

Afterword

We will deliver the “36th Collection of Essays by Elementary and Junior High School Students Contemplating Peace”. This year, this collection of essays received a total of 111 entries, 39 from Elementary school students and 72 from Junior High school students. Each of the submitted works carefully expressed thoughts about peace from perspectives unique to elementary and junior high school students.

The year 2025 marked a major milestone of 80 years since the end of the war. As the number of people who experienced war firsthand continues to decline, listening to their stories and reflecting on peace and conveying its importance holds great significance. In some of the works, individuals who had previously spoken little about the war shared their experiences in order to prevent them from fading and to pass them on to future generations. These accounts were received earnestly, and the writings expressed a renewed reflection on the importance of peace, along with a desire to convey these lessons to those who will live in the future.

Around the world, many wars are still ongoing. The students who submitted essays witnessed the heartbreaking situations in places such as Ukraine and the Gaza Strip through news and other media. While conveying the tragedy of war, they also deeply considered what they themselves can do to help build a peaceful world. Their writings also posed a profound question to us as readers: “What is peace?”

In the past, war also affected Numazu City, where we live, and it is said that 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.

In order to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future, it is important for the elementary and junior high school students who will shape the coming era to think about peace in their own way, discuss it, and share what they have learned. As reflected in this year’s works, creating a “peaceful world” does not require doing something extraordinary; rather, it begins with each individual thinking about peace and taking action in their daily lives. Through this essay collection, we hope that the elementary and junior high school students of Numazu City will engage in meaningful dialogue with people around the world about what true peace is, and will move forward step by step toward the future.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has read this collection of essays.