

Tremors in Japan affect GHS grad in Shizuoka

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 31 March 2011 13:30 -



Jamie Jorgensen, husband missionaries there.

Friends were visiting Jamie (Jorgensen) O'Donnell in Shizuoka, Japan, when the 2002 Gothenburg High School graduate began to feel light headed. She was talking with a girlfriend who had arrived with her husband from Tokyo to accompany the O'Donnells to a wedding.

For a split second, she passed it off as a symptom of pregnancy.

"I was sitting in a dining room chair and started to feel like I was going to faint or fall off the chair," Jamie said.

It took her a few seconds to realize the house was slowly swaying.

"Then I realized I was feeling off-balance because we were experiencing an earthquake," she said.

Jamie and her husband Bryan O'Donnell belong to the Navigators organization, headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO, that helps people live out the Gospel as it is written in the Bible.



"They describe their calling as living as disciples among the lost," she said.

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The O'Donnells have lived and worked in Japan for three years.

During the earthquake, Jamie said the O'Donnell's two boys—Jones, 4, and Ezra, 1 years—were playing in the next room and didn't notice what was happening.

Jamie said tremors are a normal part of living in Japan.

“But this one was longer than other ones I've experienced—I maybe felt it for 45 seconds to a minute,” she said.

Because the tremors felt mild, Jamie thought the quake was small with the epicenter nearby.

Later, she and her husband Bryan were shocked to discover that the epicenter was near Sendai which is about 300 miles northwest of Shizuoka—a city of about 725,000 known for its green tea, strawberries and slow pace of life.

“I knew at that point that it was a really big earthquake,” she said.

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