

公益財団法人 松園尚己記念財団

東京 2020 オリンピック・パラリンピック大会ボランティア活動支援事業 参加者レポート

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As the Olympics started in the Mediterranean country of Greece, my story of the Olympics also was linked to a Mediterranean country, Spain. I was living in Spain, my home country when I heard in 2013 in the news that Japan will host the Olympic games. I remember very clear this moment in front of the TV, and I also remember my feelings, I was determined to be part of and help Japan as a volunteer. At that moment, I thought that probably I would manage to come from Spain, to accomplish the volunteer activity. However, what I couldn't imagine at that moment is that in 2017 I would come to Japan to study and live. Then, my dream to help Japan as a volunteer was becoming easier and more feasible. As soon as I knew that the application for a volunteer was open, I didn't hesitate and apply to be Tokyo 2020 volunteer.

From that moment I was mentally prepared for the Olympics games, I wanted to learn how to be a good volunteer and succeed in my duty. However, as a student, my main worry was how I will pay the cost of transportation and accommodation to complete my volunteer activity. However, your Foundation eliminates this worry for my mind and I could focus on improving myself as a volunteer without any financial worries. I am very grateful for your kindness and before to start describing my activities, I would like to thank you for all the effort that you did to help Nagasaki volunteers.

Before I started the activities in Olympics I had a lot to learn and I need to improve my skills as volunteers. For that reason, I attended to an orientation and training in Fukuoka. On the 27th of July of 2019, I went for face-to-face orientation in Fukuoka City Hall. The venue was full of thousands of volunteers and we could already start feeling the Olympic atmosphere. Like all the volunteers in the hall, I was very excited to be part of this worldwide event. On the 26th of January of 2020, I attended the Field Cast Training in Fukuoka and little by little I was increasing my knowledge about the task and values of a good volunteer, how to help people with different disabilities, and the best way for teamwork. The excitement of all of us was increasing and our faces were smiling all the time of the Training. None of us could imagine that months after a pandemic would start, our smiles would be cover with masks, the reality that surrounds us would change and it will put at risk the Olympic games.

At the moment that the Olympic Games were postponed, I had mixed feelings. On one hand, I knew that in the context of an emergent pandemic it was the wiser decision and I feel relieved and save for the decision from the Olympic committee of postponing the games. On the other hand, I feel sad because the situation was very uncertain in that days and it could be the possibility that the games would not be held also in 2021. Also, I could see during my Orientation and Training all the effort and excitement that Japan put in the Olympic

games and I felt pity for all the people that were working so hard and for the athletes from all around the world.

Almost one year after, the Olympic committee and Japan announced that the Olympics games would have place in the summer of 2021. At that moment, I have started receiving messages from the Olympics asking about my willingness to participate. In my case, I trusted in Japan and the Olympic committee and I knew that if they decided to not cancel the games it was because they were able to provide secure games. I put my faith in their decision and I accepted my role and venue.

I was assigned to do my volunteer in the Ariake Urban Sports Part, Cycling-BMX Racing area as part of the Athlete Service Team Member. My role was supporting competition operation at a competition venue or a training venue and more specifically to support Athletes, team area organizes, drink food service, ice cube service, accommodation information. My volunteer activities were on the 22nd of July, 23rd of July, and 27th of July. The training session of the athletes started on the 25th of July, then my first two days my team was in charge of preparing the resting rooms and competition fields before the Athletes arrive. We were transporting the equipment need it and making sure that everything would be ready. Even I was not in contact with Athletes these two days, these days, the experience was very interesting for me. I could see and understand the preparation, work, and how big the amount of personnel is in the “backstage” of an event like the Olympic games. The 27th was a different type of work. The athletes from all around the world arrived in the venue to train. The training session of the Athletes started at 13.30 until 17.00. For that reason, in the morning we were organizing the drinks and ice cubes service for them. In the afternoon, when the athletes started to arrive, we were helping them to allocate their bicycles, redirecting them to the accommodation, providing the venue information, and in some cases resolving minor problems that they had. I also had the opportunity to help the Peruvian team. They lose personal belonging during transportation from the Olympic village, and because they couldn't talk in English, I was helping them in Spanish.

As I expected, the Olympic games were conducted with very secure and protective measures for COVID-19. All the volunteers went through saliva-PCR every morning before starting the activities and we worked all the time with masks, keeping social distance, and keeping high hygienical conditions during all our activity days. This was an additional effort that I have appreciated because I didn't need to worry about the risk of infection and all the conditions were conducted safely. Furthermore, I feel very grateful to my teammates. All of them during the 3 days were cooperative and hard workers. If I have to remark a negative aspect would be the hot weather. It was really hot these days in Tokyo and even we were rehydrating and using a hat, it was really hard to work outdoors long hours with our masks on. Even though, all of us finished the volunteer work with a smile and a kind “otsukaresamadeshita”. The picture down was taken after my last day near the entrance of the Olympic venue.



The day after my activity I came back to Nagasaki after completing one of the best experiences of my life. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to be part of a historical event as the Olympics games. In addition, these games would be always remembered for the special conditions of the pandemic. In the field, we could notice the absence of public and lack of warm atmosphere. However, seeing the big effort of the Athletes, my volunteers' mates, Japan, and the Olympic committee made me feel proud to contribute to making it possible. The Olympic games have the power to unite people from all around the world and make our differences invisible. Even these games couldn't count on the presence and warmness of the spectators, all of us worked together to send hope, union, and passion to illuminate the people's faces through their home TV screens.

Lastly, through this experience, I could learn more about myself. Before coming to Japan, I use to work as a medical doctor, and I enjoyed working in the service of the community. This volunteer reminded me how much I love service work and how happy makes me feel to help others. To finalize, I would like to point out that I had the opportunity to work with wonderful people from very different backgrounds, nationalities, and life experiences what was very enriching for me. Personally, I feel I received more than I gave and I just can say: Thank you very much Tokyo 2020!