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Hello Sakura is a free monthly newsletter featuring excerpts from the Japanese language Public Relations newsletter *Kōhō Sakura* (こうほう佐倉) issued by Sakura City. This newsletter is distributed free of charge at public facilities within the city and is also available on the city's website. Additionally, English interpretation services are available for procedures at the counters. Please be sure to make a reservation in advance by phone or email to the Public Relations Section.

## THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF UNUSED HOUSES AND LAND ! SAKURA CITY VACANT HOUSE AND LAND BANK

### Are you leaving your vacant home as it is?

“Home” is a place where you and your family can relax and where precious memories are accumulated, becoming a source of emotional support.

However, vacant houses that are left uninhabited and neglected without proper maintenance can become a significant burden for their owners and their families. This time, we will introduce the challenges surrounding vacant houses and the city's efforts to utilize them.

**Inquiries: Jūtaku-ka (Housing Section)**  
☎ 484-6168

### There might be vacant houses in your neighborhood too - The growing problem of vacant houses in our local area.

With the declining population and aging society, the number of vacant houses is increasing nationwide. According to the 2023 Housing and Land Survey(※1), out of a total of 65,047,000 houses in Japan, 9,002,000 are vacant houses with no plans for use such as rental or sale, representing a record high of 13.8% of the total number of houses. The vacant house problem has become a more immediate issue in our lives than ever before.

(※2) In Sakura City: Total number of houses: 78,990 Vacant houses: 9,090 Vacant house rate: 11.51%

### What happens if you leave your house vacant?

Vacant houses left unattended and unmanaged for reasons such as “I don't have time to dispose of it” or “I'll deal with it eventually” can cause problems in various aspects, including security and safety. Problems like the following examples could arise in a single house:

#### Roof and exterior wall collapse.

Typhoons and earthquakes can cause aging roofs and exterior walls to become more susceptible to falling or collapsing, and during disasters, collapsed buildings can hinder firefighting and emergency services.

#### Crossing boundaries of plants and trees.

Overgrown weeds and trees can spill onto roads and into the neighborhood, leading to disputes with neighbors and causing problems for vehicles passing by.

#### A breeding ground for crime.

When windows and locks deteriorate and break down due to age, vacant houses become more vulnerable to intrusion and illegal occupation, increasing the risk of them being used as bases for criminal activity.



#### Infestation by pests and vermin.

Pests and nuisance animals such as rats and raccoons, as well as insects such as wasps, may take up residence in vacant homes. If their carcasses are left unattended and begin to decompose, unpleasant odors can result.

#### Illegal dumping of garbage.

When bulky waste and other items are dumped on the premises of vacant houses, it becomes easier for further dumping to occur in a chain reaction.

#### Increased risk of serious fires.

If a fire is caused by damaged wiring due to deterioration or arson, it may go undetected for a long time, making it easier for the damage to spread.

### Owners also face various responsibilities and disadvantages.

#### Liability for damages

If inadequate management of a vacant home causes harm or damage to a third party, the owner may be held liable for negligence.

#### Increase in tax burden

If a property is classified as a “poorly managed vacant house” or a “designated vacant house” and receives a warning from the local government, the property tax on the land can increase by up to six times.

#### Decrease in asset value

The longer an asset is left untouched, the more its value and condition will decline, reducing the options available for selling or utilizing it.

### City's efforts to address vacant houses.

The city is undertaking various initiatives, including the effective use of vacant houses and land, as well as housing subsidy programs. Through these efforts, we support those who want to utilize vacant houses for the benefit of the community and those who want to take the first step towards a new life in Sakura City.

The vacant house and land bank is a system that connects owners of vacant houses and land in the city who want to “rent out” or “sell” them with prospective residents who want to “rent” or “buy” a home or land. The city works in cooperation with real estate companies with which it has agreements to provide thorough support from registration to viewings. City officials will guide you to the site during viewings, so even first-time users can use the service with peace of mind. **❖Negotiations and contracts regarding the sale, purchase and lease of vacant land will be handled by real estate agents, not the city.**

(※1) “2023 Housing and Land Survey: Basic Tabulation (Final Tabulation) Results on Housing and Households” (Statistics Bureau of Japan, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) ([https://www.stat.go.jp/data/jyutaku/2023/pdf/kihon\\_gaiyou.pdf](https://www.stat.go.jp/data/jyutaku/2023/pdf/kihon_gaiyou.pdf)) Accessed on May 20, 2026.

