O
tober 25, 2012 was a memorable day in the life of
ARI founder Rev. Dr. Toshihiro Takami, his immediate
family, and ARI’s worldwide extended family. On that day the
Yale Divinity School acknowledged four outstanding alumni
for their contributions to the world, including Rev. Dr.
Takami, who was presented with the William Sloane Coffin
Award for Peace and Justice in honor of his life’s work of
establishing and nurturing the Asian Rural Institute. Rev.
Dr. Takami, together with his wife Shinko, attended the cer-
emony to receive the award in person.

The awards committee citation presented by Rev. Allie
Perry stated, “Toshihiro (Tom) Takami, as founder and first
director of the Asian Rural Institute in Japan, you have dra-
matically reminded us of the need to sustain rural life and
empower the poor, even as our world tumbles headlong
toward a collective mindset that urban is better than rural –
stronger, richer, more educated, less dependent.

“You believe there needs to be a holistic approach to life,
one that recognizes the value of a simple lifestyle, content to
live with less, content to be out of the competitive, profit-
driven cycle of 21st century existence.

“You have encapsulated your thoughts into the phrase
‘That We May Live Together,’ which was the first motto
adopted by ARI after its founding in 1973. It shows us the
goal toward which we should move as a community and as
individuals as long as we live ... Living Together means Shar-
ing Life Together.

“Not only sharing our daily life with our friends and neigh-
bors of the present generation but also with people of future
generations; not only human beings but also the entire cre-
ation of now and future: plants, animals, insects, bacteria,
hills and mountains, organic and inorganic matter.

“... For all that you have done to uphold the dignity and
worth of all God’s people, in Asia and around the globe, we
are honored to present you with the William Sloane Coffin
‘56 Award for Peace and Justice.”

The American Friends of ARI was well represented, with
forty three folks in attendance at the YDS award ceremony
and Saturday reception at the library in Branford, convened
by Margret Hofmeister, AFARI Board Member. Through this
recognition of Rev. Dr. Takami and the connection it brought
with the far-reaching audience of YDS alumni in addition to
those attending the 2012 Alumni Convocation, many new-
to-ARI people, spanning generations, were able to learn of
ARI’s work and witness. All were moved by the commitment
and enthusiasm demonstrated by Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Takami in
making the long trip to New Haven to personally thank the
YDS Alumni Association for acknowledging the significance
of ARI’s presence in the world.

by Pam Hasegawa
hose that knew him, knew that Dr. Niwa was not a man to play around. He was serious and rarely smiled. He wanted to get things done and he wanted things done well. One of his favorite bible verses was from Romans 5:3-4: "that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." When he came on as Chairman, ARI presented him with a huge challenge. The buildings and facilities were old and crumbling and the finances were in even worse condition. In those days he was often critical, angry, and had harsh words for us.

At first, working with Dr. Niwa was a big challenge. He made decisions suddenly and without much communication. There were many tense meetings and heated discussions. But over time, I found that my comparison of him to this samurai commander was completely wrong. Serizawa Kamo’s temper was embedded in the pride of his status. Dr. Niwa’s anger was never on behalf of himself, or even against ARI. He was always fighting FOR ARI. He NEVER wanted anything for himself; not even one word of praise. His every word and action, no matter how controversial, was on behalf of ARI; to build this institute; to make it a better place. In time, the staff and Dr. Niwa “grew into” each other. Little by little the staff began to understand his character and style and saw his passion for...
in ARI are kept warm with nothing but the light of the sun.

Additionally, on the wall of the Koinonia entry way we transferred a mural from the old Main Building, painted by the famous Sri Lankan artist Narini Jayasuriya. It depicts the joy of the harvest and I feel it nicely represents that our work continues from the past to now and from now to the future, by the guidance of God.

After the dedication service, we immediately started using the Koinonia Hall which contains a dining room and kitchen and the Classroom Building which holds our classroom, library, and conference room. We brought in new round tables to replace our old worn out ones and installed “new” used desks that were donated by Sophia University in Tokyo, and ARI community life continued on without skipping a beat. The tables and bookshelves for the library were built by inmates of the local prison as part of a carpentry training rehabilitation program.

