

Afterword

We are presenting the 32nd Elementary and Junior High School Students' Essay Collection: "Thinking about Peace." This year, we received 95 essays in total: 31 from elementary school students and 64 from junior high school students. They conveyed the particular way that elementary and junior high school students take on the topics of peace, war and nuclear weapons.

In the beauty of our hometown Numazu, amidst its scenery changing with the seasons, we live our lives. However, our town has also experienced a time when many people were killed, in the chaos of war.

Later, in 1987, Numazu City proclaimed a "Declaration of Peace and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons" and since then 35 years have passed, but still there exists people around the world suffering from the effects of war.

On the one hand, in Japan a long period of peace has been maintained and as the majority of the population has no firsthand experience with war, it is meaningful for elementary and junior high school students, who will be leaders of the future, to think about peace.

This year again presented numerous works across all grades, that took on the topics of the preciousness of peace and the misery of war head on.

The works included those based on students' wishes to convey the misery and meaninglessness of war they felt after watching video and other war related media, others conveying the fact that when they learned of their own town of Numazu had been victim to the war they realized just how close it was to them; others after hearing stories directly from people who had experienced war and seeing exhibitions at the library feeling the need to express the idea that war must never happen again. All of these works were embodied by the elementary and junior high school students' passion for peace.

Through this essay collection, we hope that elementary and junior high school students in Numazu will talk with people in the world about what peace is like and pass their wish on to the future. Students are expected to reconfirm the weight of the responsibility to "protect our beautiful earth and peaceful life for our future generations" as Numazu City declared in "The Declaration of Peace and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons" They also need to make an effort.

Finally, we would also like to express our sincere gratitude for all of the readers of this essay collection.