

PRESS RELEASE

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Shine On! Kids' Hospital Facility Dog begins working at the National Center for Child Health and Development

Official launch: July 1, Facility Dog Day

Shine On Kids (<http://sokids.org>), a certified non-profit organization that supports children with cancer and other serious illnesses, will launch its full-time Hospital Facility Dog Program at the National Center for Child Health and Development (NCCHD) (<https://www.ncchd.go.jp/>) on July 1. NCCHD will be the fourth children's hospital in Japan implementing Shine On! Kids' Hospital Facility Dog Program.

The Hospital Facility Dog Program is an animal-assisted therapy program that pairs a "Hospital Facility Dog," a dog that has received professional service dog training for roughly 1.5 years to work in a children's hospital, with a nurse or other healthcare professional who has completed training to become a professional dog "handler" in a children's hospital environment. This program supports hospitalized children and their families through a variety of interactions with the dog team - from friendly visits and cuddles, to rehabilitation activities and support during medical procedures.



Enjoying interaction in the hospital ward

Shine On! Kids introduced its first Hospital Facility Dog to Shizuoka Children's Hospital in January 2010. The team (dog + nurse handler) began working on a full-time basis on July 1 of the same year, hence the declaration of July 1st as "Facility Dog Day". The launch of the program at NCCHD, the fourth children's hospital for Shine On! Kids in Japan, includes activities at Momiji House, medical short-term facility for children adjacent to the hospital. Supporting this kind of facility in addition to the hospital itself is a first for Shine On! Kids.



Visiting families at Momiji House, medical short-term facility for children

Children with serious illnesses undergo many treatments, tests and procedures that are physically and emotionally taxing over an extended period of time. To safely work with these young patients and their families, both the Hospital Facility Dogs and their handlers are required to have a high level of expertise working as a team, and the handlers must undergo extensive training in infection control. Thus two distinguishing features of Shine On! Kids' program are: (1) the Hospital Facility Dogs are trained by professional dog trainers based on international standards, and (2) the handlers are nurses with more than 5 years of clinical experience.

Introduction of the new Facility Dog Team



Facility Dog Handler

Name : Ayami Gonnokami
 Occupation : Certified Nurse Specialist in Child Health Nursing
 about 25 years of clinical experience

Ayami has been working at Kanagawa Children's Medical Center since the introduction of the Hospital Facility Dog program there in 2012. She became interested in the activities of Bailey and his handler Yuko Morita, and decided she wanted to become a handler. Ayami has experience in developing support activities for patients' families, especially those with congenital heart disease, and in providing medical assistance in Myanmar.

Facility Dog

Name : Masa
 Breed : Labrador Retriever (Male)
 Date of Birth : March 7, 2019 (2 years old)
 Birthplace : Australia (Career Dogs Australia)
 Training : Shine On! Kids

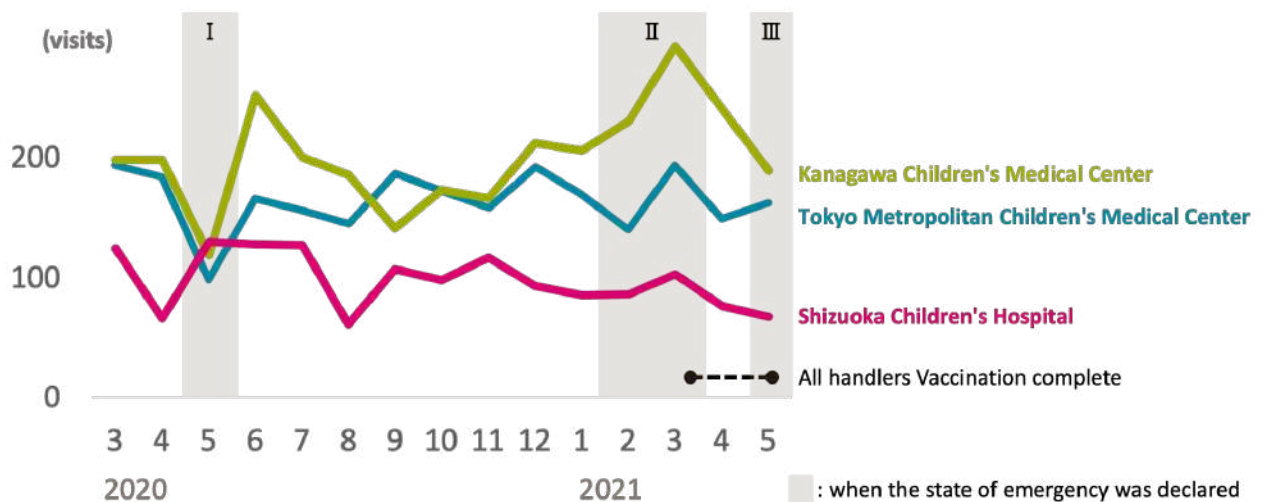
Masa was bred by Career Dogs Australia (<https://www.careerdogs.com.au/>), who specializes in breeding service dogs. Masa was trained in Japan by a certified dog trainer with experience working for organizations certified by Assistance Dogs International, the world's leading organization for overseeing the training and regulations for qualifying service dogs.



