

Researching Care Services and Facilities for International Residents

March 3, 2019 at the Catholic Church Center

Part 1- Kobe Foreign Friendship Center (NPO) and Hana Group Home
Research trip undertaken by Michi Goto and Ken Hartmann

Michi Goto spoke first and her complete notes can be read by clicking on the PDF file link of her PowerPoint slideshow below. Ken Hartmann shared his impressions of Kobe as well. The tour of the facilities was only one hour. The facility is in a low economic area. At the day care/rehabilitation facility everyone was active and seemed to be enjoying themselves. The young organizer from Mongolia, who was in charge of the tour, was very competent, and was obviously very well-liked by all. We were able to interact with those using the daycare facilities for rehabilitation and socialization. The design of the space is very efficient.

The Hana group home is a five-minute walk from the daycare center. Residents and staff seemed to get along well together. We observed those living on the second floor as the more severe dementia cases are living on the third floor. It's well-designed with lots of windows making it a bright and friendly atmosphere. There are 10 rooms and it is full. A person must be Level 3 or above to reside there. Ninety percent of the residents are covered by *Kaigo Hoken*. Residents must pay the rent. Daycare patients can stay temporarily, It costs them about ¥4,500 per day.

2. Megumi Karasawa reviewed *Kaigo Hoken*, the Long-Term Care Insurance system that covers most of the costs connected with senior medical care support services. Complete notes can be viewed by clicking on the PDF file link which shows the content of her PowerPoint slides.

She recently went through the process of using this system for her mother's care. She talked about the costs for care in Sapporo, but Ebetsu and Otaru are about the same. There is some financial support available from the city besides *Kaigo Hoken*. The care manager is very important as she or he serve as the go-between for you and those providing support. Their work is similar to that of a social worker. They are not nurses.

3. Yukiko Sakai of the Sapporo International Communication Plaza (SICP) introduced some English and Japanese guides and handbooks for senior citizens that we can download from the following link.

http://plaza-sapporo.or.jp/citizen_j/multilingual_materials/

Part 2 – Open Discussion of HMSC Priorities

Ken opened the discussion by saying that we need a local support facility for HMSC. We shouldn't wait for another natural disaster to occur before starting this work. How can we work towards establishment of an International Support Center? The following concerns were listed as priorities to focus on. The group present decided that a Survey of Concerns and Needs by foreign residents should be prepared and results analyzed.

1. Native Language Communication

This is the number 1 concern for almost everyone and the recommended Survey should focus on what kind of problems foreign residents have experienced, due to their limited Japanese ability combined with the inability of Japanese to communicate well in English or other foreign languages. This is especially true of hospital and care staff where the communication and understanding is much more critical.

2. Sapporo International Friendship Center

Ken suggested the establishment of a Sapporo Friendship/Support Center as a first step, as was done in Kobe, in order to work together with the city. We may want to include the word "International" in the title. Kobe kept KFC as their logo, but changed the text to Kobe Foreign Friendship Center to show that it was created to support foreign residents only. "International" is preferable to "Foreign" because our Social Center will be open to Japanese, as well as non-Japanese, just as we hope to have a residence facility that is international.

3. Day Care Service Facilities

Ken felt the primary focus of this is to identify local international friendly Day Care Service Facilities where foreign residents classified under *Kaigo*

Hoken as Level 1 and 2 for preventive long-term care would be welcomed. (Such information would be one type of entry to store in a database to be accessible by anyone.) In the future, HMSC would consider the necessity and feasibility for establishment of a truly bilingual International Day Care Facility in Sapporo. Interest in that idea will be included in the upcoming Survey of foreign residents currently being developed.

4. Networking Forum and Database to support Foreign Residents.

C.A. suggested an online forum where members who wish to participate would receive instant messages allowing them to respond as quickly as they are able to do so. Ken suggested that there may be other system alternatives available to utilize a network, which would include the ability to give all members the capacity to support each other as desired. This needs research and should be included in our list of priorities.

As for a Database this could simply be the accumulation of all information that we deem to be important for future use, with the intention that it would be easily accessible to all. Examples of a simple database include a file of useful links to pertinent information in English or a directory of hospitals which are foreigner friendly. One suggestion was to collect reviews of facilities and medical staff by members. We need to come up with a plan as to what data needs to be collected and consider the issue of privacy very carefully.

Our group concluded by establishing a volunteer team to prepare the Survey to be used as an assessment tool to establish the goals and priority needs of the foreign resident community. The Survey Prep volunteer members are Deborah Harris Love-Chairperson, Katherine Wyllie Mansoor, Peggy Shibuya, Yoko Otake, CA Edington, Chihiro Shinomiya, and Ken Hartmann-Editor. The committee will prepare a rough draft within one month in English, and then a final draft by the end of April. It is planned to have the Survey completed online by as many foreign residents of Hokkaido as possible. After analysis of the results, HMSC will present them to the City, seeking their support in alleviating the concerns of foreign residents and the establishment of the desired facilities.

At the end of the meeting, Michiyo Yoshida, the founder of HMSC, recommended that HMSC separate from “Neighbors” and register as an

independent group with L-Plaza. Thereafter, the independent group could apply for NPO status, and thereby seek independent grant funding for future projects.

Submitted by Kathleen Riggins