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An Open Kominkan, Where we Build the Future Together
~ Meet, Connect, Learn Together, Thrive ~

Kominkans established in each junior high school district within Okayama City serve as regional hubs for promoting ESD (Education for Sustainable Development).

At these Kominkans, we engage in learning about various fields such as the environment, disaster prevention, health, and child-rearing, and undertake initiatives to connect what we learn to solving problems.

To commemorate the 14th Global RCE Conference to be held in Okayama City in October 2025, we have created the Okayama City Community Center ESD Practice Collection 2025.

With hope that people's daily lives from the past to today will lead way to a sustainable future.

Kominkan (Community Learning Center)

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Community Development

Creating the Future

Let's all Think about a Future Filled with Smiles for Our Community!

Tomiyama ESD Smile Café Tomiyama Kominkan

Aiming for a sustainable society, we learn, think, and take actions together to create communities and societies filled with smiles for future generations and people worldwide. Learning themes cover a wide range, including food loss, fair trade, multicultural coexistence, and understanding disabilities (Help Mark). Centered around individuals active in local organizations, each session draws around 30 participants.

Learning about food loss sparked the start of a “food drive” initiative, where collected food is donated to local children's homes. Learning about the “Help Mark” led to the realization that “it's necessary to inform people in the community,” prompting the circulation of awareness flyers. What is learned here ripples out to impact the entire community.



Everyone is a Teacher, Everyone is a Student! A Fun Place to Learn

Ogami A School-Like Event "Gakko Gokko" Saidaiji Kominkan

We form an executive committee with local residents of Ogami school district and hold the “Ogami Community School Play” every year. This initiative aims to create a space where everyone from children to adults becomes a “Teacher,” sharing their expertise, and everyone becomes a “Student,” learning together joyfully while becoming “living companions”. Sometimes elementary school students become “Teachers” and adults become “Students.” Such elementary school students grow through the experiences, and adults deepen their connections with the community.

This becomes a place where the next generation of community leaders are nurtured. It takes place every Sunday in February at the former kindergarten building. Each session features a schedule of activities, such as magic tricks and table tennis taught by elementary students, English songs taught by high school students, band and KOTO performances, and disaster prevention talks. This project is now held with local events. It has been well-known activity and established as a community tradition.



Connecting the Spirit of Joji Tsubota to the Future

Learning the “Heart of Empathy” from Joji Tsubota's Literature Kozai Kominkan

Children's literature author Joji Tsubota (1890-1982) was born and raised in the Ishii Elementary School district. To honor Tsubota, a source of local pride, professors and students from Notre Dame Seishin University formed the “Tsubojo World Exploror” to conduct research activities in 2021.

Through collaborative projects, they have worked to share the results of the research widely with local residents, hoping to pass on Tsubota's spirit to future generations. In the 2024 research



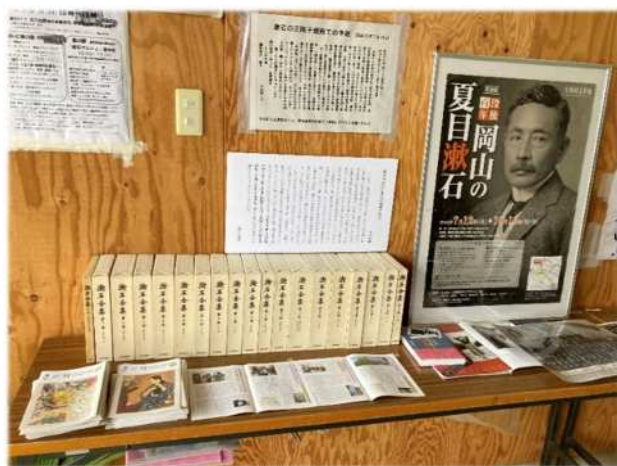
presentation themed

“Compassionate Hearts,” students read the fairy tale “MOMO NO MI(The Peach Fruit)” and explained the feelings of parents thinking of their son on the battlefield, prompting reflection on the “compassionate hearts” we should inherit as people living today. They also incorporated quizzes and workshops to help participants remember the introduced works more deeply and consciously connect literature with welfare, approaching the subject from new learning perspectives.



