

## Heartwarming Support from All over the World Cheering on the Town's Children



▲ With significant support from organizations such as NGOs, the educational environment for children was restored.  
Children chasing a ball with footballer Hasebe Makoto who visited Minamisanriku frequently to cheer up the children.

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With all our possessions washed away in the tsunami, we were, at one point, feeling in the depths of despair, but we received an uncountable number of donations and gifts. These included everything from donations from large companies and international NGOs to fundraising by children who pooled their pocket money together and made a donation. We also received a gift of a thousand folded paper cranes with warm messages of concern for us or prayers for the reconstruction of our town. With all the tangible and intangible support that we received from around the world, there were so many times that we were reminded that we are not alone, that we felt inspired to not give up and to battle on. This support became a source of energy for us, enabling us to keep up our efforts.

We also received a large amount of heartwarming support for our children, whose responsibility it will be to care for our town in the future. Concerned about the deprivation of normal daily life and wanting to help create a more soothing environment, both private and public organizations provided support for the rebuilding of educational facilities and playground equipment. In addition, professional athletes of all kinds came to spend time with the children of Minamisanriku, providing opportunities for interaction that will remain in the children's hearts forever.

Minamisanriku School Lunch Center had been completely destroyed in the disaster. With NGO and local government support, the center was rebuilt in March 2018, enabling the town to start providing safer and more reassuring school lunches to children at five municipal elementary schools and two junior high schools.

From the days immediately after the disaster, we also had volunteers who made repeated visits to the town. They brought presents of toys and farm products or spent time reading books to the children of Minamisanriku.