



The Team '98 volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of the Olympic Games. In Nagano there were more than 32,000 of them, generously contributing their time on the competition sites, at the press and broadcast centres, and in the Athletes' Village. More than 85% of them were women, and more than half were over thirty years old. Although most came from Japan, a number of German, American, Canadian, Spanish, French and Russian volunteers made the journey to the Japanese Alps. Starting in July 1994,

Team '98 recruited, motivated and trained the candidates, who were given an opportunity to put their knowledge to work during the international competitions held in Nagano in the 1996-1997 season. The volunteers were one of the great successes of the Nagano Games. Tamayo Otomune, a volunteer at the press centre, said, "everyone has their own motivation, such as practising a foreign language or meeting people. For me it was to gain some professional experience during my studies, and to

practise French. I was also astonished to discover the incredible machinery behind the fabulous skiing images you see on television. But the most important thing was the volunteer spirit." At the age of 70, Atsuko Ota finally achieved a dream she has cherished for over thirty years: to take part in the Olympic Games. "In Tokyo in 1964, my three children were too young to stay at home on their own," she explained. "I'll never forget the experience of Nagano."



Volunteers at work