From Soseki Forum to the Literary Town of Jonan

Soseki Forum Jonan Kominkan



The Soseki Forum began in 2016, commemorating the visit of novelist Soseki Natsume to Kanada in the Jonan district to deliver a gift celebrating his sister-in-law Kokatsu's remarriage. With each iteration, a market selling Soseki-related foods and goods has been added, contributing to the forum's ongoing development as a community-building initiative.

Kanada, where Soseki stayed, is also the hometown of senryu poet and essayist Shinko Tokizane. Beginning with town revitalization through Soseki's literature,

the establishment of the Shinko Tokizane Literary Monument in February 2024 has sparked a new movement: “The literary town jonan:From Soseki Road to Jonan Literary Road ” In 2025, the Jonan Literary Road will be added, connecting Soseki's residence in Kanada to the birthplace site and literary monument of Shinko Tokizane, who established modern senryu, all the way to Kamikuban. We will continue working with local residents to keep cultivating minds through literature in community.



Gathering, Thinking, and Shaping the Future of Our Community Together

ESD/SDGs Festival Kyoyama Kominkan

In the Kyoyama area, various local organizations collaborate with the Kominkan as their base, aiming to realize sustainable community development across the entire region. Since 2005, they have held an annual festival where they learn from each other about the achievements and challenges of their respective activities.

The 20th festival in 2025 featured 19 meetings and events, including an activity presentation session with participation from seven local schools, an “SDGs Exchange Meeting” involving student groups and companies, and various hands-on workshops utilizing natural materials and waste.

Furthermore, at each festival, young people and others present new proposals related to ESD and SDGs, and the community center works to realize them. Examples include activities aiming to reduce plastic use across the entire community through the production and distribution of original tumblers, and activities led by high school students offering smartphone classes for the elderly, contributing to improving ICT knowledge and skills throughout the community.



The Traditional Lion Dance Culture Connecting Generations

Mitsu Kominkan Festival & the Traditional Lion Dance Festa Mitsu Kominkan



The Mitsu region has long maintained a close connection between the Dance and daily life. Efforts to build community through the Dance have included establishing preservation societies and hosting the National Dance Festa.

However, declining birthrates and an aging population have reduced the number of preservation societies, making tradition-passing increasingly difficult.

Therefore, to achieve sustainable cultural inheritance by teaming up with the youth who will lead the next generation, we have

decided to move forward together with Mitsu Junior High School, Okayama Mitsu High School, and Asahijuku Secondary School. To connect activities centered on “learning about, experiencing, and thinking about” Mitsu's Dance, the preservation society conducted outreach classes.

Currently, the Mitsu Kominkan Festival and the Traditional Lion Dance Festa are held simultaneously, with junior high and high schools participating through stage performances and booth exhibitions. Asahijuku Secondary School, which includes international students from China, has presented a new Dance blending Mitsu and Chinese elements. Moving forward, we will continue to explore contemporary methods for passing the Dance culture from the older generation to the youth.



Building a Community of Coexistence

Building a Community Where Diverse Individuals Support Each Other

Sharing Concerns, Growing Together

Flat Home Misaoyama Kominkan

Raising children with developmental disabilities or other special needs often leaves parents feeling isolated. At “Flat Home,” parents of children needing support gather to discuss parenting, receive advice from experienced parents and specialists, and lighten their burdens. Through the group talk with others, parents notice their children's strengths that were not found when they worry alone. We also co-host events with the local “Dandelion Association for



Children and Parents in Need of Support,” providing opportunities to connect them with the community.

Children range in age from toddlers to working adults, and new challenges can arise at each life stage. Still, there are people who acknowledge each other's parenting efforts, offer empathy, share worries, and give advice... We will continue our activities as a safe place within the community to raise children.



Japanese Language Classes for Learning “Daily Conversation”

Okayama City Japanese Language Classes - Fukuhama Branch Fukuhama Kominkan

In 2024, Japanese language classes began for foreign residents to learn “Japanese necessary for daily life.” A distinctive feature is the support provided by Japanese volunteers who have undergone training in “Easy Japanese.”