(※2) “2023 Housing and Land Survey: Basic Tabulation on Housing and Households: Nationwide, Prefectural, and Municipal” (Statistics Bureau of Japan, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications) (<https://www.e-stat.go.jp/dbview?sid=0004021422>) (Accessed on May 20, 2026). In addition, the vacancy rate was calculated based on this data.

The city provides various subsidies related to housing. We mainly introduce subsidy programs that can be used for the vacant house and land bank.

※Ends when the budget runs out. For details, please see the city's website ➔



## IS IT TRULY “NORMAL”? UNDERSTANDING YOUNG CAREGIVERS.



### What is a young caregiver?

The revised Child and Youth Development Support Promotion Act, enacted in June 2024, defines a young caregiver as a “child or young person who is deemed to be excessively providing care for family members or other daily living needs”. “Excessively refers to situations where children are deprived of time necessary for growth and development (such as play and studying) or young people are deprived of time necessary for the transition to independence (such as studying and preparing for employment), resulting in a heavy physical and mental burden.

### The reality of young caregivers.

How many young caregivers do you think there are who provide excessive assistance to family members or others? According to the results of the “Survey on the Actual Situation of Young Caregivers and Support for Them” conducted by Chiba Prefecture in 2022 (please see the table on the right), the results showed that in every age group, more than 1 in 10 people were young caregivers. In Sakura City, we believe there are a certain number of young caregivers who are unaware of their role, not only to those around them but even to themselves. We are working to understand how many children and young people are excessively helping their families and others and are preparing to support those who need assistance.

It is not uncommon for children and young people to assist their parents, grandparents or other family members at home. However, when the extent of such responsibilities becomes excessive, it may have an impact on friendships, school life or future educational and career paths.

Have you heard the term “young caregiver”? Even those who do not consider themselves to be young caregivers may, without realizing it, be carrying significant responsibilities within the household. By gaining a better understanding of young caregivers, we can foster greater awareness and support within our communities.

**Inquiries: Kodomo Katei-ka (Child & Family Support Section) ☎ 484-6263**



### (CHIBA PREFECTURE 2022 SURVEY)

**[ I AM TAKING CARE OF SOMEONE IN MY FAMILY (INCLUDING FAMILY MEMBERS WHO DO NOT LIVE WITH ME) ]**

Young caregivers age group	% of people who answered	Average age at which caregiving began	Daily care time (weekdays only, average)
ES 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	14.6%	8.1 years old	2.7 hours
Jr. HS 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	13.6%	9.5 years old	2.3 hours
HS 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	10.5%	11.6 years old	2.5 hours
HS 2 <sup>nd</sup> year, equivalent to part-time	19.0%	10.1 years old	2.3 hours

[Reference] In a nationwide survey (※) Elem. School students: 6.5%, Jr. high school students: 5.7%. Full time high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students 4.1%, Part-time high school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students: 8.5%, Correspondence high school students: 11.0%. ※ Elem. School 6<sup>th</sup> grade: Japan Research Institute “On the Reality of Young Caregivers Survey Research Report” March 2022. Jr. high school 2<sup>nd</sup> year students to correspondence high school students: Mitsubishi UFJ Research & Consulting “Research Report on the Actual Situation of Young Caregivers”, March 2021

### Your neighbor or friend might actually be a young caregiver.

The children and young people who live in your neighborhood, or the friends sitting next to you at school may be smiling and chatting about trivial things on a daily basis, but when they go home, they might be young caregivers who take care of their families. These issues are often difficult to see from outside the home. Even if someone feels burdened by helping their family, believing that “taking care of family is natural”, they may find it difficult to talk about. However, it’s crucial that someone notices, or that children and young people speak up, before it interferes with their school life or job search.

### For inquiries and consultation.

Sakura City Child and Family Center  
(Child and Family Section)

This is a comprehensive consultation service covering pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. In addition to consultations related to young caregivers, it is a place to listen to and support all kinds of concerns about childcare, including those of expectant mothers and new mothers and infants.

☎ 484-6263 ✉ kokasen@city.sakura.lg.jp

Reception hours: 8:30 ~ 17:15 (On weekdays only)

### Chiba Prefecture Young Caregiver Comprehensive Support Center “Atelier”

The atelier is a comprehensive consultation center for young caregivers run by Chiba Prefecture. In addition to being able to easily consult about problems via LINE, we also hold online events where you can chat with people who have had similar experiences, and we publish various information such as the “Chiba Prefecture Young Caregiver Support Handbook”. For more details, please visit our website →



Please check out the video “What is a Young Caregiver?” (For Elementary and Jr High School students) →

