

HELLO SAKURA

Public Relations Section, Sakura City Hall, ☎(043) 484-1111, Ext.2275 or

☎(043) 484-6103; Fax:(043) 486-8720; E-mail: koho@city.sakura.lg.jp; URL: <http://www.city.sakura.lg.jp>

This is a free monthly English newsletter for foreign residents carrying excerpts from the Japanese newsletter published twice a month by the City of Sakura. Unless otherwise indicated, inquiries over the telephone or at the facilities are handled only in Japanese. If you do not speak Japanese, please have someone who speaks Japanese with you when you make inquiries. Inquiries in English may be made generally on Wednesdays through Koh'hoh-ka (the Public Relations Section) at Sakura City Hall.

SAKURA TULIP FESTIVAL ~ A FEELING OF SPRING ~



The Sakura Tulip *Matsuri* (Festival), one of the major events of the year, will be held at Sakura Furusato *Hiroba* (Square) from Saturday, April 11 to Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 - 16:00, rain or shine.

Some 500,000 tulips of 138 different kinds are blooming in the field where the landmark Dutch windmill 'De Liefde' rotates its vanes, comfortably catching spring breezes beside the vast Imba-numa Marsh.

Visitors will find it a pleasure strolling through the field of tulips and enjoying other spring blooms and greenery surrounding Imba-numa (marsh). Rental bicycles are available for ¥500 at the festival site. Also you can enjoy 'yakata-bune' boat rides on Imba-numa (¥1,000/adult, ¥500/child), putting on Dutch traditional costumes in order for souvenir pictures to be taken, and performances of street organ and accordions. Many vendors will set up stalls selling tulips, food, drinks and local products.

Admission is free of charge. As there are not enough parking lots around the site (¥500/vehicle) and traffic jams are usually foreseen, you are encouraged to take the free shuttle bus service departing at 30-minute intervals from the north exits of Keisei Sakura and JR Sakura Stations between 9:30 and 14:30, and returning between 11:00 and 16:30. Access on foot to *Furusato Hiroba* from Keisei Usui or Keisei Sakura Station takes about 40 minutes, and 60 minutes from JR Sakura Station. Call *Sakura-shi Kankoh-kyohkai* (Sakura City Tourism Association), ☎486-6000 or visit the web-site: <http://www.sakurashi-kankou.or.jp> for further information.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR CLEANING AROUND THE FESTIVAL SITE: Please assemble at the Furusato Hiroba on Saturday, April 4, 10:00-11:30. Bring your work gloves and a tool for picking up trash such as fire tongs. Application is not required. To be cancelled in case of rain. Call Shimaoka, ☎486-6000 for further information.



THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND JAPAN



The year 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of trade relations between Japan and the Netherlands, which dates back to 1609, when *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (the founder and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate) issued an official trade permit to the Netherlands.

The relationship between the Netherlands and Sakura started at the end of the Edo period, when the Sakura clan was very keen to learn and introduce the advanced technology of the Netherlands. A number of outstanding forefathers of Sakura played prominent and leading role in the process of modernizing Japan through what they learned at the Dutch medical school 'Juntendoh' and the domain-managed school.

The Tulip Festival, which marked its 21th annual observance this year, originated as one of the commemorative events to celebrate the 380th year of friendly relations between our two countries in 1989. The first Tulip Festival started with the blooms of 130,000 tulip bulbs (the same number as the population of Sakura at that time), which were imported directly from the Netherlands with the cooperation of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and other organizations. Moreover, in 1994, the windmill 'De Liefde' was built through cooperative work of Japanese and Dutch engineers as a symbol of historical and friendly relationship between the Netherlands and Sakura. It was named after a Dutch ship 'De Liefde' which stranded in *Kyushu* (southern part of Japan) in 1600.

In commemoration of the 400th anniversary of exchange between our two countries, the city of Sakura will hold various events with the cooperation of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and citizen

groups. Details will be announced as soon as they are determined. The opening ceremony for the series of events will be held on April 11, at the Tulip Festival. Call *Shohkoh-kankoh-ka* (the Commerce, Industry & Tourism Section), ☎484-6145 for further information.

