

April 13, 2012

Sompo Japan Insurance Inc.

## Sompo Japan's volunteer organization held Puppet Show to relief the affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

Partnering with the NPO Aichi Puppetry Center, Sompo Japan Insurance Inc. (President and CEO: Kengo Sakurada; hereinafter, "Sompo Japan") held Puppet Show in Unosumai-cho, Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture on Tuesday, March 20 (public holiday) that drew an audience of approximately 80 people, mainly children and the elderly.

On this day, Puppet Show, including "The Japanese traditional story Princess Kaguya," were performed, and handmade gifts and message cards made by Sompo Japan employee volunteers from all over Japan were distributed.

**[Date]** Tuesday, March 20, 2012 (Public Holiday)

**[Place]** Morning Osanai Hall (Unosumai-cho, Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture)

Afternoon Goyoryo Day Service Center, Aikeikai Social Welfare Corporation (Same as above)

### **[Background]**

Sompo Japan inquired the local government, NPOs, and others in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture and found that the needs for psychological care were particularly high for people living in temporary accommodation facilities. Sompo Japan owns Himawari Hall, a theater which is devoted exclusively to puppetry in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, and has been conducting community outreach activities through puppetry jointly with the Aichi Puppetry Center, the organization that operates this theater. In light of past experience with puppetry bringing joy to the areas affected by the Great Hanshin Earthquake, it was decided that Puppet Show would be held for those living in temporary accommodation facilities in Kamaishi City.

### **[Description of Activities]**

Hoping to bring back smiles to those in the earthquake-affected areas through puppetry, Sompo Japan formed the "Sompo Japan's Smiles Delivering Troupe!" consisting mainly of the company's employees. In partnership with the Aichi Puppetry Center and the puppetry group based in Himawari Hall – the "Yumemi Trunk"\*, Sompo Japan organized Puppet Show in Unosumai-cho, Kamaishi City, where approximately 80 people enjoyed the puppetry productions performed by professional puppeteers.

Handmade gifts and message cards made by Sompo Japan employee volunteers from all over Japan were also distributed at the performances.



Handmade gift



Message card



The morning performance was held as part of an event which targeted young children and their parents and guardians, hosted by the Unosumai District Livelihood Support Center in Kamaishi City. Approximately 60 people, including approximately 30 children and their parents and guardians, attended the performance.

The afternoon performance was held at a senior citizens' facility in Unosumai-cho, and approximately 15 people were in attendance.

Reviews from the viewers included: "I was able to see my grandchild smiling for the first time since the earthquake disaster" and "I was moved to see a professional puppetry performance for the first time in my life." The puppetry production with love and laughter seemed to have brought comfort to the people at the venue and was an opportunity for audiences to relieve their tensions.

Sompo Japan will continue to extend continuous support that matches the needs of the affected areas.

#### \*About Yumemi Trunk

Yumemi Trunk is a puppetry unit founded in 2008 by Satoko Yumidate and Hiroyuki Kuwahara. Based at the Sompo Japan Himawari Hall in the Sompo Japan Nagoya Building, the unit holds activities across Japan at kindergartens, nursery schools, elementary schools, halls, festivals and more.

The unit performed two productions for this event – "Princess Kaguya," staged by Noriyuki Sawa, an international puppetry writer based in Prague, and "The Story of a Goat," co-produced by painter Emi Hiramatsu and Yumemi Trunk. These stories with love and laughter were brought to life by colorful sets and unique puppets.

(END)