

community

Kids dance for the sake of charity

Natsuko Fukui
STAFF WRITER

Visitors going into Tokyo Church of Christ in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo, on a Friday afternoon in July were welcomed by three children with painted faces who proceeded to perform modern dance.

They were performing as part of a charity event organized by Dancing 4 Kids, a fundraising organization recently established in Tokyo.

Dancing 4 Kids, originally named Dancing 4 Kids Orphans founded by world renowned ballet dancer Lynne Charles in 2007, organizes cultural shows and tries to spread awareness about children in need.

They collect money by selling event tickets and goods from sponsors, and donate the proceeds to Two Sisters Organization, an orphanage in South Africa, and Living Dreams Japan, which supports orphans here.

"We're one of many charity organizers," said Christa Theodorakakos, managing director of the organization. "But apart from raising funds and helping orphans, we also try to promote culture, dance and art."

Theodorakakos moved from London to Tokyo about nine years ago. She was a management consultant for General Electric in London, but she said she loves organizing D4K events and hopes to continue doing charitable work.

She said she became a director in 2008 after meeting ballet dancer Charles. "It just happened to meet her (through friends), and I became interested in what she was doing, and decided to create a group to make the activities more formal than before."

A dance performance by children from the private Mendezing Performing and Visual Arts Studio in Minato Ward offering dance lessons was followed by an autumn collection fashion show sponsored by United Colors of Benetton.

Children who belong to Avex Dance Master Human Studio, an affiliate of one of the biggest entertainment groups in Japan, paraded in new autumn outfits like a real fashion show.

Benetton has been a sponsor of D4K, which said the company donated T-shirts for children in the Two Sisters orphanage in South Africa in 2008.

Another group that participated in the D4K event was Baby Loves Disco, which organizes monthly dance parties for kids and their parents. Nanae and Marina Kinno, founders of the group in Tokyo, and three other pairs of member sisters gathered on stage. Nanae said they joined the event because of the theme "Two Sisters."

"We hope proceeds from this event will be used for Two Sisters," she said.

Then she asked the visitors, mostly mothers and their children, to stand up for an easy dance exercise.

To the tune of the Bee Gees' "Night Fever," Kinno and her members showed easy movement, pointing one finger up and to the right and then down and to the left, and circling their fists in front of their chests.

Some children and a few fathers looked a little embarrassed following the movements, but many mothers seemed to be happy to try the dance and encouraged their kids to dance together. "We introduce children to this dance that both kids and parents can enjoy at our monthly club event," said Kinno.

The next performance was hip hop and club jazz style dances by child members from the dance studio Avex. Although some were shy when posing like a model during the Benetton show, they showed confidence in the dance performance.

Some of their high skill level, a participant who only gave her last name, said, "I was so overwhelmed by the kids' powerful performance." The mother

of the 10-year-old daughter to be the event for the first time.

"I heard about it from Christa," she said, adding to her friend by her family. "I saw a lot of photos of the past events at her home, and I decided to take my child to today's event."



Dancing for charity: Children from Baby Loves Disco (right photo) dance to the tune of "Night Fever" during a Dancing 4 Kids event in July at Tokyo Church of Christ in Shibuya Ward. Kid members of Avex Dance Master Human Academy (top left photo) show a professional dance performance, while Dancing 4 Kids director Christa Theodorakakos (second from left, bottom left photo) and other organizers pose for a photo as they hold fund-raising boxes. YOSHIOKI MIURA

Sato said she is happy the ticket fees and money she spends on buying goods from the sponsors will go to children in South Africa. "And the event itself is really enjoyable," she said.

Jacinta Plucinski, who moved to Tokyo from Singapore about eight months ago,

also joined the event for the first time after hearing about it through a friend. "It's interesting to see kids having so much fun," said Plucinski, a Web industry worker originally from Australia. "I'm really enjoying this." She said she would like to support this kind of event when she can.



Theodorakakos' next goal is to organize an event overseas. "Lots of our members live abroad. We try to do events in other parts of the world," she said, adding they have had a D4K photo exhibition in the U.S. and Japan.

"We also plan to bring artists from

South Africa to Japan to exchange culture," she said.

The next D4K event will be held Oct. 17. Contact chriss@cocca.co.jp for further information.

