

## Yusuhara a Home from Home: 2. Ryoma Dappan Marathon

**Stephen Woodard**

Uncertainty clouded the upcoming marathon. Scheduled on the weekend of a large powerful typhoon, the fate of the event was at the mercy of Mother Nature. As a result for the town the impending devastation was averted bringing with it, in its absence, a wonderful beautiful day perfect for a spot of running. While the typhoon's path altered away from Kochi it unfortunately still hit east Japan and we do not currently know the full impact. I am truly heartbroken for all of those who were effected and my thoughts are with the victims. This was a horrible disaster that will not be forgotten.

This was my first time volunteering for such an event, in the past I have been simply a spectator and what an event to start with. Together with a selection of students and teachers from the junior high school we cheered and encouraged the participants to do their best offering moments to boost morale. I was positioned at the start/finish line, somewhere where I could see the most action of the day. The ones who passed the finish line were truly inspiring, each individual person had a unique reason for participating.

Some wanted to push themselves to their maximum, some wanted to beat their personal best time while others just wanted to have some fun all of which you could see on their faces.

While this was a great event to experience it wasn't all standing around watching, along with the students I helped out at the finish line handing out medals and drinks to those who finished and assisting with any immediate medical help. I was unable to take part in the marathon, however, a few teachers and members of staff from the school participated and it was so exciting seeing them pass the finish line and share in their joy at achieving it their goals. Perhaps next year I may be able to join!



**The starting line of the marathon. Now a tough journey starts!**