

## Afterword

We will deliver the “34th Collection of Essays by Elementary and Junior High School Students Contemplating Peace”. This year, this collection of essays received a total of 97 entries, 29 from Elementary school students and 68 from Junior High school students. Each piece is carefully spelled out in the student’s own words, and is a wish for peace.

Students have thought about war through lessons, books, and the news, and have created works that directly express what war brings, as well as works that have touched their hearts with valuable materials that convey the events of war to future generations, and strongly appealed to the preciousness of peace, conveying thoughts on war and peace. These are works that allow us to think deeply about peace and give an insight into the thoughts of the author. They also ask us, the readers, “What is peace?” and “Can we say that the modern world we live in is peaceful?”

Many years have passed since the end of the war, there are fewer opportunities to hear stories from people who experienced the war, and unless we actively seek to learn more, there are fewer opportunities to see and hear the facts of the past. On the other hand, news reports the reality of what is happening around the world. It is no exaggeration to say that not a day goes by without news about the war being reported. At this very moment, many lives and livelihoods are being lost due to the ongoing invasion of Ukraine and the renewed conflict between Israel and Palestine. Every time we hear about the horrors on the news, our hearts hurt, and sometimes we want to turn our eyes away from the tragic reality. However, as we go about our daily lives, there are times when we all suddenly feel that events are happening in a world different from our own.

There was a war in Numazu City, where we live. It is said that the town of Numazu changed overnight, and many citizens lost their lives. In 1987, Numazu City declared itself a “Declaration of a City of Peace to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Building lasting world peace is the common desire of all humankind.”

“We will protect the beautiful earth and a peaceful life for our children and grandchildren.”

We need to continue our efforts.

I hope that through this collection of essays, the idea of preciousness of peace will continue into the future. I also hope that the elementary and junior high school students living in the future will continue to have a desire for peace and grow into adults who seek a society full of dreams and hope.

I hope this collection of essays will unite all of us who wish for peace and become a big step towards a peaceful world.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who reads this collection of essays.