

Kesen Boke Ichiza



LET'S PROMOTE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF DEMENTIA

“Has she got dementia?” “What shall we do?” “What is dementia?”

Dementia has become a far-reaching issue in our rapidly ageing society. **Kesen Boke Ichiza** is a theatre group formed in 1994 under the initiative of the staff of the Kesen Day Service Centre, a dementia-specific day care centre located in the City of Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture in Japan. The group was joined by a variety of volunteers including local home helpers, traditional folk singers, English conversation teachers and so forth, who were keen to promote a better understanding of dementia. Based in the City of Ofunato, we have so far put on 184 performances both in and out of Iwate Prefecture, and a total of 70,000 have come to see our performances.



Our aim is to go out into the community and promote a better understanding of dementia and its related issues through comical sketches. Such visual means, we believe, are far more effective than any lectures in helping the community be more aware of various issues related to dementia. Our motto “Let’s promote a better understanding of dementia!” represents the three appeals we would like to make to the community. The first is to remove prejudice against dementia by promoting the idea that, when we relate to them well, elderly people with dementia are not much different from other elderly people except that they have slightly unusual personalities. The second is to bring them out into the community because there are limits to the care that their own family alone can provide. And the third is to encourage people to consider dementia as their own issue. The whole community will come to grips with the issue of dementia when everyone seriously considers what it would be like if they themselves or their relatives have dementia



All our plays are written mainly in our local Kisen dialect and we make all props -- both big and small -- by ourselves. Our plays are based on the materials from what we call the “good stuff” notebook in which we keep our elderly people’s real speech and behaviour we have observed or interesting stories we have heard about them from their families. As every play is based on a real case, we frequently ad-lib our lines during the play so long as we are careful not to miss punch lines.

The general perception that “dementia is a real tribulation” will be completely dispelled if people have a good understanding of the characteristics of dementia and ways to deal with them. If you accept slightly unusual speech and behaviour of people with dementia as part of their personalities, you will realize what pure, gentle and loveable individuals they are. You will also see, through our sketches, that the elderly with dementia are able to live and lead an ordinary life with us in the community.

Differences in Forgetfulness

“Our mother is getting really forgetful these days. She made a big fuss again today over her missing purse. Is it possible that she has ... Dementia?”



~~Dementia begins with forgetfulness, but there are huge differences between forgetfulness due to advancing age and that due to dementia. We will show plainly the differences between the two.~~

Battle over meals



“Is the lunch ready yet?” “You’ve just had it!” Our mother asks the same question over and over again. Is she really hungry? What should we do about it?”

We will show how to respond to repeated requests for meals by people with dementia and ideas to get them involved in meaningful activities.

Mental longevity

Mental longevity – the time that you can still be yourself. If you are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, what would happen to your job, your family and your own self that you have been building all your life?



~~What would you do if you suddenly find yourself in that situation? Let’s think about it together.~~

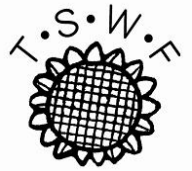


Kesen Boke Ichiza goes and performs anywhere upon request. There are currently about 20 members in the group and they are inter-generational; they range in age from the 20s to the 60s, but what has been consistent since the inception of the group is the shared belief that “if you accept the uniqueness of people with dementia, you know how loveable they are”.

We look forward to your requests for our performances.

Kesen Boke Inchiza

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