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TAKAYUKI YAMAZAWA

Equestrian centre has links to Japan

From page 1.

He eventually tracked down his friends, too. "After the first disaster I thought that this would be it, but bad things kept happening in Japan and I began to feel very uneasy, even guilty, that I was safe," he said. "Then I got an idea."

His Canadian coach, Jessica Phoenix, who is on the Canadian eventing team, had offered a one-day clinic for riders through a successful on-line auction, Horses for Japan.

"I thought that if Canadian horse people could do this and raise money, then I could do something too," he said.

Through the equestrian centre, Mr. Yamazawa is donating his fee for services as a coach and trainer to the

Canadian Red Cross.

"I know there are a lot of people who would like to help my country, Canadians, but also Japanese visiting here, like me," he said. "And it's a way that I can help my country by doing what I do best—teaching people to ride a horse."

He has painted an emblem on his saddle pad combining the Japanese and Canadian flags. Lettering on his polo shirt reads "Pray for Japan".

"We're a pretty tight team here, and I could tell Taka was worried about his homeland," said Kathy Fremes, owner-manager and coach at the centre she has run for more than 20 years.

Since 1996, the centre has hosted young people from Japan.

'HELP MY COUNTRY'

"They come to my farm to learn riding, experience living in the Canadian countryside and improve their English," she said. "Stouffville is 'Country close to the City,' so it's easy for them to get here from Toronto and they have come in droves over the years. Many have stayed in touch when they go home, and I worry about their future too."

As a certified instructor, Mr. Yamazawa has taught both dressage and jumping at the Mito Riding Club, has been a trainer at the Fuji Horse Riding Club and has acted as a guide leading horse treks through Yamato Horse Riding Park.

"He is an expert horseman and has exceptional talent with young horses and riders," says Ms Fremes, adding "he also has a wicked sense of humour and keeps us all laughing. He told me that he needs some students who speak Japanese—or even ones who want to learn it—because he is getting a little rusty. The only Japanese he's spoken since arriving in Canada is ordering takeout sushi."

For more information, e-mail Mr. Yamazawa at taka@rogers.blackberry.net, visit the farm website at www.countryhillfarm.ca or call 905-642-

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