

sponsored by  and the **Japanese Students of Gilbert Public Schools**

The “Send Love to Rinka” Project

Please help us support orphaned Rinka and honor the memory of the Hirayama family.

Rinka’s Story

A fatal crash occurred around 10 p.m. Friday, March 28th, north of Flagstaff, Arizona. The driver of a pickup truck, fleeing police at speeds exceeding 100 mph, crossed the center line and struck a van head-on. In this van was a Japanese family, the Hirayamas of Vernon Hills, Illinois. They had traveled to the Southwest on a spring break excursion to see the Grand Canyon.

Father Tomohiro Hirayama (50), mother Sachiyo (42), and son Yuki (16) were all pronounced dead at the scene. The 9-year-old daughter of the Hirayama family, Rinka, was the only survivor of the crash. She was rushed to Phoenix Children’s Hospital in critical condition and has since recovered enough to be released to the care of her elderly grandparents who traveled from Japan to be with her.

The Hirayama family is best remembered for embracing life in the United States. They took every opportunity to explore their surroundings and travel the country. However, young Rinka has no remaining family outside of Japan. She will most likely return to live with her grandparents, leaving behind her Illinois home, school, and friends.

You Can Help

The students of Japanese in the Gilbert Public School District, allied with the Japan Business Association of Arizona, have started a fund to support Rinka Hirayama on her long road to healing. All donations are greatly appreciated. Please write checks to “JBAA” with “Rinka’s Fund” on the memo line, and send to:

**JBAA
Rinka’s Fund
PMB 230,
10869 N. Scottsdale Rd. #103
Scottsdale, AZ 85254**



Alternatively, you can drop off donations or get-well wishes (cards and flat post only, please) in room #1604 at Gilbert High School, or send them to:



**Ms. Mutsumi Hazen
c/o Gilbert High School
1101 E. Elliot Rd.
Gilbert, AZ 85234**