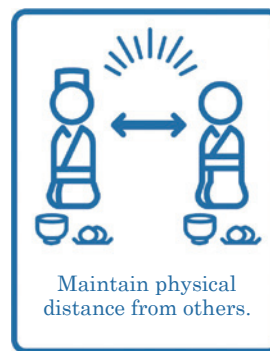
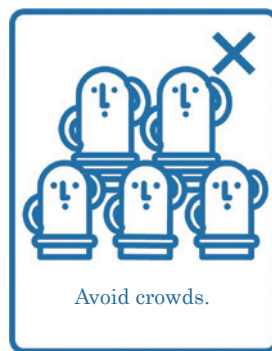
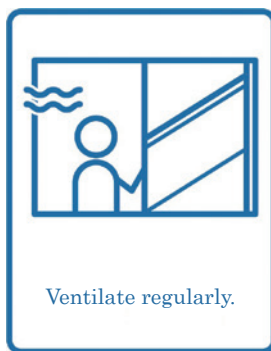


# Kokoro-no-Hibiki

It's not someone else's problem!

Let's take the Covid-19 crisis as our own problem and overcome it based on correct understanding and information!



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To help increase public awareness of human rights, the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council issues an annual newsletter, Kokoro-no-Hibiki, to advocate the importance of human rights.

HREPC Official Website



<https://www.jinkenkyo.jp>



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# What Is the Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC)?

The Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council is a civic organization established in July 1979, with the aim of eliminating any form of discrimination, including buraku discrimination, and protecting human rights of all people. With an extensive membership comprised of civil groups, businesses and religious corporations, HREPC carries out various activities to educate the public on human rights and contribute to a peaceful and prosperous society where the human rights of all people are respected.



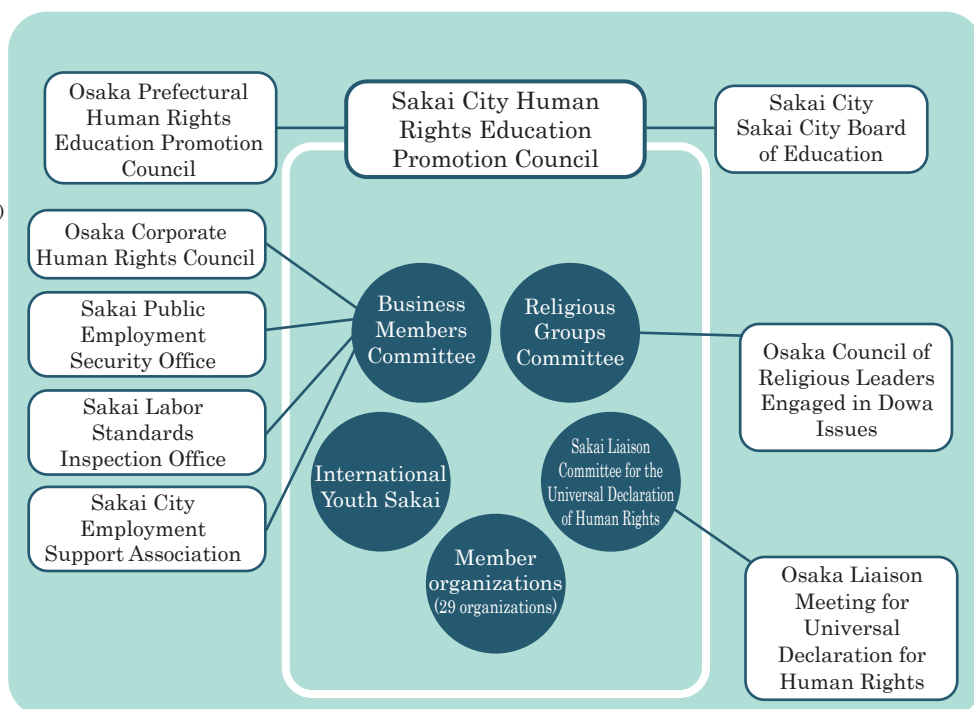
The HREPC's symbol represents people holding hands, praying for promotion of human rights and world peace.



