

To: Japanese Students and those involved in the Miura Educational Foundation

12 April 2021

Dear Students,

I would like to send you all a message from Canada regarding the troubling times we are all experiencing with the COVID-19 global pandemic and to provide you some insight into how Canada is handling these crises.

Due to the global pandemic, most Canadian provinces are currently shut down and only allow for essential services and institutions to operate such as food suppliers, hospitals, and manufacturers to keep our economy running.

The current shutdown is a declaration of emergency and province wide "**stay-at-home order**" that is put into place to save lives and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. The shutdown in our province will continue for at least one more month from the time I am writing this, in hopes to allow for more time to vaccinate citizens and to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

We are experiencing many challenges daily and are faced with constantly changing health policies and government restrictions that are put into place to help keep the people of our country safe from infection. To get ahead of this global pandemic, It is important for us to understand and adapt to any new health guidelines and government restrictions.

In Canada, we are beginning to see some changes and hope, as vaccines are becoming available. As many Canadians in the next four weeks should be receiving their first shot of a two-dose vaccine to protect us from COVID-19. We are also hearing that students and teachers in Canada are about to receive their first dose of the vaccine. This should help in reducing the spread of the virus from the younger generation.

For the past year, many Canadian students have been studying online from home, instead of from inside a classroom. I am sure that this has become a new challenge for all students. I was exceptionally happy to hear that Miura Educational Foundation has implemented a program to assist students by offering additional scholarship for mobile preparation.

I am sure that students in Japan are experiencing similar problems that we face here in Canada. and things that we take for granted in normal life such as visiting family and friends have become difficult with today's circumstances.

From my personal experience, I have adapted and overcome many of today's situations by using other ways to communicate with resources like WhatsApp, FaceTime, Facebook, and other media technologies. In today's world, we are surrounded by outstanding technology, as

thirty years ago much of this was not available. Can you just imagine how blessed we are to be living in these difficult times with today's technology versus just a few years ago?

In Canada, many individuals from all around the world live in our country. The mix of nationalities is one of the greatest and most interesting concepts of Canadian culture. For the students that are selected through the Miura Educational Foundation to visit Canada, I am sure this itself opens many conversations when they return to Japan after their visit. Many students also come to Canada to study and return to their country years later. I am sure when they return, they all have many wonderful experiences to share.

As we struggle through this global pandemic, I am sure many of you have found it stressful and upsetting as a student, trying to finish University, and worrying about going out to the world to find a position in the workplace. Although today's world with COVID-19 may be challenging at times, it is important to sit back and recognize the many opportunities that have become available because of this pandemic.

In my life, I have a saying "*When one door closes, for the deep thinker another opportunity opens up.*"

Many people in their lives have experienced difficult times, some more than others. By following a few simple thoughts which I have worked through in my life, I am sure this may become encouraging for many of you students as you prepare for a new life after this global pandemic.

- 1- *The way to get things done is to begin.*
- 2- *To aim at a target is not enough – You must hit the target if you want to be successful.*
- 3- *The greatest discovery of any generation, is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their **attitudes of mind**. (So, keep positive)*
- 4- *There is nothing good or bad in life. However, it is the thinking of it, that provides the outcome. (So, think positive)*

So as this pandemic plays out and hopefully it will be soon over, and to the students of Japan and all over the world, consider the following:

- 1- Be kind and helpful to all mankind
- 2- Look for your weakness and make it your strength.
- 3- With every challenge you are facing, look for the positive and what you can do to make it better.
- 4- Persistence trumps talent.
- 5- Finally, try to learn techniques and listen to your family, as they have most likely gone through tough times themselves and I am sure they can offer suggestions and ideas to help you through this.

Barbara and I have missed having students from Miura Educational Foundation visiting our home in Canada, which has been occurring over the many past years. The student's first visit to a Canadian home was to our home, where we have been fortunate to introduce them into the Canadian culture. I believe many of the students enjoyed the relaxing barbeque meal we would prepare and having the opportunity to talk about anything, especially how Canadians live and spend their time.

One day we hope to be able to do this again and welcome you back into our home.

As both Barbara and I enjoy sports, we are excited to hear that the Olympics will be allowed to take place in Japan this Summer and for the opportunity to learn and understand more of your Japanese culture. I have had the opportunity to visit Japan in the past and hope one day we will be able to visit Japan and meet and talk with you all.

So, as you go through these new life challenges, we wish all of you success and would hope you consider some of the inspirational ideas that have made me happy and successful.

Best wishes to you all.

Stephen and Barbara Foster

Supporter of the Miura Educational Foundation