# Let's enjoy the rainy season at Kusabue-no-Oka!

Even during the rainy season, there are plenty of fun events held at Kusabue-no-Oka.  
**Park information:** 9:00 ~ 18:00 (16:30 last admission) Free entrance for kindergarten age children and younger. 100 Yen for elementary and Jr. high school children. 410 Yen for adults and youths of high school age. **Sakura Kusabue-no-Oka ☎ 485-7821**



◆ **Hydrangea Photography Class**  
**Date & Time:** June 7 (Sun) 10:00~12:00  
**Content:** Take beautiful hydrangea photos with your smartphone.  
**Fee:** 1,000 Yen per person.  
**Target:** High school students and older who can take photos with their smartphone.  
**Capacity:** 10 people (first-come, first served, registration required).



◆ **"My hydrangeas" Mini-Photo Exhibition.**  
**Content:** Follow the official "X" account of Sakura Kusabue-no-Oka and use the specified hashtag. Post with tags.  
**Target:** Those who have an "X" account.

◆ **Hydrangea bookmark making.**  
**(Advance registration not required).**  
**Dates & time:** June 13 (Sat), 14 (Sun), 20 (Sat), 21 (Sun) from 10:00 ~. (Ends when materials run out). **Fee:** 200 Yen/sheet.

◆ **Hydrangea Festival**  
**June 13 (Sat) ~**  
**June 21 (Sun)**

◆ **Rose Café - June 13(Sat)~21(Sun)**  
 Will be offering a limited-time menu featuring "light meals inspired by flowers".  
 ※Ends when supplies run out.  
 ◆ **Soba noodles making experience.**  
**Content:** Parent and child experience making soba noodles.  
**Fee:** 2,500 per group (up to 3 people per group).  
**Target:** Parents and children of elementary school age or older.  
**Capacity:** 8 groups (First-come, first-served). **Reservation required.**  
**Deadline:** June 14 (Sun) until 17:00

## NIWA NO WA ART & CRAFTS FAIR

Niwa no Wa, an outdoor market featuring ceramic, glass and woodworking artists with ties to Chiba, along with food booths, will be held again this year.



● A "Niwa no Wa Post" will be set up at the venue in collaboration with the post office. Letters posted here will be delivered with a Niwa no Wa original postmark.

● A pop-up store called the "Niwa no Wa Special Exhibition Room" will be set up at the former Hirai family residence.

For more information about the event and how to purchase advance tickets, please see the website ↑

**Date & Time:** June 6 (Sat) and 7 (Sun) from 10:00 to 16:00 on both days.

**Place:** Sakura Jōshi Kōen (Sakura Castle Ruins Park) and at the former Hirai family residence.

**Fee:** For Jr. High School students and older: advance tickets 600 Yen. Same-day tickets 800 Yen

※Free for elementary school students and younger.

**Inquiries:** Niwa no Wa Art & Craft Fair • Chiba Executive Committee ☎ (070) 3310-5880

**In charge:** Sakura no Miryoku Suishin-ka (City Attractiveness Promotion Section)

## LET'S ALL ENJOY! NEW SPORTS FESTIVAL

New sports is a general term for sports that can be easily enjoyed by people of all ages, including those that are improvements on existing rules and equipment, or those that have been newly introduced from abroad. Why not take this opportunity to give them a try?

**Date & Time:** June 27 (Sat). From 9:30 to 12:00.

**Place:** Shimin Taiiku-kan (Citizens' Gymnasium)

**Content:** New sports, games corner, etc.

**Deadline:** June 20 (Fri) until 14:00

**To apply:** Through the City's Homepage →



**Inquiries:** Shōgai Supōtsu-ka (Sports-for-all Section) ☎ 484-6742

## FREE LEGAL CONSULTATIONS FOR FOREIGN RESIDENTS

Chiba International Center, 14F Makuhari Techno Garden D Bldg., 1-3 Nakase, Mihamaku, Chiba 261-8501 ☎ 043-297-2966 ✉ Soudan@ccb.or.jp URL: <https://www.mcic.or.jp/>

(Muryō Hōritsu Sōdan) Consultations by lawyers and on the days marked with a (\*) consultations with legal specialists. **Reservation required (Please see the flow below).** Interpreters available. **Time: 13:00~16:15 (Consultation time 45 minutes per person).** ※Consultations are limited to one per person.

① Make a reservation by phone ☎ 043-297-2966

② If you need an interpreter, please indicate the language.

③ Reconfirmation. Call or email on the specified date to confirm your reservation.

④ Reservation completed!

※If we are unable to confirm your reservation, it will be cancelled.