## Organization Chart / Directors of the Council

KANAMARU Naohiro Chair

Chair	KANAMARU Naohiro (Business Members Committee of the Council)
Vice Chair	KUBO Teruo (Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations)
Vice Chair	YAMAGUCHI Noriko (Sakai City Women's Association)
Vice Chair	OTA Kayo (Sakai City PTA Federation)
Vice Chair	SHIRAMOTO Tadashi (Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations)
Vice Chair	KIDO Kazutomo (Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools)
Vice Chair	TAKEDA Shin'ichi (Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League)
Vice Chair	YOSHIMURA Seiji (Religious Groups Committee of the Council)
Treasurer	KOYAMA Toshimi (Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation)
Treasurer	MORIUCHI Keiko (District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association)



## Member Organizations The HREPC has 29 member organizations.

- Sakai City Education Association
- Sakai City Support Group for Foreign Residents' Education
- Sakai City Women's Association
- Sakai City Liaison Council of Instructors for Youth
- Sakai City PTA Federation
- NPO Sakai Federation of Private Educational and Childcare Institutions
- Sakai City Association of Principals of Municipal Schools
- Sakai District Committee of Administrative Counselors
- Osaka Prefectural Association of Vocational Schools
- Semboku Sumai Center, West Japan Branch, UR Community Inc.
- Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation
- Federation of Sakai City Residents' Associations
- Sakai City Federation of Private Kindergartens
- Sakai City Human Rights Education and Research Society
- Sakai City Association of Childcare Organizations
- Sakai City Federation of Child Welfare Commissioners
- Sakai City Federation of Senior Residents' Clubs
- Sakai City Liaison Council of Probation Officers
- Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Headquarters of Liberal Dowa Association
- Sakai Branch, Osaka Prefectural Federation of the Buraku Liberation League
- Sakai City Association for Sound Growth of Children
- Sakai City Social Education Committee
- NPO Sakai Federation of Disabled People's Organizations
- Sakai City Agricultural Cooperative
- Sakai City Welfare Association for Single-Mother Families and Widows
- Sakai Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association
- Sakai City Council of Social Welfare
- Principals' Association of Osaka Prefectural Schools in the 8th District

# Introduction of Member Organizations

## Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation

The Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation is a volunteer organization that conducts crime prevention activities in the community and rehabilitation support for offenders and juvenile delinquents, established with the aim of contributing to the creation of a bright community free of crime and delinquency. There are approximately 1,300 district groups nationwide with some 170,000 active members.

The Sakai City Women's Group for Social Rehabilitation (SWGSR) was established in April 1965. Together with probation officers, the SWGSR conducts "activities to brighten society" and, as a social rehabilitation support group, visits rehabilitation facilities, juvenile training schools, prisons, and other facilities to help people who have committed crimes or delinquent acts rejoin society. It has been engaged in a wide range of practical activities firmly rooted in the community, including crime prevention and childcare support, which are the starting point of its activities. Blessedly, the year 2020 marked the 55th anniversary of its establishment. More than 700 members in 42 school districts are currently engaged in the activities with the spirit of charity, while widely cooperating with related local groups and organizations, based on the basic philosophy of SWGSR: the spirit of love for humanity and for the community. In the memorable 55th anniversary year, it published the commemorative magazine "Jiai" (meaning "charity") under the theme of "Jiai Tsunaide 55-nen" ("55 years connecting with charity") and newly installed standing signboards in each school district. Each word of the motto written on the signboard, meaning "Sakai children, smiling with the love of the community," represents the passion of the members for their various activities. With over half a century of history as a foundation, the SWGSR members continue to enjoy their activities and dream big for a bright society.