Internal medication support

Shine On! Kids Hospital Facility Dogs work at the same hospital every day, bringing the medical expertise of their handlers to meet the needs of individual families. Thanks to rigorous infection control measures, there have been no infection-related incidents or issues in the past 11 years with our dogs. Throughout the COVID19 pandemic, Shine On! Kids' program has continued at its three hospitals: Shizuoka Children's Hospital, Kanagawa Children's Medical Center, and Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Medical Center. When the initial state of emergency was declared in Japan, some aspects of the program were curtailed as a precaution, but through cooperation and collaboration with the infection control officers at each hospital, the Hospital Facility Dogs continued visiting patients without a single interruption. Vaccination of all handlers was completed in June this year.

Activities of the three hospitals during the COVID19 epidemic





At the staff station in the hospital ward

About Shine On Kids, a certified non-profit organization

Shine On Kids was founded in July 2006, inspired by the smiles and courage of the founders' son, Tyler, who spent his short life battling leukemia at the National Center for Child Health and Development. After they lost Tyler, his parents wanted to create something positive for families going through what they had endured. Children facing treatment for childhood cancer and other serious illnesses face anxiety and great stress during their long hospitalization. Although the level of medical care in Japan is among the most advanced in the world, the founders felt there were still issues in terms of psychological support for patients and their families. Shine On! Kids' aims to create a complete pediatric patient support system in Japan - from the moment of diagnosis, throughout treatment and after discharge from hospital. Its core programs include: Beads of Courage in 24 hospitals, and Hospital Facility Dogs now in 4 hospitals. Since 2017, Shine On! Kids has also held Camp Courage, an annual series of workshops for pediatric cancer survivors.

Origin of the name "Masa"

The founders' son, Tyler, was admitted to the National Center for Child Health and Development when he was one month old. Dr. Masaaki Kumagai, the chief physician, solid tumor specialist at the time, was his primary doctor who, together with all the staff at the hospital, worked incredibly hard to treat Tyler's leukemia. After Tyler died, it was Dr. Kumagai who encouraged Kim and Mark Ferris to establish a new NPO to carry out their vision of



providing psychosocial support programs for hospitalized children in Japan. Shine On! Kids' first two Hospital Facility Dogs trained exclusively in Japan are named Ty and Masa: Ty, for the founders' son Tyler, and Masa for Tyler's wonderful doctor, Dr. Masaaki Kumagai. Unfortunately, Dr. Kumagai passed away in 2012, but his positive and healing spirit will live on through the wonderful work that Masa and his handler will carry out at the National Center for Child Health and Development.

Tyler and his doctor, Dr. Masaaki Kumagai, when he was hospitalized at the National Center for Child Health and Development in 2004.

◆日本語版リリースはこちら <https://prtimes.jp/draft/2838cd65be251b5fb13140db9dd>

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