



Naka Ward promotes the Naka Ward Multicultural Coexistence Promotion Action Plan to help non-Japanese residents build ties in the local community. This newsletter is published by Naka Ward in English and Chinese to provide foreign nationals with useful information on topics such as municipal administration, social programs and rules for everyday living.

Delivering event and living information!

Naka Ward multilingual website

English Chinese



## Join in neighborhood association activities!



Bon-odori dancing



Sports day

The photos are from events hosted by a neighborhood association.

“If you would like to take part in local activities but do not know how to get started...” We recommend **participating in activities through your neighborhood association.**

### Answering your questions!

## Talking with Foreign Resident and the Neighborhood Association Chairperson

### It is important to take a step forward

#### ● What motivated you to participate?

I saw a post on the neighborhood association bulletin board about a “community cleanup.” My Japanese language teacher told me that **I could participate even if I didn’t speak Japanese**, so I decided to give it a try. I also joined in the “year-end children’s patrol,” the “New Year rice cake-pounding event” and the “children’s Christmas party.”



From China  
Ms. Wu Minhua  
(Honmoku Otori Neighborhood Association)

#### ● Where do you get your information about activities?

My neighborhood association **has an official LINE account, from which I’m sent event information with flyers.** I can also use the official LINE account to ask questions and apply for things, which is convenient as Japanese is not my native language. **I first heard they had an official LINE account when I participated in a “community cleanup.”**

#### ● What is good about being a member?

**Now I have more neighbors I can talk to for advice.** Before joining in activities, when I didn’t understand something about life in Japan, the only things I could rely on were the internet and my Japanese language teacher. Now, I can ask the people in my neighborhood association. Everyone is very kind.

The greatest thing as a member, though, is that **my children now have more friends.** I can interact with people of all ages through neighborhood association activities, and it feels warm like a family.

If more foreigners would participate in the activities, I think it would also become a place where foreigners can share their concerns.

First, try to take part in neighborhood association activities. Everyone will give you a warm welcome.



◀ At the “New Year rice cake-pounding event”

### You are not alone

#### ● Can I participate even if I’m not good at Japanese?

You can join us without any worries! We, the Umechi District\* Neighborhood Association, **have volunteers who can speak foreign languages** at our events, so please feel free to ask for help.

Event information is posted on the association bulletin board in **English, Chinese and Japanese.** If an event interests you, please consider participating.

\* Okina-cho, Chitose-cho, Bandai-cho, Fujimi-cho, Furo-cho, Yamada-cho, Yamabuki-cho, Yoshihama-cho, Ougi-cho, Kotobuki-cho, Chojamachi, Matsukage-cho and part of Miyoshi-cho

#### ● What are the benefits of participating?

You can find out about your local area online, but **you can get information that only local people know** by participating in neighborhood association activities. Recently, a family newly arrived in Japan participated in a “rice cake-pounding event.” They were unsure about where their child should go to school, so we told them about the local schools and they were very happy. **Even if you join one activity, you can get lots of helpful information,** that’s one of the benefits.

#### ● Do you have a message for the readers?

Many people in the area also have connections to other countries. Because Japan experiences many natural disasters, **it would be very helpful if people who understand a foreign culture and language could play an active role in times of disaster.** Meeting face-to-face on a regular basis is an important factor that helps maintain calmness in a disaster.

In recent years, people do not have as many connections with their neighbors. **By participating in neighborhood association activities, you can create such connections.** Always remember that **you are not alone.**



Umechi District Neighborhood Association  
Mr. Yasuyuki Fujihira  
(Chairman)



At the “Umechi Mini Summer Festival” ▲

**Tell me!**  
**What exactly are neighborhood associations?**

**Q** What is a neighborhood association?

**A** It is a voluntary group of local residents who work together to solve community issues and strengthen connections among neighbors. Anyone who agrees with the goals of the neighborhood association can join.

**Q** Do I have to join my neighborhood association?

**A** It is not mandatory, but we encourage you to join and participate in local activities. Neighborhood associations carry out important activities that support daily life in your community. The safety, security and connections of the community are maintained thanks to these activities. Your association also makes it easier for you to receive notifications from the city hall and the ward office.

**Q** How much does membership cost?

**A** The amount differs by association. The collected fees are used to enhance the livability of your local community through activities like those below.