HANAMI (CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING)



Hanami is one of the most popular events of spring among Japanese. *Sakura Johshi-koh'en* (Sakura Castle Park), where the 16th *Shimin Sakura Matsuri* (Citizens' Cherry Blossom Festival) is now on, is a popular *hanami* spot, approximately 10 minutes on foot from Keisei Sakura Station. The 26.2 hectare park with 1,100 cherry trees is lighted up with lovely lanterns until 21:00 every night during the festival. Many people gather for *hanami* picnics or parties, eating, drinking and singing while enjoying the graceful backdrop of cherry blossom. The enchanting sight of showers of delicate pink petals scattering to the ground by the touch of a breeze among the rows of glittering lanterns should not be missed. The Festival is held **through Sunday, April 5**, from 9:30 to 16:00. There will be many vendors setting up food and drink stalls to cater to the large number of visitors. Free parking is available at *Jiyuh Hiroba* (literally free square) adjoining Sakura Higashi Senior High School. Call Sakura-shi Kankoh-kyohkai, ☎486-6000 for more information.

CHANGE OF TIME IN BROADCASTING MESSAGE MELODY



The City has played it at 16:30 every day to encourage children to go home before it got dark in wintertime. This is also served as an emergency broadcasting test. From April 1 till October 31, however, the city broadcasts the melody at 17:00 since the sun sets later than in winter. Call *Koh'tsuh Boh'sai-ka* (the Traffic Disaster Prevention Section), ☎484-6131 for further information.

CHANGE OF TIME IN APPLICATION FOR BICYCLE PARKING

From April 1, hours available for application for municipal bicycle parking lots will become as follows:

- **WEEKDAYS:** 6:30 – 10:30 & 16:00 – 20:00
- **SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS & NATIONAL HOLIDAYS:** 8:00 – 12:00

Application forms and guidance leaflets are available at the booths in parking lots. To apply, fill out the application form and bring it to the booth during the above-mentioned hours.

Please note that the City Hall does not accept applications.

Call *Koh'tsuh Boh'sai-ka* (the Traffic Disaster Prevention Section), ☎484-6131 for further information.

APPLICATION FOR MUNICIPAL HOUSING

The application for municipal housing will be accepted from Monday, April 6 through Friday, April 17. Three apartment rooms at Ohja-machi and one room at Fujisawa-machi are available this time. You are eligible to apply for them if: you live in Sakura for 1 year or more; you are not delinquent in payment of your local resident's tax; and you have one or more relatives to live together. There are additional requirements and qualifications to be a tenant. Call *Kenchiku Shidoh-ka* (the Construction Planning Guidance Section), ☎484-6168 for further information. Application leaflets are available at *Kenchiku Shidoh-ka* at the City Hall, city branch offices, and Nishi-Shizu Fureai Center.

VIEWING OF ASSESSMENT

'Property Assessment and Legal Property Descriptions in 2009 is open for your guidance at *Shisanzei-ka* (the Property Tax Section) in the City Hall between Wednesday, April 1 - Thursday, April 30, 8:30-17:15, except Saturdays, public holidays, and Sundays. On Sundays, April 12 & 26, however, viewing is available. Viewing is free of charge, but a copy needs a fee. For viewing, if the tax payer appears in person, he/she is requested to show his/her personal identification such as a tax notice, a detailed statement of taxation, or a driver's license. In case the viewing is made by proxy, identification of proxy and *inin-joh* (a letter of attorney) with the signature and the seal of the tax payer are required. Call Shisanzei-ka, ☎484-6119 for further information.

NURSING ROOM IN CITY HALL -when you need a quiet place to feed your baby

The City has set up ● a nursing room on the 1st floor of the main building of the City Hall; and ● a play area for children, together with a nursing room, on the 1st floor of the 2nd building of the City Hall, so that child-raising parents can visit and make consultation there.

When you are going to use these rooms, please let the staff know. Call Kosodate-shien-ka (the Child Rearing Support Section), ☎484-6139 for further information.



