

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### Inspired and Thankful

Hello! I'm an SGI member here in the Philippines and I've already heard a lot about the *World Tribune*. My first time reading the newspaper, it was very informative and inspiring and I'm so happy that through it, I can be informed of how far our organization has come. I also want to take this opportunity to express my greatest gratitude to the SGI-USA's Victory Over Violence campaign, which inspired us to form our own in support for our common goal of kosen-rufu. Here in the Philippines, particularly the youth division members of Davao City Chapter, we started our activity on March 18 and it's already a monthly meeting. We call this version "Humanity Quest."

The meeting was developed, with the help of our senior leaders and the whole of the young women's and young men's team, where everyone counts. To the SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee, congratulations!!!

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Thank you for a wonderful article in the May 26 *World Tribune* (p. 11) with Mr. Marc Kielburger, the young gentleman who has the foresight to create his dreams.

Please send our congratulations to Marc and his "Free the Children" international organization.

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### Regarding Breast Cancer Experience

Kay Rynerson's words (May 12 *World Tribune*) upon discovering that she had cancer closely paralleled my own thoughts when diagnosed in April with carcinoma of the colon. (Like Kay, I am a vegetarian, a walker, an exerciser and one who is committed to good health.) I moved quickly from anger to self-pity to determination to fight this battle and emerge victorious with a more profound appreciation of life, of all aspects of my practice, and of my beloved ones.

Surgery was scheduled for May 8 and I made the determination to recover from this major operation and leave the hospital in a week. When my significant other brought me the *World Tribune* of May 12 and I read Kay's "Savoring the Present Moment," my determination was strengthened. I shared the article with visiting friends who had cancer and also thought about it during the seven endless nights. These difficult evenings also gave me the opportunity to come as close as I could to understand the meaning of the Mystic Law.

I later recalled Nichiren Daishonin's statement, "Believe in this mandala [the Gohonzon] with all your heart. Nam- myoho-enge-kyo is like the roar of a lion. What sickness can therefore be an obstacle?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412).

I believe that with the removal of the malignancy, and upcoming chemotherapy, together with active faith, practice and study, I will experience the chance to cleanse my body,

renew my commitments, and live my beliefs and passions. I intend to treasure every moment; I already see each day as a lifetime. Kay Rynerson's encouragement was a wonderful start.

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## About Depression

I read the debate over the use of psychotropic and antidepressant drugs with great interest. In our society, "mental illness" is a highly charged topic muddled in stigma and shame. I believe that not one of us can say whether a person should take any medication or not. Do we question a post-menopausal woman who chooses to utilize hormone replacement therapy? Do we question a man who takes medication for blood pressure, or undergoes chemotherapy? Certainly not, nor would we.

If a person is sick with physical or mental illness, then he or she can chant to the Gohonzon to get better, and to find the best doctor to help them in that process. Their decision to take any medication or not is a highly personal one: it should be made with a qualified, caring physician and involve their own wisdom, medical research, and clinical trials.

We can achieve enlightenment and absolute happiness from our strong dedication to faith, practice, and study—we all need the Gohonzon to do this. We need to encourage people to seek the Gohonzon ever more in their lives—not intervene in their decision to take medication or not.

If someone is in danger of hurting him-/herself or others, then I believe intervention is necessary in order to protect human life. We should not burden suffering individuals with further shame by telling them that they are wrong, or their faith is shallow, to "use" pharmaceutical assistance under a physician's care. Please, let's be very careful not to judge others' lives. Let's help them find the answer that is right for them, based on their strong faith in the Gohonzon, their study of the Gosho and President Ikeda's writings. Let's honor the decisions they make as Bodhisattvas of the Earth, and support them in their struggle to become happy and healthy.

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