

February 3rd, 1986

Dear Principal, Students, and Associates of Mrs. McAuliffe
at Concord High School:

Greetings from Japan. During this difficult time of sadness, loss, and grief, I would like to express my condolences to you on behalf of myself and my English students. I know that this must be a very hard time for you and your school, in mourning the loss of Mrs. McAuliffe. As an American in a foreign country, I cannot tell you how shocked and upset the news of the Space Shuttle made me. I was in utter shock when I heard the terrible and tragic news. I wanted to help out in some way but since I am now in Japan, I didn't think that there would be anyway to show my concern.

As the sun was coming up on the morning of January 29th, I first heard the news over the Armed Forces Radio Station (Japan is ahead of the states by about 14 hours). As the reality of the accident finally hit home, I immediately thought of you in school and how it must have affected each of you. I was so stunned I broke into tears, particularly when the Japanese news showed you students at school. Since I am a high school teacher here in Japan, I thought it would be a nice gesture to have my students write letters to you and let you know that we too are mourning the loss of your teacher and thinking of you. Although my students' English ability is quite limited, they do try and are very sincere with the things that they have written. I have approximately 700 hundred students and each one wrote a letter. However, since their English level is quite low, I wrote several expressions on the blackboard that they could possible use. Many just copied these sentences word for word while others put forth a great deal of effort - I have only sent a sampling of the letters that they wrote but please accept them as a gesture of brotherly love from fellow Japanese High School students.

As I have reflected over the tragic happening of last week, I recalled a passage by Kahlil Gibran in his book, The Prophet. He writes about joy and sorrow and says:

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.....The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.....

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

Your delight has been your teacher and companion. You hurt because you love her. I hurt because of what she stood for. She had dreams and one of the biggest was to never let you down. She has given her life so that you can carry on those dreams that she wasn't able to accomplish. Now, it is you who must not let her down.

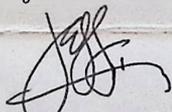
I looked up to your teacher as I am sure many Americans did. Although I never knew her personally, I felt that I was somehow close to her. I felt a warmth and glow as I heard her speak in the interviews and now that warmth has been transferred to you, the ones who were close to her. It is your responsibility to nurture that warmth into something special. We would never know happiness and joy if there weren't pain and sorrow in our lives. I too plan on nurturing that warmth and glow that your teacher sparked in me. I'm still young (only 30) and have many dreams, goals, and desires. Your teacher's courageous and brave sacrifice has inspired me more than anything else. I plan on putting her philosophies and practices into my own personal life. I owe her a great deal.

Finally, in closing, I beg of you to never let your hopes, your desires, and dreams die away. I look to you for help and leadership in the future. Gibran says:

If you would indeed behold the spirit of death, open your heart wide unto the body of life....In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond; And like seeds dreaming beneath the snow your heart dreams of spring. Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity.....

Please accept these letters from my students. Even if your can't understand all of their English, please understand their hearts by which they wrote them with. Feel free to reply to any letter that might catch your fancy. Take care of yourselves and work hard - make Mrs. McAuliffe proud of you. Don't ever limit yourself. Each of you has a great deal to offer humanity. Thank you for taking time out to read this letter. I must apologize for being so late in writing but due to the mail system, it does take time.

Sincerely yours,
your friend, brother, and fellow American,



Jeff Hiskey
Chiba-Ken, Kashiwa-Shi,
Akebono 3 chome, 5- 12
Kotobuki Koto #101
JAPAN T277



THIS CHARACTER
MEANS
"FRIEND" AND
IS
PRONOUNCED LIKE
"YOU "



AND

THIS CHARACTER
MEANS
"LOVE" AND
IS
PRONOUNCED LIKE
"I"

P.S. MOST OF THESE LETTERS WERE WRITTEN BY TENTH GRADERS AT THE "EDOGAWA GAKUEN TORIDE HIGH SCHOOL."

SO IT MEANS FRIENDS AND LOVE
AND ITS SAID YOU AND I

TO EVERYONE AT
CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL



CONTAINS EXPLANATION AND LETTER