The main activities are community activities in seven districts and subcommittee activities conducted by eight subcommittees. In the subcommittee activities, directors representing each school district belong to one subcommittee and work on the activities of each. Meanwhile, all members participate in community activities in each school district. The eight subcommittees work on the following: training; promotion of regional cooperation; communication with rehabilitation facilities; "donation of love" activities; childcare support; social contribution activities; tea ceremony experience programs; and public relations. Each subcommittee shares their desired activities for rehabilitation volunteers and actual achievements, leading to the great joy of the members. What supports these activities is the volunteer spirit and passion for the community of each member, who is not under anyone's orders or direction, and the warmth of human love at the root.

Looking back at the 55 years of history, the SWGSR has renewed its commitment to meet the demands of the times.

The SWGSR has now reviewed each of its activities based on solid awareness, with gratitude for the HREPC providing an opportunity for contributing this article. As rehabilitation volunteers, all the members will take sure and stronger steps forward over the footsteps of their predecessors while dreaming of brightening the town of Sakai.

## District Committee of the Sakai City Human Rights Commissioners' Association

Human Rights Commissioners are consultation partners in your city.

Human Rights Commissioners are private citizens commissioned by the Minister of Justice. This system, which is unique to Japan, was established in 1948, one year after the enforcement of the Constitution of Japan, based on the idea that it is desirable for people from various fields to spread the idea of respecting human rights in the community, to make sure that the human rights of residents are not violated and to protect human rights.

Currently, approximately 14,000 commissioners are assigned to each municipality in Japan. Thirty-five commissioners in Sakai City form the Sakai District Association together with commissioners in Matsubara City, Takaishi City and Osakasayama City, and they are proactively engaged in their activities (consultation, remedy, and awareness-raising).

Human Rights Commissioners provide consultation on human rights to residents at human rights consultation offices at the Legal Affairs Bureau, as well as those temporarily opened at public facilities, such as city offices and social welfare facilities.

If, through consultation or other opportunities, a victim reports that his/her human rights have been violated, they work with the Legal Affairs Bureau staff to gather information, investigate and handle the human rights violation case, and they coordinate the interests and claims of the parties involved, thus leading to smooth resolution of the case.

In addition, to raise awareness of human rights among local residents, they run human rights classes and the Human Rights Flower Campaign for kindergarteners and elementary school students to share the importance of compassion, provide consultation on human rights through "SOS mini-letters" for elementary and junior high school students, solicit and award junior high school students' human rights essays, and serve as lecturers at human rights workshops at companies and other organizations.

Furthermore, they conduct creative educational activities in each region, such as regularly publishing and distributing special booklets for the protection of children's human rights and, with the cooperation of broadcasters, introducing human rights protection activities (e.g., award ceremony for human rights essays by junior high school students).

If you have any questions about the Human Rights Commissioners in your city or have some problems, please feel free to contact the Osaka Legal Affairs Bureau Sakai Branch. Consultations are provided free of charge.

## This Year's Projects

### General Workshop (August 24 to September 24, 2021; online distribution)

For the general workshop, a lecture by Ms. Yasuda Natsuki (photojournalist) titled “What is Living Together? – Diversity seen in refugees’ voices and family history” was recorded and distributed.

It provided an opportunity to reconsider what it means to “live together” as she spoke about the diversity she has seen while traveling to Cambodia and working in Syria, where the civil war continues.



### Citizens' Gathering to Protect Human Rights (December 24, 2021 to January 23, 2022; online distribution)

In line with Human Rights Week from December 4 to 10, the 42nd Citizens' Gathering to Protect Human Rights was held as an opportunity to think about human rights together with citizens and further expand the circle of respect for human rights.

The first part was the award ceremony of the essay contest “My Human Rights Message.” The ceremony was canceled last fiscal year from the viewpoint of preventing the spread of Covid-19, but this year it was held on December 4 at the Sakai City General Welfare Hall while taking infection control measures, such as limiting the number of participants.

