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New Jersey CAP seeking aid for Japan

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By Jessica Beym

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The New Jersey Child Assault Prevention Project, headquartered at the South Jersey Tech Park at Rowan University, is launching a fundraising campaign to help its partner-program that was affected by the Japanese tsunami last month.

The CAP project in Northern Japan is one of many international programs where leaders educate teachers, parents and students about how to empower children and keep them "safe, strong and free."

But up to 500 of the leaders at the Northern CAP Regional Training Center in Japan have been left homeless, along with their families, due to the devastation of the tsunami and massive earthquake.

Cheryl Mojta, director of operations at NJCAP in Mullica Hill, said the state's project is asking the community for help for the Japanese workers.

"When we heard about the earthquake, we were so upset," Mojta said. "We had been there. We met these people and they had come here. We are very connected to them mentally and emotionally because our work is the same work and that is the work to prevent child abuse and neglect."

Many of the specialists with the Japanese CAP program have been put into shelters and have lost their homes and belongings, Mojta said.

"They have lost so much," she said. "We want to be there for them and we want to know if anyone wants to share in helping these projects."

Mojta said the work to empower children and prevent assault and bullying is just as crucial in Japan as it is in the United States. "If not more."

"Bullying in Japan is a major issue," she said, adding that several children have committed suicide in Japan due to bullying or pressure to perform academically. "The CAP program helps kids realize they don't have to be something they're not and they can be proud of who they are."

Many of the instructors with the CAP program in Japan aren't paid much and "have made personal sacrifices to make their country a better place for people to live," Mojta said.

Mojta said donations to the Japanese CAP program can be made by sending checks payable to ICAP/EIRC to the NJ CAP facility, 107 Gilbreth Parkway, Suite 200, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062. More information can be found at www.internationalcap.org