After we got settled in, the old Koinonia Hall was demolished. If you come visit us now, you will feel that the ARI campus looks very different. On October 13-14 we held our Harvest Thanksgiving Celebration, centered around these two new buildings. On October 20, we organized a cello concert, performed by Leonard Elschenbroich, the son of one of ARI’s good friends in Germany. This was also the debut for a newly donated grand piano. The dining hall is an excellent place for performances and we look forward to welcoming people to many events like this in the future. I would like to give thanks from my heart that we have been able to move forward with the recovery of the ARI campus by the support and prayers from all of you.

ARI. At the same time Dr. Niwa began to get to know the staff and our mutual trust and communication grew.

Dr. Niwa worked tirelessly for ARI. He never tried to avoid problems. Conversely, he would head straight to the root of a problem and attempt whatever needed to be done to fix it. To improve the financial situation he tried everything. He introduced ARI to all of his friends and acquaintances, many of whom offered generous support. He drove his silver Prius the length and breadth of Northern Japan to attend meetings and events, just to have the opportunity to promote ARI. He established the Income Generation (IG) section at ARI with the goal of raising 30% of the budget through product sales, events, and programs. The IG section is now very active and hardworking, and before the earthquake it was inching closer and closer to that 30% target. When he visited ARI, he never left with his hands empty. He always carried eggs, cookies or other products to sell. No job was too big for him. No job was too small for him.

Then the earthquake hit and a mighty new challenge was set before us all. Dr. Niwa was here the next day. Over a year and a half have passed since then and now ARI has a beautiful new Koinonia. If you take a walk around the campus, you will find many more projects; some completed; some under way; all recovery projects from the earthquake. If you want to know why all of this is happening, you need look only as far as Dr. Niwa. Without knowing where the funding would come from or how it would be carried out he drew up a detailed 4-phase, ¥535 million plan to reconstruct this campus. The funds were not yet there, but the vision was. Dr. Niwa gave us the vision and that was the most important. With this vision clearly set before us, we could find the hope, the energy, and even the money to rebuild. This is why ARI has a new Koinonia and this is how ARI is being transformed. My only wish is that we could work with him one last time, just to plant the flowers he loved so much around the sides of Koinonia; and then take a step back together; admire our work, turn to him, and say, “Thank You.”

by Steven Cutting
This year ARI welcomed its first two participants from East Timor, a young country that has only just celebrated its 10th anniversary of independence. One of them is Armando Ximenes, or Arman, as he is called at ARI. He is from a small village in the southeast part of the country where there is no electricity and it takes more than two hours to carry farm produce to the market. After graduating from high school, he trained to be an electrician at the Claretian Training Center (CTC), which was established by the Claretian Mission. He then took up a job installing solar panels in areas where there is no electricity. However, Arman soon observed that the problems in the villages are not only related to electricity. “The main activity in my village is agriculture,” explains Arman, “but many people believe they can’t farm without using agricultural fertilizers and chemicals. Poor farmers cannot afford to buy these chemicals and yet they are throwing away the livestock manure as waste.”

When Arman was introduced to ARI by sister Inoue in Jakarta he thought, “This is it!” “When I came to ARI, everything was new to me and every day I found new things. I never knew that livestock manure, rice husk, and kitchen garbage are usable resources for farming. I thought these things were just garbage. Not only organic agricultural techniques, I also learned the importance of good management and good leadership. I am very happy now.” Humble and usually quiet Arman talked passionately as he spoke. “The chickens in my village are all raised for meat and they run around freely. Our eggs are imported from Indonesia. At ARI I learned for the first time how eggs are produced. I want to raise layer chickens in the future. In my old job, after I installed the solar panels my job was finished, but in farming there is a change every day and that is why it is so interesting. I want to practice what I have learned at ARI, first by myself, and then I want to spread organic farming to my village using techniques that work best for us.”

Before he came to ARI, Nishantha had been serving in a rural Methodist Church in the southern part of Sri Lanka. That country has just ended a civil war that lasted for more than 30 years, and though the fighting has stopped, deep wounds and dark scars still remain both on the land and in the people. Nishantha works closely with people of different religions, ethnic groups, and occupations, always seeking out the most oppressed. “In the land next to the church I started planting trees and made an organic farm,” Nishantha explains. “I invited children from other parts of Sri Lanka and promoted the importance of safe organic farming. I wanted to show them that living by organic farming is not difficult. While I was doing those activities I was introduced to ARI and
read Takami sensei’s article, which says that we must work for the oppressed people. This is what is also written in the bible and what I have been attempting to do, but I have faced many problems. I thought that ARI was the right place for me.”

