

# **Progress Report**

## **July 2011**

### **Welcome/Farewell**

The Sakura Committee would like to welcome Mr. Nobuaki Yamamoto as Acting Chair of the Sakura Committee. Mr. Yamaguchi succeeds the previous Chair, Mr. Tetsuo Yamashita, who has since returned to Tokyo and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Spring Plantings**

The spring 2011 planting season was capped off with a weekend of planting ceremonies. The first ceremony took place on June 11, with the donation of 30 trees to Toronto Island. The ceremony was held as part of the City of Toronto's annual Toronto Tree Festival, an event that celebrates the city's trees with nature walks, talks and children's activities, all tree-related. The ceremony was attended by Richard Ubbens, Director of Parks, Department of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Steve Fry, President, Friends of Toronto Island, Acting Chair Yamamoto and members of the Secretariat. One tree was ceremonially planted by Messrs. Ubbens, Fry and Yamamoto. As part of his remarks, Acting Chair Yamamoto noted the links between the trees planted on the island to the devastation of the Great East Japan earthquake, saying that "the flowering of the trees, especially in the regions of Japan affected by the March 11 Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent tsunami, served to encourage the victims of this devastating disaster. They saw how, even now, life goes on – that there will be, without doubt, rejuvenation and resurrection." In response, Mr. Fry read out a letter of acknowledgement for the ceremony from Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, and announced that the path where the trees are planted had been renamed as "Cherry Tree Lane".

On June 12, Approximately 60 people gathered at Scarboro Missions (SFM) to celebrate the donation of 15 trees to the missionary society. The ceremony was attended by Father John Carten, Treasurer General, SFM, Jack Lynch, Superior General, SFM, Roy Sakaguchi, Chair, Toronto Japanese Catholic Community (TorJCC), Committee Member Fujita, Secretariat Member Otsuka, and other members of the Secretariat. One tree was ceremonially planted by Father Tom O'Toole, Chaplain Emeritus, TorJCC, Mr. Sakaguchi and Mr. Otsuka. In giving his remarks, Mr. Otsuka said, "The Sakura donated this year at Scarboro Missions in a sense mark this disaster, but this also means the trees will grow along with Japan as the country rebuilds itself. One day, these trees will be fully grown, and their flowering in springtime will celebrate the recovery of Japan and the unfaltering will of the Japanese people." In response, Father Carten thanked the Sakura Project for the donation, and noted that his organization had strong ties with Japan, with some priests having lived and carried out missionary work up to 45 years in the country. The event was capped by a series of traditional dance performances that date from the 16th and 17th centuries by Japanese folk dance troop Urara Minbu-kai, as well as a reception at SFM.

### **Other Plantings**

Other plantings that took place in spring 2011 in order to complete or continue with donations that have been announced in the past: Toronto's Centennial Park received 149 trees on April 27 and May 4; Hamilton's Macassa Lodge received 5 trees on May 11; Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington received 25 trees on May 27 and the City of Kawartha Lakes received 6 trees on June 21. So far, the Sakura Project has donated 2,921 trees to 55 locations around Ontario.

## Wide-Ranging Support

The Sakura Project began its fundraising campaign in March 2000. Since the launch of the Sakura Project, Ontario and Japanese citizens and companies have generously donated more than \$83,000 (as of July 2011). Many thanks are extended to the Sakura Project's financial contributors.

## The Project

Initiated in the spring of 2000, the Sakura Project aims to plant 3,000 Japanese flowering cherry (*Sakura*) trees in the province of Ontario over the course of a number of years. The Project is administered by the Sakura Committee, which has been chaired by Mr. Yamamoto since April 2011.

The Japanese hold tremendous affection for Sakura, its beauty being a source of a great deal of national pride. The aim of this project is to promote friendship and understanding between Japan and Ontario – and between Japan and Canada – by planting donated Sakura trees in public places around Ontario. For further information and updates on the Sakura Project, please visit: [www.toronto.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/english/sakura/main/html](http://www.toronto.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/english/sakura/main/html).

### The Sakura Committee

**Acting Chair:** Mr. Nobuaki YAMAMOTO, Acting Consul-General of Japan in Toronto

**Vice-Chair:** Mr. John CRAIG, Partner, McMillan LLP

**Members:** Mr. Scott FUJITA, Landscape Architect, Retired, Salmona Tregunno, Oakville  
Mr. Sid IKEDA, Special Ambassador, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre  
Mr. James MATSUMOTO, President, The Association of Japanese Canadian Businesses and Professionals

Mr. Yoichi TOMIHARA, President and CEO, Toyota Canada

Ms. Sonia CARDILLO, Law Clerk, Fasken Martineau

**Advisor:** Mr. Ray KACZMARSKI, Research Station Manager, University of Guelph

**Secretariat:** Consulate-General of Japan  
Suite 3300, Royal Trust Tower  
77 King Street West  
P.O. Box 10, T.D. Centre  
Toronto, ON M5K 1A1  
Tel: (416) 363-7038  
E-Mail: [access@japancg-toronto.org](mailto:access@japancg-toronto.org)