**Types of neighborhood association activities**

**Disaster preparedness**

People in the immediate community need to help each other in a disaster. Neighborhood associations prepare for disasters through **disaster preparedness drills and managing emergency food stockpiles.**



▲ Disaster preparedness drill

**A place for friendly interaction**

Through **festivals, sports days, club activities** and more, neighborhood associations provide opportunities for locals to interact, create a place of belonging and carry on the local culture.



▲ Summer festival

**Crime prevention and traffic safety**

Neighborhood associations **install and maintain security lighting, patrol for crime prevention and watch over children** on their way to and from school.



▲ Watch over children

**Childcare support and keeping an eye on the elderly**

Some neighborhood associations provide support to the wider community for **child-rearing, health promotion and watching over the elderly.**



▲ Parenting salon

**Town beautification**

To make our town a clean and livable place, we engage in activities such as **cleaning garbage collection sites and planting flowers and cleaning public areas** in the community.



▲ Cleaning activities

**If you want to join your neighborhood association**

If you are unsure how to join your neighborhood association or which association you belong to, please feel free to contact us.

Inquiries: Community Promotion Division, Naka Ward Office  
 Address: 6F, Counter 64, Naka Ward Office,  
 35 Nihon-odori, Naka-ku, Yokohama  
 TEL: 045-224-8131 FAX: 045-224-8215

You can apply to join your neighborhood association using the Yokohama City Electronic Application and Notification System. After you apply, the neighborhood association will contact you.



▲ Apply here (in Japanese)



**Get event information!**



**Naka International Lounge** provides information about local events via email in **English, Chinese and easy Japanese.**

The events we introduce are **attended by staff from Naka International Lounge**, so you can participate with peace of mind even if you are worried about language or cultural differences.

**If you would like to receive emails, please ask at Naka International Lounge.**

**Naka International Lounge**

Address: 1F, Naka Ward Office Annex,  
 35 Nihon-odori, Naka-ku, Yokohama  
 TEL: 045-210-0667  
 Email: nakalounge@yoke.or.jp

## Take the First Step to Quit Smoking!

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day. Smokers are said to have double the risk of mouth or throat cancer.

For advice on quitting smoking, please contact the Health and Welfare Division.

**<Health and Welfare Division (4F, Counter 402), Naka Ward Office Annex, TEL: 045-224-8332>**

## Inclusive Sports Experience

Join this hands-on event to experience inclusive sports, which can be enjoyed by anyone regardless of age, gender, disability or nationality.

**Sports to experience:** Boccia, Mōlkky, etc.

**Date/Time:** May 31 (Sun), 11 a.m.–3 p.m.

**Venue:** Yokohama City Hall atrium

**Participation fee:** Free

**<Community Promotion Division (6F, Counter 65), Naka Ward Office, TEL: 045-224-8137>**

## Your municipal, prefectural and forest environment tax notice will arrive in June

This important document states you how much in taxes you owe. Carefully confirm the notice and payment deadlines.

To consult about the amount and payment methods, please contact the Tax Division of your ward office.

**< Tax Division (4F, Counter 43), Naka Ward Office, TEL: 045-224-8191>**

### Editor's Note

I believe that neighborhood associations foster growth and connections. I have been participating in neighborhood association activities since I was a child. Through these activities, I made friends my own age and daily life was enjoyable. Also, the people I met through such activities were always watching out for the community, so children were able to safely play in my neighborhood. My neighbors taught me many things, such as the importance of greetings. Being a member of the neighborhood association allowed me to experience traditional culture, such as carrying a *mikoshi* (portable shrine), and I grew to love my town. I am still able to live here safely because I know so many people in the community.

If you have not participated in a neighborhood association activity yet, I encourage you to go to at least once. You will surely have a wonderful encounter.

## Bike Rule Breakers Get Fined!

From April 1st, 2026, bicycle traffic violations are subject to fines. Please be a responsible cyclist and follow the rules properly!

### Examples of violations

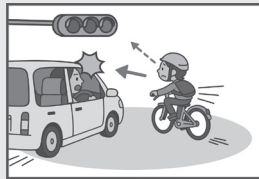
Using a mobile phone while riding

Fine: 12,000 yen



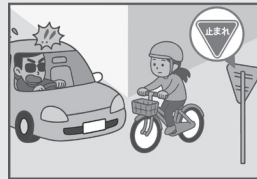
Ignoring a traffic light

Fine: 6,000 yen



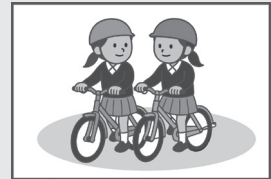
Failure to completely stop

Fine: 5,000 yen



Riding side-by-side

Fine: 3,000 yen



**International Service Staff Naka Ward Office (2nd floor)**  
English: 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Chinese: 8:45 a.m.–3:45 p.m.