According to Nishantha, his time at ARI has been rich and has had a profound effect on his thinking. “ARI is the place where my effort and my dream can move forward. I have had difficulty in working with people in different positions, but at ARI I am living with diverse people of different nationalities, languages, thoughts, and positions. I began to see that if we make an effort, then the impossible can become possible. Also I thought that the idea of “Foodlife” is very true. We are not just eating. In order to eat, we first must work.”

With his mind fixed on his next task, Nishantha shared, “after I go back home, I will restore the abandoned farms attached to a church in the northern part of Sri Lanka which is located in a former combat zone and was totally destroyed. I will revitalize the land and establish an agricultural school. My dream is to bring together Tamil youth from the north and Sinhala youth from the south to rebuild their broken relationships through farming together – producing food by working together.”

Kaniki is from the province of North Kivu where an armed rebel group called the March 23 Movement has been openly fighting the Congolese government forces. Large numbers of people have already fled, including her own children. Last month two of her brothers and one cousin were killed by the rebels. On November 20, 2012 these same rebels took control of the provincial capital, Goma, which is home to many of Kaniki’s family and friends. The situation is extremely tense and dangerous and at the moment Kaniki is not able to return to her home. She is currently in Uganda, trying to reunite with her children. Please keep Kaniki and her family in your prayers.

Kaniki at an orange farm in Kyushu, during the Western Japan Study Tour

Kaniki is on staff at the Oneness Development Institute. Her main role is to empower women and children through education, training, and income generation activities. She further does spiritual counseling for women who are victims of violence. At the moment, he has had to flee from the Congo because of a book that he wrote about human rights.

Kaniki is taking advantage of every learning opportunity ARI has to offer, grabbing every chance to train and equip herself to address the problems of malnutrition and poverty her people face. She wants to have the ability to provide them with healthy food to boost resistance and their immune system. “My training in ARI is a great, great help especially on food production.”
Gilbert Hoggang is a trained veterinarian and has been on staff at ARI since 2008. He prefers to go by “Jil” and his main duty is to manage the pig section, but as is the case of all ARI staff, he contributes in many diverse ways to the community and to the training program as a whole. He is of the Ayangan Tribe of the Ifugao Indigenous Peoples of Luzon Island in the Philippines and he first came to ARI as a participant in 2004. Gilbert’s home village was relocated by the Philippine government due to the construction of a hydroelectric dam. The government began negotiations with the elders of the Ayangan villages in 1972. In 1982 all the villages started to move and Jil’s family was the very last to leave the area in 1987. The following is taken from Jil’s Morning Gathering sharing given in October of 2012.

“What is development?”

We have a lot of amenities in the community. We have almost everything, I remember thinking. I compare to what I see now. The forest is like our supermarket. Why? We get fruit there. We get vegetables there. It becomes also our hardware store. We have wood, many kinds. We have vines. Rattan we call them. Very good.

In the community, we do not need money to get the things we need.

The river is another supermarket because we can get a lot of fish, different kinds of fish. You can get crabs there during season. And then on the bank of the river I get also feed for our cattle. The grass is very nice in season, very nice grass at the banks of the river where we cut. The river also becomes our washing area. Of course, we do also take a bath in the river.

The only difference in my community is that it is free. It is free. Here, when you go to the supermarket, when you go to the department store you need to buy. In the community, it’s free. All of us can go to get something, unless you violate some rules in the community that you should not do when you go to the forest, like cutting something without using it. So the difference is, it’s free. We do not need money to get the things that we need.

Sharing of the work in the community, it’s very very nice when I see it. The community, I can see when I carry the rice wine. All the community people line up for harvesting rice, because by hand, we do the cutting by hand. And they start singing, from here, one old lady will start and they follow her, while moving. It is very nice, and then I pass by their backs and I leave the cup of rice wine, and at the end when I reach the last person they start another song. And they finish the harvesting. It is, for me, it is fun. Very fun. We share all the work the same. I also have my share. During farm work, sometimes my older brother will tell me, “Oh, please go and help our neighbor Arthur, because they are going to plow the field.” So I go, and then during our farm work also in my family, also of course Arthur will come to help us. And another community also comes. So I think it is what we are doing now in ARI, sharing the work.

