



Rumiko Inoue, director of Kodomo no Chikara, receives a testimonial on Friday in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo. The Yomiuri Shimbun

3 groups acknowledged for contributions to society

The Yomiuri Shimbun

The Kiwanis Club of Tokyo, a social services organization in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo, awarded three organizations for their steady contributions to society during an awards presentation ceremony held in the ward on Friday.

The "Shakai Koekisho" (Public benefit award) marked its 50th anniversary on Friday. First prize was given to the organization "Kodomo no Chikara" (Power of children) in Koto Ward, Tokyo. Second prize was awarded

to two organizations: "Circle En" in Nishitokyo, Tokyo; and "Kokoro no Aozora Kikin" (Foundation of blue sky for heart) in Arakawa Ward, Tokyo.

During the ceremony, the club's President Shinichi Yoshikuni handed testimonials to representatives of the three organizations.

Kodomo no Chikara started its contributions in March 2008 under the leadership of its director, Rumiko Inoue, 57. Members of the group have played with children suffering from cancer or other serious diseases who are receiving treatment at the Nation-

al Cancer Center Hospital in Chuo Ward, Tokyo. They also play with children who visit their siblings in the hospital.

"The brothers and sisters of children who are hospitalized tend to repress their emotions because they care too much about their family. We want to tell them that we want them to be themselves," Inoue said.

Circle En was established in 2009. It has promoted communication among parents whose children have disabilities or diseases. "You can face your difficulties if you are connected with others,

even in times of hardship. We want to advance our effort and consider the award as encouragement," said Noriko Kawamura, 49, leader of Circle En.

Former professional boxer Hiroyuki Sakamoto, 45, is the leader of Kokoro no Aozora Kikin, which was established in 2000. Sakamoto has visited children's nursery homes nationwide, where he has tried to encourage the children by teaching them boxing. "We want to keep on sending our love to children all over the country in the form of passion," Sakamoto said.