



Clown Camp® Kiso

— Dr. Richard Snowberg

Japan's Clown Camp® Kiso was held this past summer at the Kiso Park Culture Hall about a two hours drive from Tokyo. Program directors RONE and Gigi—both WCA members, carried on the tradition of Clown Camp® that had been held in the United States for 30 years. The location was a mountainous retreat with much acreage as well as a concert hall, practice studio as well as lecture and meeting rooms.

The program utilized the services of RONE and Gigi as instructors as well as Reiko Hsomi to teach mime and movement, and Shiho Noji to manage the balloon sculpturing classes. Additional staff members included Cathy, Maggie, Shigeko Kurosawa, and twelve-year old Kai Takahashi. Kai, known as "Rook" has been taking clown classes from RONE and Gigi since he was five years of age and is an exceptional performer. These assistants all helped coordinate clown alleys during the program's weeklong session.

Around forty participants took part in sessions to learn about clowning, with group practice sessions, sessions on solving performance problems, and appearances before local audiences. Participants included mostly adults but also a good number of Junior Joey's.

There was doubt whether the program was going to be able to be held due to the terrible earthquakes and resultant problems that plagued Japan. While the program was held, an earthquake did take place on the first day of the program week. However overall the program was a huge success, and the directors already are planning on the 2012 program to be held during the last week of June. ☺