We have traditional laws in the community. One is called “taboo.” That is very difficult to implement now. Taboo means in the community, when they say, “Do not do this.” “This is not good.” “It is bad if you will do this.” It’s absolute. No question. You cannot ask why. We just believe what the elders say; that it’s not good to do that. It’s bad to say this. Then we follow. The children follow. When they say, “Do not climb that kind of tree. Do not eat fruit,” no way! If you climb that, “Mah! I saw you, you climbed!” Then you have to go down immediately, because “I will tell the elders that you climbed the tree.” Then nobody will climb until the day that the elders will say “Ok, finished.” Then we can climb and we can get the fruit. There are many more policies and traditional laws that we have in the community. Without any outside help, the community will do. We do rituals – in marriage, in sickness, in thanksgiving and many other activities. It’s part of the community.

We share all the work. It’s fun.

That’s the situation I can remember before. Then suddenly the big change came in our community. Construction of the big dam project came. Several government people came and they said, “A dam will be constructed.” We were situated between two big rivers that became one and we were here in the center. At the end of that river, the government built a dam for a development project. It was a big development project for the Philippines, for the people in Luzon, that would produce electricity and would irrigate a thousand hectares of land in some parts of Luzon. So that was the
The consultation process lasted several years actually. Then all the communities accepted. Ours was just only one from ten communities that would be submerged by the reservoir of the dam. During all the consultation processes so many conflicts also came. The armed group of the Communist Party of the Philippines came also to convince us, the community [to fight against the government]. And the government groups also came to convince us to accept the project and to move out from the community, to leave our community. Quite, very difficult in the community. Then many actually wanted to fight. They did not like to move from the community. But after all consultations with the 10 groups, the last resort was to move out from the community, to follow the government. So we moved out from the community. We went to the resettlement site.

Then in the new community, I found out everything is in a pattern. Pattern means you have to follow things. It is in pattern. The houses are built straight like this. The roads are straight like this, so it’s uniform. Most of the laws and policies in the new community are made by outside people. It is not the community. We are not involved in the policies that we are following. The law also defines the leaders. There are general criteria, qualifications that do not include the unquantifiable qualities of the leaders in the community. Most of the elders are told, “oh, sorry, you cannot join the leadership,” because they do not know the parliamentary procedure – “With us, with this situation of the community, I therefore” “I second the motion.” “Objection, your Honor!” Then, the elders cannot participate in that style of leadership. The elders are very quiet on the side. The leadership is taken by young people.

I saw the death of customs and traditions. We lost a lot.

And then a new way of life comes. Big change, very fast change. Faster, the life of the community becomes faster. More money is involved already in the community. Buying and selling is the system. Entertainment is paid for. It’s not free. If you go to movies in the city you have to pay. If you buy a bicycle you have to pay. Everything you have to pay. No sharing then, because everybody in the community does not have much. People begin to be individualistic. You have to be individualistic. No sharing, because money cannot be shared. Not much. We have not too much money to share. Then I saw the death of the customs and traditions of the community. We lost a lot. I do not see them anymore. Very new. Then our elders are very fast also to die. I observe, very fast the elders die, one by one, one from each other, including my grandparents.

So sometimes I was wondering, what is the development we need that will fit to the people? What is the learning from ARI that will fit to my community? How will I be able to make use of this learning in my community? But it is a continuous learning actually for us.

Jil’s prior work was with indigenous tribal people in the Philippines

He applied techniques learnt at ARI such as rice husk charcoal making
This year’s Harvest Thanksgiving Celebration (HTC) is the second HTC from “that day.”

“That day” means March 11, 2011, the day when the great earthquake hit Eastern Japan. Recently, I went to see a preview of a movie called “Atomic Wounds.” It is about the activities and history of one Japanese doctor named Dr. Shuntaro Hida. Dr. Hida has examined patients who were affected by the atomic bomb (called “Hibakusha” in Japanese) in Hiroshima and Nagasaki for more than 60 years. He was in Hiroshima working as a medical doctor for the army when the atomic bomb was dropped there.