TEIGAKU-KYUFU-KIN (SUPPLEMENTARY INCOME PAYMENTS)

The Japanese government has arranged a budget for supplementary income payments to residents in Japan as of February 1, 2009. You will receive payment from the municipality in which you are registered.

Eligibility: Those who are registered on the Copy of Basic Resident Register of Sakura City, or those who are registered on the Copy of Foreign Register (except for those with Temporary Visitor status or those who are staying illegally).

Sum of payment: ¥12,000 per eligible person, while those who are 18 years old and under or 65 and over as of February 1st, 2009 will be given ¥20,000 per person.

How to receive: Eligible recipient (head of household) will receive an application form from the City at the beginning of May. Payment will be transferred to your bank account if you apply via postal mail.

KOSODATE-OH'EN TOKUBETSU-TE'ATE (SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR CHILD-REARING)

Considering burdens of early childhood education in multi-child households, the Japanese government provides ¥36,000 for each child of early childhood education age.

Eligibility: ●The child must have the same eligibility as for supplementary income payments. ●Children born between April 2, 2002 and April 1, 2005, who are the second or later children in their families. ●Children shall be considered 'second' children if they are second in age among their brothers/sisters aged 18 or younger (i.e. born on April 2, 1990, or later). ●As there are additional eligibility requirements to be a recipient, visit the English web-site: http://www.mhlw.go.jp/kinkyu/juyou/kosodate/pdf/info_090316a.pdf, or call *Shohkoh-kankoh-ka* (the Commerce, Industry & Tourism Section), ☎484-6423 for further information,

How to receive: The same as for supplementary income payments.

ATTENTION: Staff of the Sakura City will never ask you for your personal information regarding supplementary income payments or special allowance for child-rearing, or to make transactions through an ATM (automated teller machines of a bank or a convenience store).

If you should receive any strange telephone call or letters, immediately contact a police station or the City Hall.

CITY-SPONSORED RABIES VACCINATIONS

In accordance with the Rabies Prevention Law, all dog owners are required to register their pets and have them vaccinated once every year. The city offers special vaccination opportunities at many locations in Sakura. The venues and dates for this year are listed in a chart in the March 15 issue of *Koho Sakura* (official semimonthly newsletter written in Japanese), or you can get it at animal clinics in Sakura.



Vaccination notices will be sent to the owners of registered dogs. Please fill out the form and bring it to the venue. The rabies shot costs ¥2,800, and the 'vaccination completed tag' fee is ¥550.

Owners of unregistered dogs can also have their dog registered and immunized there. The registration fee is ¥3,000, plus ¥2,800 for the rabies shot, and ¥550 for the tag.

If any changes occur in the information listed on your dog's registration record, such as changes of owner and address, you need to report it to the city in order to have the record updated. Also, if your dog dies, you need to file a death notice to have the record canceled.

If you are unable to attend any of the city-sponsored vaccination, have your dog immunized at an animal clinic. Afterwards, submit the veterinarian's vaccination certificate to *Kankyoh-Hozen-ka* (the Environment Preservation Section) to receive the 'vaccination completed tag'.

Call *Kankyoh-Hozen-ka*, ☎484-6148 for further information.

TEMPORARY CLOSING DAYS OF LIBRARIES: In addition to the usual closing days, Shizu Bunkan Library and Kita-Shizu Jidoh Center Library-rooms will be closed on Wednesday, April 29.

INNOCULATION FOR CHILDREN: Oral vaccine for polio (OPV) will be given to children from 3 months old to 7.5 years old who have taken vaccination less than twice before. They should visit either: ●Kenkoh Kanri Center on Fridays, April 10, May 12, or June 4, ●Seibu Hoken Center on Mondays, April 27, May 25, June 15 or 22, ●Nambu Hoken Center on Mondays, April 20, May 18, or June 8, or ●Shizu Community Center on Tuesday, April 14. Reception is from 13:30 to 14:20. Please note that the vaccination cannot be administered to the child if he/she has diarrhea. As there are more important conditions for getting the OPV, please call Kenkoh Kanri Center, ☎485-6711 for further information.