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Month	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Days	10 (Wed) 24 (Wed)	6 (Mon)* 8 (Wed) 22 (Wed)	5 (Wed) 19 (Wed)	2 (Wed) 14 (Mon)* 16 (Wed)	7 (Wed) 21 (Wed)	4 (Wed) 16 (Mon)* 18 (Wed)	2 (Wed) 16 (Wed)



# WE ARE TAKING INITIATIVES TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF RISING PRICES !

To support citizens and businesses in the city affected by the prolonged rise in prices, we will implement the following projects using the national government's "Temporary Grant for Regional Revitalization to Support Response to Price Increases".

## The following items do not require application:

- ◆ Distribution of shopping vouchers to support daily life (Sakura Machinaka Shohin-ken) ❖ Details on the right → We will send local gift certificates that can be used at participating stores in the city to all residents. This applies to individuals registered in the Sakura City Resident Registry as of May 1, 2026 and those who moved into or were born between May 2 and June 30.
- ◆ Water charge reduction support project. We will waive the basic water charges for all pipe sizes, equivalent to four months' worth of charges.  
**Target period:** Scheduled to cover regular meter readings from September to December.

## Application required for the following item:

- ◆ Promotion of the widespread use of combined septic tanks (subsidies for maintenance costs). The regular subsidy (5,000 Yen) will be increased by an additional 1,000 Yen to cover the equivalent of the increase in statutory inspection fees.  
**Target:** Combined treatment for households outside the city's sewage system and agricultural community wastewater treatment areas. Those who are responsible for the maintenance and management of septic tanks.  
**Deadline:** March 31, 2027  
Please see the website for details → We are also considering support measures for businesses that find it difficult to immediately reflect the impact of rising prices in their business operations.



## WHAT IS "SAKURA MACHINAKA SHOHIN-KEN?"

"Sakura Town Shopping Vouchers" (Sakura Machinaka Shohin-ken). These will be sent to the household heads according to the number of people in the household. 5,000 Yen worth of vouchers per person (Light blue vouchers worth 3,000 Yen, valid at large and small stores and pink vouchers worth 2,000 Yen valid at small stores only). You can use the vouchers for your usual shopping or as a little treat for yourself at participating stores throughout the city. The possibilities are endless!

**Shipping period:** Mid -June onwards. Vouchers will be sent sequentially via Yū-Pack (Japan Post). It will take approximately one month to deliver to all households.

**Usage period:** July 1 (Wed) ~ October 31 (Sat)



### INQUIRIES:

**Measures to address rising prices:** Kikaku Seisaku-ka (Policy Planning Section)  
**Water Reduction Support Program:** Keiei Kikaku-ka (Management Planning Section)  
**Project to promote the use of combined septic tanks:** Seikatsu Kankyō-ka (Living Environment Section)  
**Sakura Machinaka Gift Certificate Call Center:** (In charge Commerce and Industry Promotion Section)

☎ 484-3374  
 ☎ 485-1191  
 ☎ 484-6148  
 ☎ 0120-205-065



## BRUSHING YOUR TEETH IS THE FRONT LINE OF PROTECTING YOUR BODY

June 4 ~ 10 is "Dental and Oral Health Week"

To maintain good dental and oral health, daily self-care and regular professional care are effective. Sakura City will be conducting adult dental checkups and oral cancer screenings starting June 1<sup>st</sup>. For details on eligibility, costs and other information, please visit the city's website →

**Inquiries:** Kenkō Suishin-ka (Health Promotion Section) ☎ 312-8228



## LIFE-SAVING HEAT COUNTERMEASURES: LET'S PREVENT HEATSTROKE

**Inquiries:** Kenkō Suishin-ka (Health Promotion Section) ☎ 312-8228

To prevent heatstroke, don't hesitate to use air conditioning and make sure to replenish fluids and electrolytes frequently.

◆ **Please use the Sakura Cooling Areas.** The city is opening up public facilities and participating shops within the city as "Sakura Cooling Spots", providing a place for anyone to easily stop by and rest. If you feel hot while out and about or if you experience symptoms such as thirst or dizziness, please do not push yourself and use these facilities as soon as possible.

◆ **Cooling shelters will be opened.** If a special heatstroke warning alert is issued, cooling shelters (designated heat evacuation facilities) will be opened to protect you from the dangerous heat. Information on heatstroke prevention measures, heatstroke warning alerts and special warning alerts can also be found on the Ministry of the Environment's "Heatstroke Prevention Information Site"



← Check the heatstroke special alert information on the Ministry of the Environment's website.

Sakura cooling shelters. Look for the banners and flyers! For more details, please see the website →

