



FUNAI

FUNAI Electric and Boston Red Sox



**Announce Year Two of
Red Sox US-Japan Youth Baseball Exchange**

*US Youth to Visit Japan this summer
after kids from Japan visited Boston last year*

For Immediate Release
July 6, 2009

BOSTON, MA - The Boston Red Sox and global electronic giant Funai today jointly announced the start of Year Two of the Red Sox U.S.-Japan Youth Baseball Exchange. The program allows youngsters from Japan and the United States to visit one another's homelands and learn lessons of life and culture through baseball.

Following last year's exchange in which a dozen Japanese youngsters visited Boston, a dozen boys from Boston will travel to Japan and participate in various baseball and cultural activities between July 30 and August 11, 2009.

"Japan is a deeply respected member of Red Sox Nation and since the arrival of Daisuke Matsuzaka, Hideki Okajima, and Takashi Saito, interest in Japan among our fans has grown exponentially," said **Red Sox Chairman Tom Werner**. "With this exchange program, we will be part of life-transforming experience for children in Boston and Japan as they explore each other's cultures through their shared love of baseball."

Funai is the presenting sponsor of the Red Sox US-Japan Youth Baseball Exchange program, generously supporting this international youth athletics and cultural exchange program for two years since 2008. This year Red Sox Foundation is happy to include Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company as supporting sponsor and Extra Innings in Watertown as in-kind sponsor for this program. The Red Sox Foundation is the organizer of this unique exchange program with support by the Japan Society of Boston.

"Boston's connections to Japan are deep and long lived," said **Tomonori Hayashi, President & CEO of Funai Electric Co., Ltd.**, "This exchange will be a home run for everyone involved. It will be a life changing experience for the children, and a great reminder of how much we can share through terrific educational exchanges like this one, and through our shared beloved pastime of baseball."

The Boston boys will also experience the many charms and cultural and educational attractions of Chiba, Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto -- Boston's sister city, which in 2009 is celebrating the 50th anniversary of this remarkable international relationship. The boys also will also take part in a Youth Baseball Clinic at the Chiba Lotte Marines Academy, led by former Manager, Bobby Valentine and see traditional and contemporary sites in Japan. The youngsters also will attend the legendary *Koshien* High School Baseball Championship, the pinnacle of youth baseball in Japan, where during

the summer of 1998 at the age of 18, Red Sox pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka powered Yokohama High School to the championship with a no-hit performance in the final.

In Japan, the 12 day program will include baseball clinics and games with young Japanese teams of the same age, and the opportunity to explore a variety of cultural and educational activities that will help promote greater understanding between Japan and the United States and encourage a greater appreciation of each other's traditions, history and customs. The Just as the Japanese boys stayed with Boston host families last summer, the Boston boys will spend time with Japanese host families.

Participants in the Exchange program were selected not only on their baseball skills but their demonstrated interest in exploring other cultures. Young Bostonians are not only interested in the international sport of baseball, but are also curious about the world, have demonstrated leadership capacity and value the opportunity to foster international friendships.

Considered a national sport in both the US and Japan, baseball in recent years has provided a uniquely effective cultural bridge between the two countries. The addition of Daisuke Matsuzaka, Hideki Okajima and Takashi Saito to the Red Sox roster, raised interest in Japan, its culture and customs among New Englanders virtually overnight. Likewise, the presence of these three superstars on one American team underscores the interest Japanese youth have in American and in New England in particular.

As was proven last year, this youth baseball exchange can be a life changing experience to all who have a role in the program -- whether its the boys participating or the Japanese and American families who host them.

For more information about this unique exchange program, which is sponsored by Funai and organized by the Red Sox Foundation in association with the Japan Society of Boston, please visit www.redsoxfoundation.org.

You can also see a video of last years program on YOU TUBE keywords "Red Sox Foundation" and "japan exchange" or at :<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbkK4FaxWLE>

OTHER QUOTES

Bobby Valentine, Manager Chiba Lotte Marines

"I'm delighted that it's now our turn to host twelve young ballplayers from Boston here in Japan, which has been my 'home country' for the past 5 years. I'm sure that these children will enjoy their visit as much as I have enjoyed living here, and that the experiences and knowledge they gain here will continue to foster the beautiful friendship between our two countries."

Daisaku Kadokawa, Kyoto Mayor

"We are very pleased to participate in the second year of the Red Sox US-Japan Youth Baseball Exchange Program commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Sister City Relationship between our two great cities, Kyoto and Boston. As Boston Red Sox's Daisuke, Okajima, Saito, and other Japanese players in the MLB have proven, baseball has increased awareness between our respective cultures and bringing our countries closer together. I hope that the twelve boys from Boston participating in this wonderful exchange will use their skill and interest in baseball as a powerful communication tool in making new friends and communicating with host family while in Japan. Kyoto, like Boston, is a vibrant, thriving city renowned for its history, education, culture and world heritage sites, as well as for the world's leading technology companies. I hope that the 12 participants will fully take advantage of the variety of events and opportunities offered to them as cultural ambassadors in Japan and enjoy the once in a lifetime experience. I look forward to welcoming you all to Kyoto this summer!"

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ABOUT RED SOX FOUNDATION

The official team charity, the Red Sox Foundation is committed to using the power of the Red Sox fan base to improve health, educational and recreational and social service programs for children and families in New England. A registered 501(c)3 charity, the Foundation was founded in 2002, immediately after the group led by Principal Owner John Henry, Chairman Tom Werner, President CEO Larry Lucchino and the team's partners bought the fabled franchise. With the support of fans, NESN and through special fundraising events, the Red Sox Foundation has quickly become the largest team charity in Major League Baseball. For more information, visit www.redsoxfoundation.org.

ABOUT PRESENTING SPONSOR: Funai Electric Co., Ltd.

Founded by Mr. Tetsuro Funai, the company was established in 1961 in Osaka, Japan. Funai Electric Co., Ltd. in Japan is engaged in development/design, manufacture, marketing and distribution of audio/visual products such as LCD TVs, DVD Recorders and Blu-Ray Disc Players. Funai now also produces ink-jet/laser printers, digital still cameras, and IP/Wi-Fi phones. Funai has sites in Japan, Poland, Republic of China, and Thailand. For more information on Funai Group, please visit: <http://www.funaiworld.com>.

Funai Corporation in the United States was established in 1970, as wholly-owned subsidiary of Funai Electric Co., Ltd. Funai Corporation, Inc. was reorganized in May 1991, and is engaged in the import, export, servicing, marketing and distribution of Funai products in order to serve customers across United States. For more information, please visit <http://funai.us/>.

ABOUT CONTRIBUTING SPONSOR: Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company

Founded in 1993, Cambridge based Millennium is a biopharmaceutical company with an innovative pipeline of novel molecules. In May 2008, Millennium was acquired by Japan based Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited. Millennium is focused on oncology research and development. For more information, please visit: <http://www.millennium.com>.

ABOUT IN KIND SPONSOR: Extra Innings, Watertown

Extra Innings' mission is to improve the performance of baseball and softball players at all skill levels and ages by providing high quality personal and group instructions. Extra Innings' professional training facility in Watertown includes six indoor hitting & pitching tunnels, a fully stocked pro shop, members training room, softball batting tunnels, and a birthday area. For more information, please visit: <http://www.extrainnings-watertown.com>.

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