The “My Human Rights Message” contest is held to raise awareness of human rights among more citizens by encouraging them to think about the preciousness of human rights and the importance of protecting them in everyday life. Awards were presented to specially selected works out of a total of 2,550 entries. In addition, four award winners were invited to present their essays (introduced on pp. 5-6, “The 42nd Essay Contest ‘My Human Rights Message’ Award-winning entries”). The essays, written by people of all ages on a variety of topics related to human rights, were very inspiring. The first step toward solving human rights issues is for everyone to see them as their own problems and think about what they can do to address them.

The second part was a lecture by Ms. Matano Akiko (former kindergarten/nursery teacher) titled “Alive and Shining Now – The world seen on a wheelchair is quite wonderful.” It was recorded and distributed as the “42nd Citizens' Gathering to Protect Human Rights” with the first part. Ms. Matano talked about the world she has seen on her wheelchair after becoming disabled and what is needed to make a better society. This lecture helped to promote understanding of disability.



# Do Not Let Covid-19 Affect Your Mental Health.



**“It’s not someone else’s problem”  
– The reality of discrimination amid the Covid-19 crisis**

Many cases of discrimination against healthcare workers, their families, and those involved in duties essential to the maintenance of social life have occurred throughout the country. There are also new types of discrimination and prejudice, such as excessive avoidance and blaming of infected people and close contacts. Other cases include asserting someone to be infected simply because he/she has certain symptoms, or even discrimination and prejudice against students at the same university or residents in the same neighborhood as an infected person. Furthermore, the damage caused by inappropriate online postings to these people is becoming more serious.

Cases of unfair treatment of non-infected persons have also been observed. Everyone needs to put themselves in the shoes of the parties involved.

**How would you feel? Just imagine!**

**Do not blame infected persons,  
their families or foreign residents.**

You should not try to identify the names or addresses of infected persons or their families.

There should be no discrimination, prejudice or bullying.

Do not be prejudiced, be compassionate.

**It is up to each person to decide  
whether or not to get vaccinated.  
No discrimination, no harassment.**

Whether or not to get vaccinated should be based on the person's own will, and the decision should be made independently, considering various circumstances, such as health condition, advantages and disadvantages.

Do not force others to get vaccinated or discriminate against those who have not been vaccinated.

**Do not be misled by uncertain information, be compassionate!**

**Remember everyone  
lives in anxiety.**

Some people are anxious about their jobs, while others are fearful of becoming infected or worried about their families.

Keep in mind that everyone is anxious about something.

**Express your gratitude and  
send messages of support.**

Always be thankful and respectful to all the people who support our society.

By facilitating mutual assistance and compassion with others, we can overcome the Covid-19 crisis together.

# Essay Contest “My Human Rights Message”

◆ Award-winning Entries ◆

The following website contains award-winning essays specially selected from 2,550 entries and permitted to be posted by the authors. (In Japanese)

Collection of award-winning essays:

<https://www.jinkenkyo.jp/past-message/>



## Human Rights of People with Disabilities (Fifth-year elementary school student)

Human rights are the rights of people (to live a healthy life, to learn a lot, to engage in activities freely, and to be protected and supported by the country); they are rights that all people have at birth to live as human beings. Human rights are important to everyone and must be protected through compassion in everyday life.

For example, some people mock or bully a person for being a woman or a child. I think this is an incorrect notion because women and children are human beings, just like everyone else. When considering the feelings of others, it is not good to mock children or women just because they are children or women.

I have a younger brother with a disability. He cannot speak, stand or walk. So, in addition to my father and mother, I also help him with various things. By doing so, my brother will be happy and so will my parents. To me, that is a matter of course. But when we walk outside, there are people who stare at my brother in his wheelchair or little children who say, “He is so big but in

a stroller!” or “Why doesn't he just walk?” I wondered why they would stare at my brother in his wheelchair. For me, that is a natural and normal thing. If they did not understand, they could have asked me or my mother.

