



HARUKANO HIMAWARI /

## Haruka's Sunflower Story

The story begins in January 1995, when Haruka Kato, a very kind and popular 11 year old girl, was killed in the terrible Kobe earthquake which destroyed her home. That summer, a beautiful sunflower mysteriously fought it's way throught the piles of rubble and bloomed in the vacant lot where Haruka's house had once stood. Residents took seeds from the sunflower and sowed them as symbols of memory and hope. And then seeds were collected from these sunfloweres... and so it continued with sunfloweres sprouting all over Japan and the world. Seeds were sent to USA for the 911 disaster, and to Thailand after the tsunami. And of course, Haruka's sunfloweres were planted in Tohoku after the tsunami to bring strength to the local people who suffered such tragedy and loss. The sunflower is not just an ordinary flowere in Japan anymore, it has become a symbol of hope for all.

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