

**Practical Training and Healing at Mt. Shikada Footpath
--Towards a Shining Tomorrow for Everyone Through the Four Seasons**

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ABSTRACT

The Mt. Shikada Footpath on the outskirts of Midori City, Gunma Prefecture, is a promenade with a rich natural environment, and is open for people of all ages for walking and observing nature throughout the four seasons. In addition to the Mt. Shikada Network that preserves this environment, students of the Prefectural Watarase Special Support School participate in local activities.

Broken wood chips are spread over the walking course; elderly walk for health maintenance, management and rehabilitation, while high school students and young people run this path to train their bodies. Neighboring kindergarten children ride in school minibuses, and enjoy the mountain path with their teachers. Also, the Special Support School students experience nature while walking the footpath with teachers and training themselves.

At Watarase Special Support School, high school students split into various groups for "Work Learning". As an example, the "Environmental Conservation Team" participates in the work of the Mt. Shikada Footpath Environmental Network, paving wood chips on the footpath, cleaning toilets once or twice a week, and looking after the flowerbeds at the footpath parking area. Rapeseed seedlings are planted by elementary, middle and high school students, and create a wonderful hilly landscape. With this kind of work experience, these students fulfil their social contribution in learning, which is firmly rooted in the region. Their efforts are appreciated.

We would like you to know the Japanese students who have grown up in the wonderful natural environment, working on the environmental protection work of the footpath, while having relationships with the local people. Here we will introduce a student activity at the Mt. Shikada Footpath, where community people live with students of Special Support School for a bright tomorrow in a natural environment for their own health maintenance and healing.

Keywords: Prefectural Watarase Special Support School, Students' social contribution, Activities at Mt. Shikada Footpath, Walk for health and rehabilitation, "Work Learning" and Environmental Conservation Team