66 years after Hiroshima, 1 year after Fukushima

According to the movie, right after the atomic bomb was dropped the American government established a program to record and research casualties of the bomb. A lot of data was collected and many films were recorded but almost all this material was sent to the US and Japan was not allowed to know the contents for more than 30 years. Because of that, the reality of the casualties of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima was not well known, hindering research in Japan on this topic. It took Dr. Hida and his colleagues 30 years to convince the American government to admit that the real number of victims was double what the US announced at first and even more people are still suffering. The American government only counted those who died right after the bombs were dropped. But Dr. Hida insisted that there were more people who died later from low radiation exposure. The Japanese government has been reluctant to help Dr. Hida’s movement.

However, 66 years after the Hiroshima atomic bomb, similar things are happening. After the earthquake occurred, the Tokyo Electric Power Company’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plants exploded three times and a great amount of radioactive substances were dispersed. Since then, many people, especially residents of Fukushima have been examined, but as long as the examinations are initiated by the Japanese government, the data are controlled by the government. Those who were examined are not owners of the data. For example, I received a report of the results of my son’s radiation exposure over a two-month period, but the content was very simple. I want more detailed information and want to ask many questions but it is not easy to do so. The report only said, “According to the advisor and scientifically, at this moment, we judge that this radiation exposure is not the level that gives negative effects on health.”

With this explanation, very few parents would be concerned about the radiation. After the accidents in the nuclear power plant, a local citizen’s movement was formed called Nasu wo Kibo no Toride ni suru (Make Nasu a Bastion of Hope). In short, it is called “Toride” and it aims at collective measurement of radiation in this area by residents themselves and sensitizing people about radiation. Eight months later, another small group was born out of Toride called NRARP (Nasunogahara Residents Association for Radiation Protection) by people who live only around here, Nasushiobara city and Otawara city. NRARP is composed of 30 members. ARI staffer, Osamu Arakawa and I are members of this group representing ARI and we are doing the following things:

- Monthly measurement at more than 20 fixed points (6 points in ARI)
- Helping the ARI Becquerel Center (three regular volunteers come every day and help to measure food, water, soil, etc. for radiation content)
- Studying and sharing information about radiation
- Appealing to the city government to seek radiation exposure measurements for ALL children
- Appealing to set up a long term systematic health check system for all residents of Nasushiobara
- Promotion of our activities and sensitization about the issue of radiation at events and festivals. NRARP will display the results of the tests done at the ARI Becquerel center.

The effects of low level radiation exposure are not known very well all over the world. We cannot be careful enough, so we have to open our eyes and put up our antennae high to collect information and connect people with the same interests.

**We should take all possible measures to know the real situation**

Only 5 years after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, people found increased numbers of thyroid cancer cases and other type of diseases among the children, and many Japanese researchers and medical doctors have been involved in the research and treatment of these diseases. These people have been warning the Japanese government that the same things may happen in Fukushima and surrounding areas, but the government does not try to listen to them. This is mainly because, once they admit it, they may need to pay a huge amount of money in compensation in the coming years, almost forever. I believe that we should not give up and need to continue to campaign about the danger of radiation and take all possible measures to know and examine the real situation and let the people know what the real situation is.

Most people who come to ARI, except staff members, stay for a short time. The longest case is one year. I believe that a fixed stay in ARI would not give these people any effect because radiation in the air here is found to be low now and ARI food is very safe. But for the residents it is very different. We have been here already for one and half years after the accidents and will live here much longer; for some, even decades. That’s why we should prevent the government from trying to let people forget about this matter.

It is in these circumstances that we are celebrating the 39th HTC. Who could imagine we would have this big beautiful Koinonia Hall just before HTC to give thanks to God in with all of our friends and supporters coming from all over Japan. If this is not a blessing, I don’t know what blessing means. Also, we just found out that the amount of Cesium in our new rice (brown rice) is only 3Bq/kg. This amount is very minuscule and if we polish and wash the rice, almost no Cesium is detected. Forty years have passed since ARI was born on this land and many staff, volunteers, and participants have worked hard to grow this land and soil. Last year, it was contaminated by the nuclear power plant accidents in just a few days. However, the level of contamination is said to be recoverable and this is really really fortunate. This level and depth of contamination was decided by our distance from the plant and by the wind direction, the strength of the wind, the movement of the clouds, and the timing of the rainfall at that time. As an educational institution that receives people from all over the world, we must always pay attention to the radiation issue and make our maximum effort to prepare a safe environment for all the people that come here and stay.

