

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP TALKING PEACE

Sadako Sasaki and 1,000 paper cranes

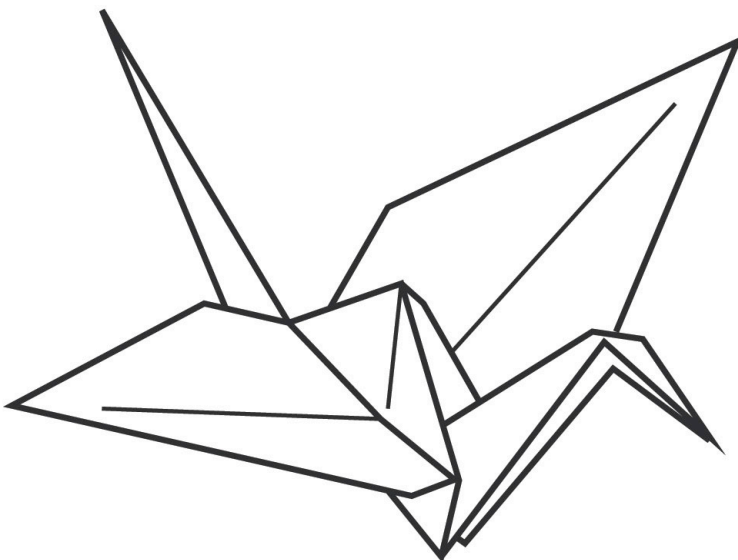


Sadako Sasaki was a young girl who loved life. She lived in Hiroshima in Japan. She was happy, she had a lovely family and loved being part of the running team at school with all her school friends. Sadly Sadako died when she was just 12 years old but, still today, 56 years later she is remembered all over the world.

Sadako was just 2 when the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima but she could remember the brilliant white flash and having to run with her mother and brother to get away from the fires and falling buildings. Nearly the whole city was destroyed in seconds and 140,000 died from that one single bomb but Sadako her family managed to escape and felt very lucky.

As she grew up she became strong and athletic. She was the fastest runner in her school, but one day while running she felt very weak and collapsed. Her parents were worried and took her to the doctor who had lots of tests done. When the results came back it was bad news and Sadako and her family were shocked to find that she had a type of Leukemia. It was 10 years since the bomb had dropped but the specific kind of radiation from the nuclear bomb had caused the illness to develop.

Sadako became very ill and had to go to hospital. Her friends came to visit her often and one day her friend Chizuko brought her a present of a paper crane. Chisuko told her of an old Japanese legend about the cranes, that if you make a 1,000 paper cranes then your wish will come true.



Sadako decided that if she could make a thousand cranes maybe her wish to live would come true.

She was happy and worked hard using every bit of paper she could find, even the paper wrappers from her medicine, and soon her room was full of beautiful bright cranes.



However as Sadako became more ill, she tired easily and making the cranes was hard. She managed to make 644 before she became too ill and with all her family beside her she lay still. As her breathing slowed Sadako closed her eyes and dreamt of happy times with her baby brother out under the cherry blossom and of her beautiful paper cranes. Gradually her breathing slowed and stopped.

All her friends were shocked and upset when Sadako died and decided they wanted to do something to remember her. Between them they finished making the thousand cranes for Sadako. Then they got together with the teachers at Sadako's old school and set out to raise enough money to build a statue to Sadako and to all the other children who had died because of the bomb.

Soon school children from all over Japan sent donations and a beautiful memorial statue of Sadako now stands in the Peace Park in Hiroshima. Many thousand of people visit the statue every year to remember her and to read the 'Children's Wish' on the statue.



This is our cry
This is our prayer
To create peace in the world

Sadako is an inspiration to people the world over for her courage, for her love of life and as a symbol of peace. She will never be forgotten.