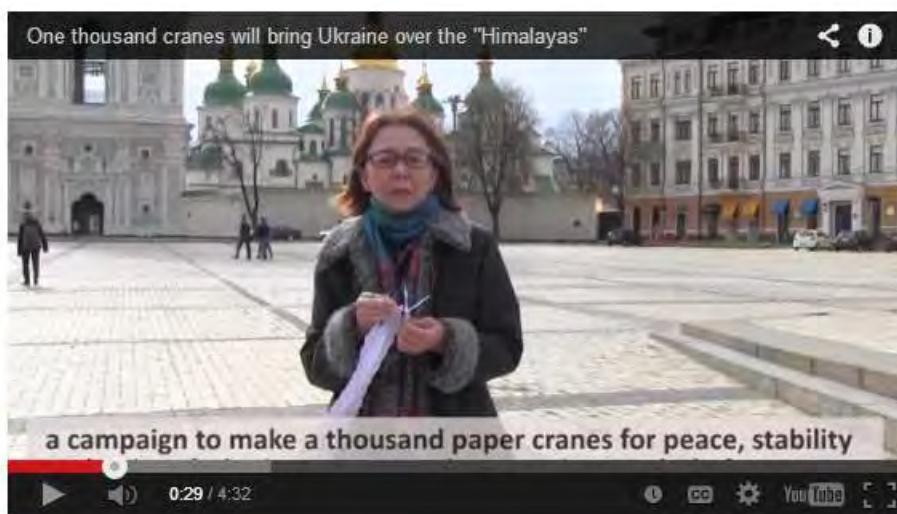


Making 1000 Paper Cranes for Peace in Ukraine

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May 30, 2014



Kiev, Ukraine - For weeks, young people in Ukraine, guided by Japanese volunteers, have been making paper cranes as expressions of their desire for peace, stability and unity of Ukraine; the cranes were assembled into a garland of 1000 cranes and presented at the Peace Cycle Race in Kiev on May 30.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiIIffWGjE>

The campaign was the inspiration of Ms. Nobuko Omori, who has been visiting Ukraine for more than ten years. In Japan, the crane is a symbol of peace. These amazing birds can overcome any difficulties. Their migration route takes them over the Himalaya Mountains. Japanese make paper cranes when they desire to achieve a great goal. It is believed that if you make 1000 cranes, your wish will be fulfilled.



Out of a desire to help Ukraine preserve peace and unity, Japanese volunteers with UPF have been making a thousand paper cranes together with Ukrainian youth.



At an April 3 meeting of the Ukrainian Peace Council, Ms. Omori made a proposal to the Ambassadors for Peace to create a garland of 1000 paper cranes and offering it to the people of Kiev with the desire that the people can overcome the difficulties that have come upon the country and always remain peaceful, united and happy. On April 24, she made the same proposal at the Kiev Family Center at a seminar on youth issues. Participants supported the proposal.



Tadzu, a volunteer from Japan, said that her name means “many cranes.” After the earthquake and tsunami that struck her hometown of Sendai, the people of Ukraine helped the people of Japan. “In return, I want to help Ukraine and make 1000 paper cranes for peace.”



Japanese and Ukrainian UPF volunteers visited the Special School #10 of the Darnitsa district of Kiev on May 5. Students and teachers greeted the guests very warmly and together with the volunteers they enthusiastically made yellow and blue paper cranes.



Two days later, the volunteers visited Kiev school #239, and each third-grade student made two cranes, yellow and blue; one they kept for themselves and the other they gave to the Japanese guests to add to the garland. They had read about cranes and were excited that Japanese people had come to show them how to make the cranes. As a sign of gratitude the students sang a song about peace and unity for the Japanese guests; in turn the volunteers sang a song in Japanese about the motherland. “I liked most the Japanese song,” one third-grader said. “I wish we had more such meetings.”



Japanese volunteers met with the students at the Law Faculty of Borys Grinchenko University in Kiev on May 24. Students and teachers also supported the idea of a garland.



Each year, Kiev hosted an international cycling competition the last weekend in May. The program of events on May 30 began with a Peace Cycle Race, which was attended by 10 Ukrainian teams and 13 teams for Europe. One hundred and fifty international riders cycled through the streets of Kiev, expressing solidarity and support. They signed a banner expressing their best wishes. UPF representatives attended the event and signed the banner also.



Ms. Omori presented a garland of 1000 cranes to the team of Ukrainian athletes from Donetsk, expressing the desire of everyone who made the cranes that difficulties can be overcome and peace and unity achieved. Children released doves before the start of the first race. For photos of the race, including cyclists signing the banner with messages of peace, click [here](#).