Participants learn Japanese through themes closely tied to daily life, such as emergency reporting methods, visiting medical facilities, and shopping. Occasionally, cultural experiences are incorporated, allowing participants to enjoy Tanabata, Bon dance, and New Year's Calligraphy in a warm and friendly atmosphere. The yukata worn during Bon dance



were donated by local residents. The dance instructors are individuals who study folk dance and Japanese classical dance at the Kominkan. This is not just a place to learn Japanese; it aims to foster mutual understanding through interaction with local residents and to create a community where everyone, Japanese and foreign nationals alike, can live comfortably.

*Easy Japanese refers to Japanese that has been

rephrased using simple words and phrases to facilitate communication with foreigners who are not yet proficient in Japanese.



The Charm of Our Region We Want to Pass On to the Next Generation



Enjoy Learning Kohoku SDGs 11 Kita Kominkan

The community group “SDGs11 Kohoku” was formed by local residents. It collaborates with the Kominkan to plan and run workshops. The group aim to convey the importance of nature and the charm of our community through sharing the games, knowledge, and skills we experienced as children with today's youth. This activity has been ongoing for over 10 years, so some elementary school participants who joined as attendees become members after they grow up, as they now eager to support organizing events. Members ranging from junior high students to their 90s gather



monthly for planning meetings to share ideas. They engage in diverse experiential activities: cultivating and harvesting sweet potatoes in fields, exploring nearby rivers to discover creatures, playing with bamboo water guns, and taking town walks. Parents also join in the fun during nature experiences. We hope young generations to become future community leaders through joyful experiences with local people.

Connecting with the Community through Club Workshop Experiences and Sales Practice

Collaborative Project with Okayama Minami Special Needs School

Kojo Kominkan

Every year, students from Okayama Minami Special Needs School's high school division participate in Kominkan club workshop experiences and sales practice, enjoying interactions with local residents while advancing their learning.

During the club workshop experiences, students participate in workshops they requested, such as

“Vibrant Stretch Tube Experience,” “Nostalgic Music♪ Tapness,” and “Natural Art.” It's truly impressive to see them so engrossed in the activities, exclaiming “I want to do more!” and losing track of time.



During the sales practice, students sell vegetables they've carefully cultivated, fabric accessories made during work practice sessions, cookies, and other items. These are very popular with the community. Many people arrive at the center before the sales even begin, eagerly awaiting the start.

These initiatives provide opportunities for community members to learn about the students and their school life.

Multi-Generational Exchange at Fujita Tonton Cafeteria

Fujita Tonton Cafeteria Fujita Kominkan

This initiative began with the desire of local volunteers to provide children with safe, nutritious meals made using rice and vegetables from Fujita, ensuring they can eat with peace of mind. Held once a month on Saturdays, it is operated primarily by the Fujita Children's cafeteria Steering Committee. Participants enjoy meals together and interact, fostering a sense of belonging. They spend joyful times playing with volunteer junior high and high school students and university students, or enjoying handmade picture-story shows created by high school students. More people are donating vegetables and rice. Some children who struggled to attend school found their smiles again here and now go to school regularly. Aiming to prevent children's isolation, the program fosters connections among participants and volunteers, revitalizing the community and energizing the local area. We will continue to discuss and develop systems and structures to ensure the program's ongoing sustainability.



Let's Expand Our Salon Circle!

Salon Exchange Meeting

Takebe-cho Kominkan

“Interaction Lively Salons” have been established in many communities as resident-led gathering places for interaction. Their purpose is to prevent isolation and social withdrawal among seniors, promote health, and foster a purpose in life.



Over the years of operation, requests arose to learn about other salons, leading to these exchange meetings. Participants learned about exercises and dementia from care and welfare professionals and shared details about their own daily activities. Feedback included comments like, “I want to incorporate activities from other salons,” and “Seeing participants leave with smiles makes me want to keep trying harder next time.”

We will continue supporting efforts to expand the circle of salons.