

Nation



Yomiuri Shimbun photos

Ogikubo Kazoku Residence, with its distinctive near futuristic design in Suginami Ward, Tokyo

Gathering spots build warm community ties

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The cheerful voices of children and adults can be heard from "Komajii no Uchi," an old, empty, private house used as a place for people in the community to interact. At the request of local people in the Honkomagome district in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, the owner of the house offered it to the community, and the house was converted into an activity center that opened in October 2013.

Classes such as go, mah-jongg, cooking and beadwork are occasionally held, and about 4,000 people, including families and elderly people nearly 100 years old, annually use the house.

"This is a wonderful place for the community," said Hiroko Ito, 37, who visited the house with her daughter.

Ogikubo Kazoku Residence in Suginami Ward, Tokyo, is a residence used not only as a place to live, but also as a place for meetings and an atelier that can be used by residents in the neighborhood. It has impressive outer walls made of concrete.

Owner Masako Rurikawa, 65, constructed the building by demolishing her own house and an apartment house she had inherited, thinking she would like to "provide a residence where tenants and community members who help each other, and people in the neighborhood, can live for a long



Above: Torn paper of a shoji sliding door is proof that children gathering at Komajii no Uchi are in good spirits, in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo.

Future tenants and their neighbors gather for interior decoration work at the new residence, right.

time."

On March 8, about 20 people, including future tenants and residents in the neighborhood, gathered at the residence to paint indoors together.

Risa Matsuzaki, 30, who began living there from April, said: "Recently, few people talk to one another in the neighborhood. This residence is great because neighbors can easily get to know one another here."

Creating a place of community has breathed new life into these spaces.

