

sponsored by **GHS Japan Club** and **Asian Culture Club**

## *Third-Grader Orphaned*

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

### **~ Rinka's Story ~**

A fatal crash occurred around 10 p.m. Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, north of Flagstaff. 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.

Three of the four Hirayama family members died at the scene. The father Tomohiro Hirayama (50), mother Sachiyo Hirayama (42), and son Yuki Hirayama (16). The 9-year-old daughter of the family, Rinka, was the only survivor of the crash. She was taken to the 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.

### **Car Wash and Bake Sale**

**When:** Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>

8:00am – 12:00pm

**Where:** Walgreens on Val Vista and Warner  
Near Denny's



***Come to Send Love to Rinka, leave with a clean car and a tasty treat!***

Please help! Donations are accepted in room #1604 at Gilbert High School.