I used to wonder why some people stare at those with disabilities but do not speak to them when they are in need, but recently I have come to realize that it takes courage to speak to them, and some people just can't do that. When my mother pushes my brother's wheelchair to get on the train, she always seems to have difficulty with the steps. Whenever someone calls out to help her at such times, she repeatedly says, “Thank you for all the help.” Then my mother and I smile at each other and say, “He is such a kind man,” and “How helpful.” So, wishing that life will be easier for people with disabilities and that compassion and willingness to help will become the norm, I would like to speak to such people and help them if they are in need.

## Making Use of My Experience (Second-year junior high school student)

My particular concern about human rights is women's human rights and gender discrimination. In the past, only women could become nurses, but now men can too. There are many such professions. Despite that, there is gender discrimination in workplaces. I have heard that some supervisors discriminate against female workers on the basis of gender, saying, “Because you are a woman, I cannot entrust you with this kind of work.” This is of course ridiculous. There may not be so many such cases now, but I heard that there were many in the past. It is true that men and women are physically different. But to say that “women are supposed to have babies” or “women are supposed to cook” is discriminatory. I don't think it's a good idea to make such an assertion; some men might like to cook.

Next, let me talk about women's human rights, based on what I have experienced. I loved cute things from the time I was in kindergarten until the fifth grade. I enjoyed myself by wearing big bows and pink skirts and collecting trendy items and cute dolls. But suddenly I began to feel uncomfortable and changed

myself. I stopped wearing pink skirts and bright-colored clothes and started wearing pants and dark-colored clothes only. My mother did not notice such changes in me and would buy me skirts.

When I entered junior high school, I naturally began to refer to myself as *boku* (Japanese first-person pronoun used by men). Some of my school friends have asked me why. I am glad most of them did not care about that and did not mind being friends with me.

When I move up to the second grade at junior high school, my mother asked me why I called myself *boku*. I replied, “It was a natural change for me.” From that day on, my mother stopped talking about that, and now she tells me to go buy my own clothes. I am more myself now than when I was in the sixth grade at elementary school.

Then, in May in the second grade, I had my hair cut really short and became the way I wanted to be. Some say, “Oh, you looked better with long hair,” while others say, “It looks good on you.” I like who I am now. I will continue to live my life as myself.



## Your Commitment Can Save Lives (First-year high school student)

Recently, I saw an article about a person who committed suicide due to bullying. Reading that reminded me that I too had been bullied before.

My friends, including my best friend, bullied me. At first it was just for fun, but it escalated and developed into bullying. Every day they ran away from me. They treated me as invisible and slandered me about my appearance. The worst was when they told me, "You are not my friend." I do not know how many times I cried alone, how many times I thought I wanted to die. Such days continued.

Reading this, you might have thought, "Why not just tell your teacher or parents?" Well, I thought that if I did that, they would say I tipped them off and the bullying would get worse. My thinking was: "I don't want to bother people around me. I just have to endure it by myself. I am miserable and ashamed to be bullied." So I did not consult anyone.

One day, my mother said to me: "Are some of your friends doing something you don't like at school? Don't

hide it, tell me the truth." I tearfully confided everything that had happened to me. When my mother heard this, she also cried and said, "I'm sorry I didn't notice."


Some days later, I consulted the teacher in charge of my school club. The next day, those who had bullied me were called in for a discussion. One of them denied the fact in tears, and the teacher believed that. I despaired.

Then I had trust issues and was unable to attend school. However, my parents supported me when I was thinking about committing suicide every day, and they helped me recover to this point. I am still grateful to them.

Bullying is a violation of human rights and a crime. I wonder why the perpetrators are not punished. It is the traumatized victims who should be protected.

Many people are still being bullied today. Bullying will never be eliminated, but it can be prevented.

My point is this: if there is one person who can be relied on, one life can be saved. I strongly hope that, in the future, more people will have the courage and hope to move forward by having someone to rely on.



## Just Recognizing the Difference (Adult)

I believe it is important to "just strongly recognize" that everyone is different in order to better understand invisible differences. This is because, although we can recognize each other's differences to some extent, it is very difficult to understand each other correctly from the standpoint of the other, and unwanted misunderstandings and frictions can arise from unintentional words and actions.

