

MSC Committee Meeting

Saturday, June 30, 2018, 10 am to noon

GoFly Wheelchairs office

Members present: Ken Hartmann, Masako Takeda, Michiyo Yoshida, Yoko Otake, Stuart Walker, Megumi Karasawa, Michi Goto and Kathleen Riggins.

1. Reviewed “Objectives” and “About Us” as stated on the website.

MSC is registered among several other organizations through MEIKAN, and MSC is the only organization whose primary target audience is English speaking foreign senior residents in need of Japanese member assistance. Our website says that being a Multinational Community the language of choice to be used will be English for communication.

2. What are our target people, language use policy and range of topics?

We must be careful to have the meetings in both languages, not English only. At the same time, we know that most senior expats cannot understand Japanese completely. Therefore, the focus on presentations has been to find speakers who are bilingual and can explain when necessary in either language. The speakers are asked to prepare bilingual materials, if possible, and to do any Q&A bilingually, so that all participants will not hesitate to ask questions. Our primary emphasize for topics should be on ‘Senior Support’ and an ability to communicate in ‘English’ by the speaker. The ‘About Us’ page of the website has been updated to clarify what is intended by the phrase ‘bilingual presentations.’

Stuart and Ken pointed out that we have learned from experience that it isn’t effective to have a Japanese only presentation with simultaneous interpretation. It was lengthy and cumbersome and frustrated participants. When we plan a truly bilingual presentation, it needs to be very well done, like the Emergency Medical Services meeting held in April 2018. That meeting utilized the services

of a professional interpreter from SEMI whenever the person speaking could not use English at all or a Japanese person from the audience only spoke in Japanese. Of course the interpreter was excellent.

In June, there was a meeting about property purchase and other real estate related transactions. Some Japanese members felt that this topic was only for foreign residents and also not really of interest to seniors. Actually, several senior members attended that meeting, and were very interested in the topic. As the speaker pointed out, the understanding of property transactions is very complex, and does indeed affect seniors, as they do sell property, rent, downsize, and move into senior housing. In addition, it would have been helpful if some senior Japanese members of HMSC had attended and shared their own personal experience dealing with property issues, rules and regulations, which are often unique to local areas. This firsthand experience is what the foreign residents need to hear.

As to what topics we should look into, it was felt that we need to solicit suggestions for meetings and activities periodically, not just one time. We should also feature some topics a second time, such as new research into cancer and other major diseases affecting seniors.

One possible topic mentioned would be sleep disorders. A member of our group, Simon Tholar, personally knows a good bilingual medical doctor whom he has recommended for a presentation on this subject, which is a serious problem for many seniors.

Meeting format: It was suggested that our meetings ideally should include 1) presentation, 2) Q and A, and 3) small group discussion. We would need to carefully plan the schedule for such a format, but it would be very effective. Separating into small groups for discussion might make it easier for the Japanese present to share their views in Japanese, and the results of such group discussions can be recorded and summarized in English.

3. Decisions should be made by consensus of committee members

At the November 18, 2017 committee meeting, it was decided to change the name of MSC, replacing the word 'senior' with 'support.' Michiyo was not present at that meeting and could only learn about it when the minutes of that meeting were sent out 10 days later. She reminded the committee that MSC is registered as having as its main purpose to help seniors. She feels that this point should be reflected in the website banner image. Ken said that he could put a subtitle in the heading on the website, which would state that HMSC is "Supporting Seniors in Hokkaido." [Note: This has been done.]

Currently, we have 10 officers and Kathleen proposed that 10 should be the maximum. We need to communicate any proposed major changes to all committee members before any final decision is voted upon. We need to determine how many voting members present are required to establish a quorum, and whether such decisions can be made by simple majority. Previously we had a list of 14 or more committee members so reaching a quorum was very difficult to obtain, but decisions always need to be made. The committee members are working hard to represent the group and make decisions only after thorough discussion of the issues.

4. Neighbors & HMSC

Michiyo reported that HMSC can receive up to ¥200,000 for this fiscal year from Neighbors. It is assumed that a grant was received on behalf of the activities to be conducted by HMSC. With the added funds it was felt that we could take on some activities that we couldn't afford solely from the donations collected, such as another bus tour to senior support facilities.

Michiyo suggested that some of the money could be used to send a few people to visit the Group Home Hana in Kobe. It is an international care facility, and the first of its kind in Japan. Michi Goto said that she usually visits Kansai at the

end of October and beginning of November, and volunteered to visit there. She said that it would not cost HMSC anything as she would just use some of her time in Kobe for the visit. Someone suggested that two people should be enough for the visit and hopefully one would be a foreign representative.. Since none of the foreign committee members present felt they could take the time to go there, it was suggested to ask Helena (a former committee member) might join Michi Goto on the visit as a foreign representative of HMSC. Yoko said that she would be seeing Helena the next day and will ask her about her availability.

After the visit to Group Home Hana, HMSC plans to hold a workshop later on this year, perhaps led by Michi Goto, as noted in the tentative schedule below.

5. Schedule of activities for the next few months:

When scheduling our meetings, be sure to avoid the dates of Free Professional Consultation for Foreign Nationals sponsored by SICPF. They are August 25, October 5, December 1, and February 16.

Sunday, July 22 Book Exchange at Biidama.

Kathleen will place a reminder. The theme is "The Future" and there is limited seating.

Michiyo pointed out that the beginning of September is usually when there is a Disaster Prevention meeting sponsored by the Plaza. We will strongly recommend people to join this event as there is concern for seniors who can be greatly confused about what to do when a natural disaster strikes.

September, last half

Lunch at Biidama, followed by a walk in Maruyama Park. This will replace the summer picnic that has been held in Nakajima Park. Yoko will make the reservation at Biidama on July 22nd, if a date for the event has been determined.

November, Palliative care presentation

Stuart is in charge of the planning for this event and is attempting to narrow down the possible speakers to be included. At this time it is thought that the event will most likely be held at Hokusei University. Palliative care includes both home care and care in a facility.

Date undecided: International Senior Facility Planning Workshop

A short presentation on what was learned during the visit to Group Home Hana in Kobe, the first international housing facility of its kind in Japan. This would be followed by small group discussion about requirements and recommendations for an international senior housing facility in Sapporo. Leaders from the small group discussions would then report back to all participants on what their groups felt such a facility should include. After the end of the workshop, the requirements would be recorded and used to inform realtors and developers who have an interest in seeing such a facility established in Sapporo.

6. Financial Report

There was no formal financial report provided since the last one back in March. Ken reported that ¥31,000 in donations was collected at the Emergency Medical presentation in April and ¥4,300 was collected at the Real Estate Property workshop in June. Added to the previous balance reported in March this would give us an approximate balance of 50,000 yen. It was not stated how much of the grant money might be deposited to the HMSC bank account. Hopefully, this will be clarified later in the interest of financial transparency.