

“The Music Festival Created by Borderless People in Kodaira city”

This is to introduce the inclusive music festival which has been organized by various stakeholders including people with disabilities for 10 years in Kodaira city

Historical Background

In December 2013, the documentary film “Ohaie!” was shown at the community center in Kodaira. The “Ohaie!” is the introductory film of “the Very Special Music Festival” which has been held every June in Sendai. This festival is that people with and without disabilities can enjoy music together and use the power of music to create barrier-free hearts. Some people who were impressed with this video visited Sendai and experienced the festival. And then they aspired to organize a similar music festival in their own city.

The first music festival was held in December 6, 2014 during The Week for Persons with Disabilities to be the one week from December 3 to December 9 in Kodaira by the initiative of citizens. One of the key persons is Mr. Takuro Hosoe, who has been actively engaged in various volunteer activities in Kodaira after his retirement from a private company.

This is the beginning of “the Music Festival Created by Borderless People in Kodaira city”. The first chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Music Festival created by Borderless People was Mr. Hosoe.

Outline of 10th Music Festival Created by Everyone in Kodaira 2023

It was held on December 2, 2023 in the line with the Week for Persons with Disabilities for the first time in three years due to COVID-19. The theme was “Reunion”. The venue was the community center in Kodaira where 5 rooms and a courtyard of the center were used for different performances.

46 groups of performers participated, 50 volunteers, 890 audience and 223 YouTube viewers enjoyed the music from 11:30 to 17:00 on December 2. Performers include people with disabilities, chorus groups of schools/universities, professional and amateur music bands with different genres of music.

It was co-organized by the Executive Committee of the Music Festival Created by Borderless People and the Board of Education in Kodaira. So the staff of the community center which belongs to the Board of Education supported for its organization. The Chairperson of the 10th Festival was Mr. Keita Miura who served as the chairperson for 7 years.

The Executive Committee meetings were held once a month with around 20 members who have different backgrounds. One fourth of 20 are persons with disabilities, half are company employees so meetings were held mainly in the evening. Ages of members range from 20th to 70th. Some left and some enters.

The Music Festival Created by Borderless People was awarded citation as one of the great contributors for the Welfare Town Building by Governor of Tokyo Metropolitan Government on December 23, 2023.

This is partially thanks to the contribution of volunteer circles of sign interpreters, note takers and brail information. Other contributors are Public Addresses(PA), volunteers, staff of the community center, former members of the Executive Committee, etc. Such joint efforts made the Music Festival successful.

The challenge of 10th Festival was to ask every performer to take a certain role at the organization of the Music Festival, then the number of performers decreased from previous 80 to 46. But as a result sense of unity was achieved by everyone.

Followings are roles shared by performers and organizers.

- MC
- PA and stage setting
- Accessible Information provision by volunteer circles
- In charge of performers, audience
- Café opened in one of the rooms
- Making an introductory music video of the Festival,
<https://youtu.be/PWIUBuN2IGg>
- etc.

Budget

It is born by the community center up to 150,000 Japanese yen for PA, accessible information provision such as sign language interpretation. No guarantee to performers, and free participation fee.

Reflection

The meeting of reflection was held about two weeks later by the Executive Committee. Members shared impression of the 10th session and what should be improved next year.

The result of the questionnaires were mostly positive. The voice of audience were as follows;
"Many various people who joined were filled with sense of unity."

"Barrier-free and everyone can enjoy."

"The sign language interpreter is amazing."

“Handmade feeling, friendliness, happy, warm atmosphere and feel connected.”

What is stressed most.

- The Music Festival is not for persons with disability only. Similar kind of music festival was held for persons with disabilities by welfare related organizations, but families and friends are main audience so understating towards disability has not been promoted much. Instead this Festival aims for breaking barriers of supporter-recipient relationship by creating music together.

-Preparation of sign language interpreters and note takers contributes to enhance understanding of the necessity of accessible information.

-There has been achievement in developing good relationship among members of the Executive Committee. People learn communication with people who has different needs.

-In the process of preparation various collaboration with difference sectors has been developed.

Personal view of Mr. Keita Miura, Chairperson of the 10th Festival

“Of course I enjoyed the Music Festival, but in addition I enjoyed participation to the meeting of the Executive Committee as well. I became vivid after I attended the meeting. So I felt this is my place to be in community.”

I would like to appreciate great cooperation of Mr. Takuro Hosoe, Mr. Keita Miura and his colleagues who provided me with lots of insightful information on the Music Festival Created by Borderless people in Kodaira.

I hope an inclusive music festival will be introduced in many countries in the world.

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Pictures of preparation and the day



The Executive committee are held at the community center.



Decoration making workshop with performers.



Various decorations are made based on the themes of stages.



Decorating the venue the day before the festival.



Prepare balloons for the finale.



Volunteers for audio and YouTube live streaming.



Parking lot, reception and the other volunteers gathering.



Welfare Work Centers of the Kodaira city open stalls.



The volunteer of the sign language interpreter and the moderator.



Text information volunteers project text on screen.



Borderless music group playing in the lobby.



The sign language interpreter sings with her hands according to the song.



Kids dance group dancing in the hall so happily.



“Pipe and Tabor” performers parade down the hallway



Traditional dance of Kodaira “Suzuki-Bayashi”.



Led Zeppelin cover band playing in the audiovisual room.



The finale. Everyone can dance and hand clap with “Shin-Kodaira-Ondo”.



Everyone sing the theme song of the festival “Borderless” and enjoy hitting the balloons.