I have been able to live without concealing the fact that I am a Zainichi Korean (ethnic Korean who has permanent residency status in Japan) for the past twenty-odd years. This is probably because the history and culture I learned through ethnic education from elementary school to high school, as well as the ethnic food I naturally had and the language I used at home, nurtured my identity as a Zainichi Korean. Therefore, even after graduating from high school and joining Japanese society, I have always used my real name instead of my common name and have revealed to many of my friends and colleagues that I am a Zainichi Korean.

There is a word that shocked me after I entered the workforce. It is the word "Japanese," used casually to refer to a large number of people, including myself, as a whole, or to me personally.

One day, during an internal meeting, we discussed the need to improve the technical level of our overseas

offices. At that time, my boss said, "Let us Japanese go there and give them good guidance." On another day, at a company party, a person I had just spoken to for the first time said to me, "Since you were born and raised in Japan and can speak Japanese so fluently, you are no different from a Japanese person."

I could sense that they did not mean to reject me or imply something else. However, I felt as if my existence had been somewhat denied, and all sorts of questions started to arise in my head.

(How should I react if they really think I am Japanese? How can they say such a thing without knowing the feelings that I have lived with so far? In the first place, what do they look for in a person to determine his or her nationality?)

For me, the very act of using my real name is proof and pride of having lived as a Zainichi Korean. Actually, however, such a thing is not really perceived by people around me. I thought that how I looked, how I spoke, and how I acted left a strong impression on them about me.

We naturally have invisible differences in identity and values. It will be very difficult to understand them correctly. So, I believe that if we can strongly recognize just that "everyone is different," instead of approaching others without much thought, we will be able to naturally see the differences.

## The Human Rights Promotion Division of the Sakai City Government lends out DVDs and videos on human rights for free.

A list of available  
DVDs/videos:

堺市人権啓発DVD・ビデオソフトの貸出

Search



Inquiries: **TEL 072-228-7420** **FAX 072-228-8070**

DVD: Human rights amid  
the Covid-19 crisis

Approx. 26 min.

*Watashitachi Hitorihitori ga Dekirukoto: Tojisha Ishiki wo Motte Kangaeru Korona Sabetsu* (What each of us can do: Covid-19 discrimination with a view to the parties involved)

This drama-style human rights awareness material allows viewers to learn about the characteristics of discrimination related to Covid-19, why discrimination and prejudice occur, and how we can address them.

DVD: Information ethics

Approx. 21 min.

*Minna no Joho Moraru III: Animeshon de Manabu SNS ni Hisomu Risuku* (Information ethics for everyone III: Learn by animation about the potential risks of social media)

This video material on information ethics, showing the potential risks of social media, enables viewers to see the problems through a drama and obtain knowledge and attitudes for safe and secure use through easy-to-understand explanations.

\* Volume VI on the impact and responsibility for information dissemination is also available.

## Sustainable Development Goals



The motto of the SDGs is “Leave no one behind.”

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The SDGs are intended to achieve a better future for the world by finding solutions to various global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, disparity, climate change, depletion of resources and destruction of nature, in a 15-year period from 2016 to 2030.

The Sakai City Human Rights Education Promotion Council (HREPC) has been working to increase public awareness of the SDGs by producing SDGs panels and stickers. The HREPC is committed to working toward the SDGs in partnership with Sakai City and other organizations by expanding human rights education and conducting awareness-raising activities.

Sakai City was designated as an SDGs Future City in June 2018 by the Japanese government and has since been working toward the SDGs based on the Sakai City SDGs Future City Plan.

Sakai City has been promoting the Safe City Sakai program to create a safe and comfortable living environment for women, children, and all other people.

The program includes support for victims of sexual violence. The city has been improving its consultation and support system to help them recover physically and mentally and conducting awareness-raising activities to eliminate social prejudice against victims of sexual crimes and promote understanding.

The city will continue its efforts to eradicate violence against women and children.



堺市 性暴力相談 Search