In this time of uncertainty, God still gives us abundant blessings, delicious food, wonderful friends and community, great cooperation and solidarity, and above all, God gives us hope for tomorrow. This HTC is the second HTC after the earthquake. Let us be thankful – filled with thankfulness in our whole body and senses.
One of the first things to hit me when I came on staff was the effort it takes to carry out this training, and how hard, but joyfully, all the staff work. For a quick glimpse behind the scenes one need only sit in on the end of the year reflection meetings we just held. Piece by piece we went through all of the components of the training, discussing the effectiveness of field management activity, group leadership rotation, keeping a growth file, rural community study tour, community life, special lectures, kitchen management, individual summer projects, Foodlife work, work camp groups, and many more. Individually these are threads, but woven together they are the fabric of a vigorous curriculum that aims at much more than just agricultural training. It aims at personal transformation of leaders who serve their rural communities. So beneath the practical elements of the program lie the deep rooted philosophies of ARI such as servant leadership, the dignity of labor, and the value of rural life, and it is up to the staff (including me) to serve as living examples of these principals.

**Living the ARI principles**

Of course we are human and these standards are every bit as challenging for us as for anyone. But it is a fulfilling challenge and the burden does not rest only on us. We take it on together as a community, and together we have far more strength to “raise the bar” than any one person alone.

I came to be at ARI by invitation of former staffer, JB Hoover. The decision was not an easy one, but my heart said, “Go,” and my wife, Miki, said, “Let’s go,” so I decided to listen to both and left Tokyo to start a new life. I still remember the first night we arrived in Tochigi. Standing in front of our shabby little staff house in the chill of a February night, the first thing we saw was a sky full of stars and the first thing we heard was the silence. The plan was for me to take over JB’s work as recruitment officer. Several months of overlap were arranged to give me time to learn the job. Plans changed however, and I ended up filling the post of Ecumenical Relations instead. As this position had been vacant for two years, important longstanding relationships had started to erode. Many of these connections had been established years before by Takami sensei and Gretchen DeVries, and as I started the process of reconnecting I felt an unexpected closeness to them and admiration for their work. The vast network of supporters they had built are people who truly stand by ARI’s mission and each has a unique story of

**ARI changes lives.** Nearly every person who has spent time here can attest to this, and it is just as much true for the staff as for anyone else.

When I first started working at ARI back in 2004 I never dreamt how thoroughly this place would penetrate my life and the lives of my family. Far more than a job, it is a conscious decision to live life close to the core, focusing on the basics of food and community and discovering in these things a harmony in God’s creation that is both reassuringly simple and beautifully complex.
Ellie (left) and Sarah (right) never missed the annual community rice harvest.

Guiding the participants in writing their reflection paper was one of Steven's many jobs.

Ellie hitching a ride with Fatmata from Sierra Leone.

how they got “hooked” on ARI. More than just supporters, they are good friends. Slowly I gathered the ends of a hundred frays, and began winding them back together.

**Telling the ARI story**

The simplest way to define my work is that I tell the story of ARI. I tell it over and over again to as many people as I can. I love doing this because I firmly believe in this school’s unique mission and approach. When people hear it, they light up. They are inspired and say how refreshing it is to hear about something good in the world. They ask a LOT of questions, and I find that even I am constantly discovering new things about our curriculum, our philosophies, our way of life. I also spend a lot of time connecting with denominational offices and church mission programs worldwide in terms of recruitment, scholarships, and volunteers. In many cases ARI’s training beautifully complements the aims of these organizations and we quickly find common ground on which to work together. These relationships are built on good communication, good mutual understanding, and first and foremost, trust.

Trust is something that cannot be emphasized enough. After the earthquake of 2011 we immediately started receiving inquiries from people and churches worldwide, first asking if we were OK and then asking what could be done to help. Over the next months donations started to pour in, some of them the biggest ARI has ever seen, and these have allowed us to rebuild our damaged campus (actually we are still in the process of doing so). This show of support was beyond what I ever could have imagined and it came because of a relationship built on trust. I do not take this for granted. It is something for which I am deeply grateful and I am just a little bit proud that I was able to have a hand in building this trust during my time here.

