

## Unificationists Make Common Cause at Japan-Aid Festival in Maryland

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*L to R: Madame Maria Antonio, Mrs. Keiko Burton, Madame Yuki Sakata, and Mrs. Tomiko Duggan. More than forty ladies took home bouquets and vases from the demonstration. (All photos courtesy of Randall Francis.)*

By all accounts, the Japan-Aid festival and concert on May 1, 2011 in Landover Hills Maryland was a unifying event for Unificationists of all ages, and dozens of public-minded citizens in the national capital area, according to event organizers.

The Japan-Aid fundraiser for the Red Cross and the Women's Federation for World Peace, which drew upwards of 300 citizens, was aimed to finance relief for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Japan on March 11, 2011.

“By design, we structured the fundraiser as our first broad-coalition effort of multiple ministries and groups in Maryland. It was led by our young people,” said Scoutmaster Jim Boothby, adult leader of Boy Scout Troop 1212, which played a key role in staffing the festival. “In reality it was the first-ever real cooperative effort between diverse entities: our church youth ministry, young adult ministry, the church-supported Boy Scout troop, the WAIT team, the Japanese community and the Pastors -- a significant first for our community,” he added.



*Face painting at the festival was a hit for many.*

“This was a very fun and informative fund-raising effort,” said District Pastor Randall Francis, who by coincidence was an elementary school pupil at the building that currently houses Lovin’ Life Ministry in Landover Hills. “I have several ties to the tragedy in Japan and this special local relief effort since I am originally from the Landover Hills area,” he continued. “My wife Kumiko is from Aomori in Northern Japan. Our children's grandparents and other relatives escaped most of the destruction, but through uniting in this cause they could again feel the concern Americans of all backgrounds have for those that are in need,” Rev. Francis said.

*Japan-Aid* was covered by four local newspapers, including the *Washington Examiner*, a daily, and drew the participation of Mayor Lee Walker of Landover Hills and Madame Yuki Sakata, a respected instructor of floral design, who travelled from Japan at her own expense to support the fundraiser.



*Shin Taylor performed an original song for Japan-Aid Fest.*

Madame Sakata praised those gathered for the rock concert and explained her support of the Women’s Federation for World Peace: “There is a limit to what governments can do to rebuild the nation. Governments can build houses, but they cannot make homes. Wives and mothers make homes. The women of faith in Japan are the wind beneath the wings of government, because they build families of faith, hope and love. The family is the building block of society, and the Women's Federation knows this and teaches this. And that is why I am supporting the Women's Federation at this event.”

Participants at the festival feasted on Japanese sushi, yaki-soba noodles and teriyaki chicken. Generous donations of food from True World Foods and from the local Niwano Hana restaurant supported the booths. Children flocked to the face-painting tent and to the Wii tournament, while more than 40 ladies learned the principles of flower arrangement from Madame Yukiyo Sakata. Booths teaching calligraphy and chopsticks games were also a hit.



*The Arigato Choir from Laurel Maryland.*

The concert featured the singing and dance skills of the Washington AIDS International Teens (WAIT); the Arigato Choir comprised of five young Unificationists from Laurel, Maryland, singers Shin Taylor, Emiko Nadimi, Mehrdad Mizani, Laurence Baer and George Burton. A collage of slides portraying the tragedy of the quake was produced by Ms. Teresa Ferrete, the Young-Adult minister of the local church community and one of the organizers of Japan-Aid. MC responsibilities were ably handled by Rachel Boothby and Marcel Caron, both 17.

“The event was a great success. The best aspect of it was that many people from the community, our church, and from New Hope Academy came to show their support. It was a great demonstration of good team work.” said Kaeleigh Moffitt, 22, who coordinated an informal committee of volunteers to implement the festival.

Church Pastor Matt Goldberg commented to familyfed.org afterwards: “I feel the event was a success because we drew many people and raised a substantial amount of money for earthquake relief [close to \$5,000]. And, we raised a lot of awareness about Japanese culture.”