THE POPULATION OF SAKURA CITY: As of the end of February 2009, the Japanese population of Sakura was 175,509 (86,643 male and 88,866 female) in 69,079 households. Registered foreign residents accounted for 1,888. The combined population of Sakura City was 177,397.

HEALTH CHECKS FOR CHILDREN

Kenkoh Kanri Center (Health Management Center) ☎485-6711; *Seibu Hoken Center* (Seibu Health & Welfare Center) ☎463-4181; *Nambu Hoken Center* (Nambu Health & Welfare Center) ☎483-2812

| AGES OF CHILDREN | APRIL '09 | TIMES | PLACES |
|--|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| Health consultation for children of 4 months born in November, 2008 | 7 | 9:30–10:30 | Kenkoh Kanri Center |
| | | 13:30–14:30 | |
| | 13 | 9:30–10:30 | Seibu Hoken Center |
| | | 13:30–14:30 | |
| | 23 | 13:30–14:30 | Nambu Hoken Center |
| | <i>Mogu-mogu</i> (munching) Class for children of 8 months born in July, 2008 | 8 | 9:30–9:45 |
| 21 | | Seibu Hoken Center | |
| 23 | | Nambu Hoken Center | |
| For 18-month-old children born in September, 2007 | 15 | 13:30–14:30 | Kenkoh Kanri Center |
| | 28 | | Seibu Hoken Center |
| For 3-year-old children born in October, 2005 | 16 | 13:30–14:30 | Kenkoh Kanri Center |
| | 22 | | Seibu Hoken Center |
| Dental check for children born in April or October, 2006 or in April, 2007 | 6 | 13:30–14:30 | Kenkoh Kanri Center |
| | 9 | | Seibu Hoken Center |
| | 13 | | Kenkoh Kanri Center |
| | 17 | | Nambu Hoken Center |
| | 24 | | Seibu Hoken Center |

HEALTH CONSULTATIONS

| PLACES | APRIL '09 | TIMES | APPOINTMENT |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------|
| Nambu Hoken Center | 15 | 9:30–11:30 | Nambu Hoken Center |
| Kenkoh Kanri Center | 21 | 13:30–15:30 | Kenkoh Kanri Center |

Consultation with public health nurse, nutritionist, or dental hygienist is available.

For consultation, an appointment is required by calling the respective centers.

Telephone counseling is available at any of the centers, 8:30–17:00, Monday - Friday.

FREE ANTENATAL CLASSES

| LESSON | DATES | TIMES |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| 1 st | April 24 | 9:00-15:00 |
| 2 nd | May 10 | 9:00-14:30 |

Free antenatal classes will be held at Kenkoh Kanri Center in April & May for expectant mothers to have the first babies between July and September 2009. The program will include instructions on how to raise a healthy child, preparation of nutritious baby food, a lecture by a dentist, etc. There is a limit of 35 people in a class. To

attend, application is needed by calling Kenkoh Kanri Center.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Always be sure to bring your health insurance certificate !

Daytime treatment on Sundays & public holidays : Consultation by a **physician, a surgeon or a dentist** will be available between 9:00 and 17:00 (reception is open until 16:30) at the doctor's office who is on duty in a rotation system. Call ☎484-2516 to learn the doctor on duty.

Nighttime treatment on Sundays & public holidays : **Internal medicine & dental treatment** are available at Kenkoh Kanri Center, between 19:00 and 22:00 (reception is open until 21:45). **Treatment by a surgeon or an ENT doctor** (otolaryngologist) will be done at the doctor's office who is on duty in a rotation system, between 19:00 and 22:00 (reception is open until 21:45). However, obstetrics & gynecology treatment will not be offered any more as there are few patients. Call ☎485-6711 to learn the doctor on duty.

Pediatrics : For children under 16 years of age. **Open year-round** for treatment at Kenkoh Kanri Center from Monday through Saturday, 19:00-6:00 (next morning). On Sundays & public holidays, 9:00-17:00 & 19:00-6:00 (next morning). Call ☎485-3355 for further information.

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