

Saya Komatsu is a former Campus Chapter member and have joined Habitat Global Village volunteer during her school days. On March 11, 2011, she watched TV news showing tsunami's impact and soon joined street fundraising with other members for the affected families. A year later, she visited the disaster areas of Ofunato, Iwate and Higashimatsushima, Miyagi as a Habitat volunteer. Saya said, "I always wanted to visit the site to actually see for myself.



*Saya (right) distributing winter items to an affected family in Higashimatsushima, Miyagi*

Saya thought 'nothing left' on the first day of her visit. She could not imagine that there used to be houses and buildings and people were living there. While working to build storage units and a gazebo at temporary shelters and helping renovate a community center, she met many locals. "I cannot forget those I met who were suffering from the disaster but struggling to overcome it," said Saya.

As a former Campus Chapter member, she knew how much important house is but she said, she realized why Habitat is building and repairing houses, why house is important for people through this disaster relief volunteers. "A home partner told me that he wanted to return home as soon as possible because volunteers helped him repair his house. House may not be a priority right after disasters, because people need food, water and those basic things to live. But people need 'a decent place to live' to restart their lives. It is crucial to have own house to recover from disasters.



*Saya (right) and other volunteers painted a picture of once-beautiful beach of Higashimatsushima so that the locals can remember*

Saya is now working as a network engineer in Tokyo so it is difficult to visit the disaster sites to volunteer. "Since I visited there and met home partners, I always remember those people and hope for their brighter future. I cannot do much for them now but I want to share my story with my friends so that more and more people can remember the tragic disaster and those who are struggling to live."