Provides support for procedures at the ward office such as interpretation, help filling out forms, etc. If you are not confident in your Japanese, please tell the counter staff. They will call International Service Staff to assist.

Help Me Know  
**Q&A**



## There is a “Community Care Plaza” near my home. What is it?

Community Care Plazas are local centers for health and welfare services.

Yokohama has 146 Community Care Plazas, with six in Naka Ward.



### Your Local Help and Advice Center

- Free consultations for all kinds of health and welfare issues, including matters regarding the elderly, children and people with disabilities.
- Depending on the nature of the consultation, we may refer you to other specialist institutions as necessary.
- Please check with your local Community Care Plaza.



Community Care Plazas in Naka Ward ▶

### Find local information here!

- Is there someplace my young child can play or an event me and my child can attend?
- I just moved here and want to make some friends
- Is there a place where a person with a disability can have fun?

If you have questions such as these, please contact your local Community Care Plaza.

In addition to providing local information, the plazas hold events.



◀ About Community Care Plazas





Go for a Visit

# Gaze at the port city of Yokohama from the ocean



The city of Yokohama looks very beautiful from the ocean.  
The city viewed from the ocean is a stunning sight everyone should experience.



Maritime access to major Yokohama tourist destinations.  
Quietly enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Port of Yokohama and experience the feeling of taking a mini cruise.

Yokohama Station East Exit

Hammerhead

Pia Red Brick

Yamashita Park



(in Japanese)



This cargo-passenger ship was built in 1930 for runs between Japan and Seattle.  
It was designated an Important Cultural Property in 2016 and is currently moored in Yamashita Park.

You can tour the inside of the ship and, on certain days, take a guided tour with the captain or enjoy the open deck.



Thoughts of a Foreign Resident Life and Culture in Japan



## Joining the neighborhood association: The story of a certain housing complex

Three years ago, my family moved into a *danchi* (housing complex) that was built about 50 years ago. It has over 700 households and the average age of residents is quite high. In our first year after moving there, I was suddenly asked to serve as an officer for the neighborhood association.

Certain activities are common to all neighborhood associations, including disaster preparedness drills, cleaning, summer festivals and Respect for the Aged Day events. The most frequent work is preparing the monthly *kairanban*, a neighborhood circular notice passed from house to house. A stack of them can be heavy, in addition to the regular one, there are sometimes extra announcements, and the work was more time-consuming than I had imagined.

I had a computer and a copy machine at home, so I was able to handle the task, but I began to think about the elderly residents as I distributed materials. It would not be easy work for people who

were not familiar with the equipment and the work.

The year passed and my term as an officer was coming to an end, but it was difficult to find someone to take on the role. There was talk of digitizing the system to reduce the burden, but one person told me, "If the *kairanban* disappears, we would lose track of what is going on in the community." Those words made me realize that the circulars not only provide information, but also give people a sense of security by connecting them with their community.

The neighborhood association play an important role in supporting people's lives behind the scenes.

However, the number of people who can take on this role is steadily decreasing.

I did not fully realize this until I did the work myself. It made me start thinking about how I want to connect with the local community in the future.

(Naka International Lounge staff)

Good to Know! About Japanese Culture



## あじさい 紫陽花 Hydrangea

An introduction to seasonal events and the foods and decorations associated with them



Japan has a tradition of enjoying seasonal flowers, with cherry blossom viewing in spring being the most-known example. Hydrangeas are loved in Japan as flowers that bloom during the rainy season.

Even though it rains a lot in this season, people still take their umbrellas and visit hydrangea spots. You might wonder why people would go out of their way to see flowers on a rainy day, but hydrangeas glistening with rain are incredibly beautiful.

This rainy season, why not seek out a famous hydrangea spot?



We are always looking for locations to distribute *Naka Ward Town News*. If you have many foreign visitors to your shop, clinic, facility, etc. and would like to make this newsletter available to them, please contact us at 045-224-8123 to arrange delivery. The next issue will be published on July 1.