Minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games
MARUKAWA Tamayo

Minister Address

In January 2016, in anticipation of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, 44 organizations became the first to register as Host Towns, an initiative allowing Japanese municipalities and countries/regions from around the world to have exchanges. Since then, the number of Host Towns has continued to increase and so far, 530 municipalities (as of end of June, 2021) have registered.

The time for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games to take place has finally come. During the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, for a duration of 45 days from July 23rd to September 5th, we will be holding the online event “Host Town House”, to introduce the Host Town Initiative to the world as the first of its kind in the history of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. 5 years have passed since the first registry, and since then many exchanges have taken place, and many stories have been woven nation-wide.

There were many things we noticed for the first time through the exchanges: the astonishing amount of ingredients, dishes, and eating customs that exist around the world; the obstacles we had never considered until walking the streets with Paralympians; the biases in our hearts that we had never accounted for; the number of athletes striving to make it to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in less than ideal conditions with little to no facilities to train; and the vast number of people supporting these athletes...
The many things we never knew to notice, has taught us more than we could have ever imagined.

There were many struggles during the organizing process. At times we were worried up until the end if people would indeed come to Japan, even after already receiving confirmation. At other times we felt frustrated not being able to completely convey what we were thinking due to the language barrier.

We have also been able to share amazing experiences with citizens from around the world; the moments when the children worked hard to make the exchanges even better; the joy we felt when the words we learned were understood by the athletes; the food, music, and sports we enjoyed with the citizens and athletes from counterpart countries/regions; the reunion
with the rescue teams that helped us after the Great East Japan Earthquake; the opportunity to express our gratitude and show how the affected regions are gradually recovering; the time when we competed together in Boccia regardless if we were children, adults, or had impairments... These many experiences have bolstered the vitality of regions and the growth of its citizens.

We have not only learned that we can mutually respect and understand one another beyond languages, cultures, religions and impairments, but that being connected to each other brings joy and happiness to us all.

Since last year COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the world, halting various activities around the globe, and postponing the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games by one year. The Host Town exchanges also took a major impact. Despite the conditions, the Host Towns have strived to come up with ways to make sure the exchanges can continue. Many Host Towns sent online messages of support to the athletes and citizens of their counterpart countries and regions.

Unfortunately, many Host Town municipalities were not able to receive the athletes directly, including for the training camps. However, none of the municipalities gave up on the exchanges, and have been driven to continue their efforts to support the athletes through sending messages and exchanging online. I truly felt that it is the people who shape the world, and that it is our hearts that keep us connected.

The many stories that each Host Town has written are irreplaceable, and we treasure them all. The Host Town exchanges will live on forever. They will continue to go on incessantly, to the future across generations and beyond.

Here at “Host Town House” we hope you will be able to see the many different paths exchanges have gone down, and sense what has taken place in various parts of Japan over the past five years. We hope that all of you visiting will not only watch over, but actively be a part of the different exchanges the municipalities of Japan will continue to have as Host Towns, now and beyond the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

丸川珠代
"Host Town" is an initiative in which, through exchanges in various fields such as sports, culture and economy, aims to revitalize regions and realize exchanges that will continue far into the future between Japanese municipalities and residents of countries/regions taking part in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which has been postponed to the year 2021.

Brought together by chance, Host Town and the world are connected

Exchanges with counterpart countries/regions continued amidst COVID-19, and our bonds have deepened

The bonds we formed will forever stay strong, beyond the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, on to the future
Event Outline

Period: July 23 (Fri) - September 5 (Sun), 2021
Organizer: Secretariat of the Headquarters for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Cabinet Secretariat
URL: https://host-town.jp/house
Commencing on July 23 (Fri) at 10:00am *Subject to change

Virtual venue

**Welcome Area**
Learn more about the Host Town Initiative.

**Cheer Circle Area**
This area is where you, along with Host Towns, can cheer on the athletes participating in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Let’s liven things up!

**Host Town Collaboration Project Area**
See how Host Towns receiving the same countries/regions collaborated to conduct exchanges together.

**Theme Based Activities Area**
Introduction to Host Town activities on reconstruction, inclusivity, and food.

**Theater Area**
Here you can watch a video compilation on the history of Host Town exchanges and a variety of other interactions.
This is the entrance to the Virtual Venue. Out of the thousands of contents in this virtual space you will be able to find videos introducing Host Town, exhibitions, and other recommended contents. Come on by!

The Cheer Circle began with Host Town and keeps getting wider. On exhibit there are messages of support sent from around the world to cheer the athletes on. Wouldn’t you like to be a part of that circle?
See how Host Towns receiving the same counterpart countries and regions collaborated on aspects such as food, culture, education, music and sports whilst keeping in mind the characteristics of each municipality as well as those of the counterpart countries/regions. Click the Guidance Button you see in this Area and listen to audio contents to learn more about the theme.

**Ethiopia, Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Rwanda, South Africa**
To support the athletes of Africa, the cities of Hachimantai, Iwate Pref.; Nikaho, Akita Pref.; Iwanuma, Miyagi Pref.; and Kasama and Shimotsuma, Ibaraki Pref. created videos messages using their traditional music, and gathered drawings from children to make picture books.

**Thailand, Malaysia, Mongolia**
Introducing the efforts of 5 Host Town municipalities with Asian counterparts using easy-to-understand manga. Enjoy learning about the different exchanges between each municipality and their counterparts (Thailand, Malaysia, Mongolia).