What's Up

E-mail event and party listings. chris@times.com or communityclassifieds@times.com for more info. **Reserving tables online.** www.reservations.jp

The things are for now. 17000 yen (including shipping) and more. **The things are for now.** 17000 yen (including shipping) and more. **The things are for now.** 17000 yen (including shipping) and more.

CHARITY

Creative writing workshops (www.writingworkshops.net) for novice writers or writers who are blocked or want to sophisticate their writing voice on Sun, Sept. 13, and Sun, Oct. 18, 6-8 p.m. **Nonna's home in Zushi** (need ship after Komakura), Kanagawa Pref. Time: 10 a.m.-8 p.m. **Cost:** ¥15,000 (including lunch and snacks). Mail info@writingworkshops.net or call (045) 872-5523. Six **workshops** in total.

Japan Writers Conference Plans are now under way. **Cost:** ¥20,000 (including travel). **Dates:** Oct. 17 and Sun, Oct. 18 in Tokyo. **Japan Women's Invention Camp** of Daitoshi Women's College. There will be over 30 lectures, readings,

readings and/or oral and book presentations. **Prize reservation is required.** **International Personal Computer Club** meets at noon on the third Saturday (Sept. 16) of the month in Hibino, Nagoya. Call (07) 9152-2662 or www.ipcc.org for further details. **Kobunshi Toastmasters Club**, an international English language public speaking club, meets at 7 p.m. in monthly meetings, which are members-only. **E-mail:** ast@kobunshi.com, www.kobunshi.com. **Outdoor Club Japan** is a leading outdoor and Japanese club for nature lovers. **Cost:** ¥1000 (including admission to all Tokyo climbing, camping, canoeing sites). **Web:** www.outdoorclub.jp.

Full Friends International Hiking Club welcomes

classes, exchanges between members and evening monthly programs. For more information and membership details, please see www.fox.org.

EDUCATION

We make English come alive! The World Rainbow Cross Cultural Institute, located in Akaishi, Kanagawa, presents an exciting new arts program combining drama and English instruction. With the creation of our brand new drama website, **www.wrci.com**, we are now able to provide children and adults the opportunity to learn English by participating in dynamic, theater-based lessons and workshops. **The NISSA Summer Showcase** on Sun, Aug. 23 will offer a great opportunity for all students of drama to learn more about

Chinese-Japanese translation skills. For learners who plan to work in Hong Kong, Singapore or China, all levels. Free trial. Call N. Fung on (001) 8323-2356. **Akasaki Nihongo Club** offers a new class for beginners in Tokyo. The class is taught by a volunteer Japanese teacher. **Cost:** ¥1000 (including materials). **Address:** 1-10-1300 a.m. Vester Akasaki Fukushi-Kohden, near Exit 6 of Akasaka Station (Chiyoda subway line). **AHC** will also have a lesson "Next day meeting." For details, call (03) 9401-8278. **University teachers** uncertain time at work? **Address:** 1-10-1300 a.m. Vester Akasaki Fukushi-Kohden, near Exit 6 of Akasaka Station (Chiyoda subway line). **AHC** will also have a lesson "Next day meeting." For details, call (03) 9401-8278. **University teachers** uncertain time at work? **Address:** 1-10-1300 a.m. Vester Akasaki Fukushi-Kohden, near Exit 6 of Akasaka Station (Chiyoda subway line). **AHC** will also have a lesson "Next day meeting." For details, call (03) 9401-8278.

and swimming nearby. Fifteen percent discount of Tanga Natural Foods. If you would like to showcase your organization's website creation, please contact us at info@alphan.jp. There is no space charge. For details, see www.alphan.jp. **Alphan support-center.com** or call (042) 952-4823. **CityNet Yokohama Congress 2009** From Mon, Sept. 7 to Fri, Sept. 11, various times at Pacific Yokohama to include walk from Minato Mirai 21. **Cost:** ¥1000 (including materials and meal). **Address:** 1-10-1300 a.m. Vester Akasaki Fukushi-Kohden, near Exit 6 of Akasaka Station (Chiyoda subway line). **AHC** will also have a lesson "Next day meeting." For details, call (03) 9401-8278. **University teachers** uncertain time at work? **Address:** 1-10-1300 a.m. Vester Akasaki Fukushi-Kohden, near Exit 6 of Akasaka Station (Chiyoda subway line). **AHC** will also have a lesson "Next day meeting." For details, call (03) 9401-8278.