

College Students and Elementary Schoolers Examine Biology in Rice Paddies

July 9, Omiya

There was a biological survey of the rice paddies in Morimoto on July 9th. This survey was planned after the students discovered two endangered species of diving

beetle. Ryukoku University Policy Studies Club members visited the Mie and Morimoto regions as part of their efforts for the “Kyotango City Collegiate Community Development Committee,” aiming to revitalize the region.

With sparkling eyes, children used nets to catch diving beetles and tadpoles alongside the college students, and had fun while learning.



↑ A child learns from a college student about the creature they caught.