**Austria**
To welcome the people and athletes from Austria taking part in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Yahaba Town, Iwate Pref.; Nasushiobara City, Tochigi Pref.; and Azumino City, Nagano Pref. collected recipes, picture books made from children’s drawings, and created a chorus video linking the national anthems of both countries.
Virtual Venue Map

Brazil
Hirosaki City, Aomori Pref.; Tono City, Iwate Pref.; Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Pref.; and Kakogawa City, Hyogo Pref. are all registered as Host Towns of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society of Brazil. With "Força Brasil (Go Brazil)!" as their chant, they've prepared powerful messages of support for the Paralympians!

Chile
Elementary and junior high school students in Mitaka City, Tokyo and Kami Town, Miyagi Pref. learned Spanish so as to support the athletes from Chile, and here you can see them utilizing their new skills to exchange online with junior high school students from Chile. Witness how these exchanges connect them from opposite sides of the world!

France
Kobe City and Himeji City, Hyogo Pref.; as well as Urayasu City and Isumi City, Chiba Pref. are Host Towns of France, and high school students from the cities conducted interviews at Host Town exchange venues as well as with French athletes to create the "Host Town Newspaper." They, along with high school students of France, will become the bridge in anticipation to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Georgia
Tokunoshima Pref.; Omuta City, Fukuoka Pref.; and Shika Town, Ishikawa Pref. developed original Georgia-inspired dishes, have an online tour connecting Georgia with the 3 of them, and have been conducting activities such as exchanges with citizens through art to include the younger generation. Find out more!

Germany
Find out what 12 high school students learned and thought through their interviews with German officials on the realization of a harmonious society and regional revitalization. You can also see how the online German picture book story telling exchanges went that were held during "Germany Week."

Italy
Using the messages of support on Instagram, we’re making a video relay connecting the train rails that connect the participating municipalities. We’re also writing articles on the activities of each municipality from a perspective that everyone from Italy are sure to enjoy.
Mexico
In support of the athletes from Mexico, children from Host Towns of Mexico in Hiroshima Pref. are sending leis/wreaths they made using paper cranes to the athletes along with letters. This is a heartwarming project, allowing people to share their feelings no matter the distance!

New Zealand
The people rooting for New Zealand came together to create a song relay of “Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi,” a traditional Maori song. Please listen to the passion of the people of each Host Town and New Zealand.

Saudi Arabia
Witness the birth of a long lasting exchange-relationship! Hear about the exchanges held so far with Saudi Arabia under the concept of “not giving up on what can still be done despite the COVID-19 crisis,” and the exchanges yet to come beyond the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Taiwan
1 prefecture and 9 municipalities designated as Host Towns to Taiwan came together in support of Taiwan. They created support video relays and mosaic art, promoted the charm of the Host Towns in Taiwan, and exchanged online with athletes and sports organizations!

The Americas (Caribbean Countries and Territories)
The “Candle Night at HOST TOWN!” and “CARICOM×HOST TOWN SDGs Meeting” are online exchange events between Caribbean countries/territories and 6 Host Towns, focused on environmental issues that are common to island countries surrounded by ocean. See how these events bring the Caribbean together, in hopes to make the Games a success, protect the earth, and further mutual exchanges!

United States of America
At the U.S. Host Towns, choir and art exchanges were held. Here you can also find concert footage of the U.S. Army Japan Band, and interviews by influencers covering each Host Town. You’ll surely enjoy both watching and listening to the contents!
**Virtual Venue Map**

**Theme Based Activities Area**

Here you can find out about the numerous efforts of each Host Town, from the exchanges through food with counterpart countries/regions, to the details on “Arigato” Host Towns for Supporting Reconstruction and “Host Towns of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society.” Host Town municipalities all over Japan have continued to show ingenuity in their activities. Please come see what they have achieved! Click the Guidance Button you see in this Area and listen to audio contents to learn more about the theme.

**“Arigato” Host Towns for Supporting Reconstruction**

Here you can learn more about the support counterpart countries/regions provided “Arigato” Host Towns for Supporting Reconstruction municipalities of Iwate Pref., Miyagi Pref., and Fukushima Pref. You can also see panels and footage explaining how the reconstruction efforts currently are after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

**Host Towns of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society**

Learn through manga and videos about the efforts of Host Towns of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society, aiming to become cities easy to live in for everyone, despite any impairments.

Check out the Barrier-free Map citizens made after checking each place, introducing areas around stations and multiple tourist sites. You can also watch the online bocce exchanges, which you can enjoy with anyone, no matter the distance.

**Theater Area**

Here in this vast open space you can enjoy “MY HOST TOWN HISTORY” to learn about the process Host Town has taken from when it began to the present through interviews with four Host Town Leaders. Not only that, you can also watch a collection of videos separated by category such as food, culture, sports, and even by continent. Enjoy!

**HOST TOWN Collaboration Project**

See how Host Towns receiving the same countries/regions collaborated to conduct exchanges together. Focusing on their horizontal ties, municipalities worked together to plan ingenious ways to further exchanges with their counterpart countries/regions, so please enjoy!

**MY HOST TOWN HISTORY**

--From the Past, to the Future and Beyond--

Through interviews with four people who played major roles in promoting Host Towns and won the “Host Town Leader Award,” we will deliver a 4-part series on the development, achievements, and future prospects of Host Towns from when it began to the present!

**Theme Based Host Town Exchanges**

Each Host Town has held exchanges with the athletes and citizens from their counterpart countries/regions in a variety of ways in order to deepen mutual friendship. Here you can learn about the different efforts of Host Towns by theme.
Light up HOST TOWN Project

"WE ARE ALL, ONE WORLD Light up HOST TOWN Project" is a Host Town exclusive website intended to encourage and bring people together both domestically and internationally by showing the progress of Host Town exchanges.

https://host-town.jp/