**Watching this community grow my children**

In the end, however, greater than any impact I made on ARI was the impact that ARI made on me. Two months after we arrived my first daughter, Sarah, was born. One month later she started her ARI life by joining the morning gathering every single day. She and her younger sister, Ellie, have grown in arms that are brown, black, and white. They have learned songs in Zulu and Haitian Creole. They have listened to the prayers of people from every corner of the world. They are now ages 8 and 6 and I am amazed at how easily they navigate this cultural environment and how quickly they are able to relate with the different participants and volunteers. In most cases this is by simply doing what kids do best – playing. Of course, I too have experienced this community, working together in the pigpens, harvesting the rice, sharing meals in Koinonia, singing together, arguing together. But it was in my children, watching how this community has grown them, that brought it all home to me.

Now I have a big task. After my transformation at ARI it is time for me to go and carry all I have learned out from here. This is exactly what we expect our graduates to do, and I feel as if I too am now joining in their ranks. In the spring my family and I will move to Kyushu where my wife has taken up a teaching position at Asia Pacific University. It is her dream job and so I now pass her the career baton. As we prepare to depart, foremost on my mind, is how to build community in our new environment. At ARI it is all too easy. There, I don’t think it will be. But ARI has equipped me and I have two simple plans that will serve as a start. The first is to cook for people. This includes my family, and from time to time to invite our new friends and neighbors for some American dinners. The second is to befriend the local farmers to offer a helping hand in their fields and, of course, to buy their produce. Both ideas are based on food – growing it and sharing it. This is what we call Foodlife at ARI and it is what forms the rooting for our community. While departing is not easy, I am tremendously excited about this next step and about discovering what it takes to build community in places beyond ARI.
Credit Card Points
If you use a credit card, chances are you are enrolled in a rewards program of some type. This includes Visa, American Express, and MasterCard. Sometimes credit cards are connected to airlines, like a United Visa Card. Either way, you can donate any amount of Rewards points to ARI through AFARI. If you are interested please contact JB Hoover:
(206) 349-2807
john.b.hoover@gmail.com

For Delta Fliers
If you, your family, friends, or members of your congregation fly Delta, you can help ARI without any cost at all. Just send AFARI your used boarding pass or the ticket number of the flight. You keep your Frequent Flier miles and ARI still benefits by getting Sky Bonus points, which can be redeemed as real tickets for use by ARI participants. Please contact JB:
(206) 349-2807
john.b.hoover@gmail.com

Frequent Flier Miles (any time of year, but urgently needed by March 1, 2013)
Every year AFARI has been able to provide air tickets to Japan for a number of participants through donations of Frequent Flier miles. This saves ARI thousands of dollars. Miles from nearly any airline can be used. Even if you have not traveled in a while you may have some miles in your account. Don’t let them expire! Please contact AFARI President, Pam Hasegawa:
(201) 400-6714 /
pamhasegawa@gmail.com

ARI 40th Anniversary Celebration 2013
Sept 16-17
Ceremony and Symposium
*That We May Live Together: Practices of Rural Development and a Vision of Living Together*

Sept 18-22
ARI Experience and Tohoku Visit Program
Details coming soon to the ARI website

Join our Tours!
**ARISA Graduate Tour** – plans in the works
**Place:** Nagaland, India
**Time:** February 2014 for 7-10 days
(pleasure of time to plan ahead)
**Option:** Visit ARI first and join the group from here
**Coordinator:** Kaori Sakuma
arisa@ari-edu.org

**More details to come, but don’t hesitate to contact Kaori with any questions.**

**Nebraska and Kansas Speaking Tour**
AFARI is coming to Nebraska and Kansas speaking engagements and meetings with supporters and others. Soon we will be contacting individual and organizational supporters. In order to keep costs to a bare minimum, JB Hoover is looking for homestays along the way. Also, if any supporters have a car they could lend, either part or all of this period, this would be a tremendous help and save the cost of rental. If you would like AFARI to speak in your church or organization or if you would just like to have a cup of coffee together please contact JB Hoover:
(206) 349-2807
john.b.hoover@gmail.com