

HIGHLIGHTS

Former ELI student recognized for courageous recovery from injuries

4:16 p.m., Aug. 25, 2005--On the evening of July 11, 2002, Shiho Nabeshima, then a student in the University of Delaware's English Language Institute (ELI), was struck and critically injured by a car as she crossed Elkton Road in a marked crosswalk.

Thanks to prompt life-saving efforts by UD and Newark police and emergency medical personnel, Nabeshima recovered after months of hospitalization and rehabilitation in Delaware and Japan.

Nabeshima was at UD as a sponsored student of Japan's Miyagi prefecture, the sister state of Delaware, to study in the Center for International Studies and at ELI.

This week, Nabeshima returned to UD, where she was recognized for her courage and fortitude in recovering from near-fatal injuries and embarking on a career to help others deal with similar situations.

On Tuesday, Aug. 23, Nabeshima was given a warm welcome by staff members at ELI, where a six-foot-long banner in her honor was displayed.

"Shiho is here on a kind of victory tour, being reunited with some of the hundreds of community members of all faiths who prayed daily for her recovery, made chains of a thousand origami cranes (a traditional Japanese expression of good luck) and who also provided hospitality for her parents," Scott Stevens, ELI director, said. "Since her accident occurred only a few days after her arrival here three years ago, Shiho is really seeing Delaware and its surrounding attractions for the first time and loving every minute of it."

During her visit to the ELI, Nabeshima recalled the immediate aftermath of her accident and the support she received from family and friends in Japan and the United States.

Because she only had been in Newark a few days when the accident occurred, Nabeshima said she was surprised by the number of people who visited her during the 50 days she was a patient in the Christiania Hospital's Trauma Unit.

"I don't remember much of those first days, but I later learned that family and people from UD were visiting me even while I remained unconscious," Nabeshima said. "Scott Stevens, Barbara Gillette [an ELI instructor] and Lesa Griffiths [director of UD's Center for International Studies] came to see me, and my parents stayed the whole time I was in the hospital."

Nabeshima rallied, regained consciousness, and on Aug. 30, 2002, she returned to her hometown of Toyama City, on Japan's west coast.



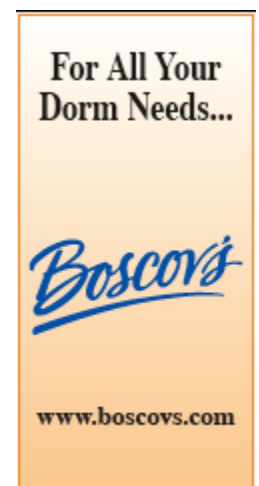
Shiho Nabeshima holds the plaque commemorating her special day in the city of Newark, with her mother, Mieko, father, Yoshio, and sister, Aya. The Roselles gave the family UD caps and other gifts to commemorate their visit to campus.



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A Message from the Bonistall

Ahead lay four months of painful and difficult physical rehabilitation, during which time Nabeshima said she had to relearn several basic skills that she had previously taken for granted.

"I was shocked because I couldn't walk or sit down or play the piano. I couldn't write my own name," Nabeshima said. "I took all those things for granted. Now, I appreciate all these things."



Shiho Nabeshima: "I became a very strong person because of the warm support I was given by my family and by so many friends both in Japan and America."

something very positive," Nabeshima said. "My dad believes that I am so strong, even though I am small. He believes that I will return many things to others that I have been given."

After her rehabilitation, Nabeshima went on to pursue graduate studies at Tohoku University, where she completed her master's degree requirements in psychology in March.

Nabeshima recently began her studies at the Gunma Medical School in Japan. Entry to the school is extremely competitive, with only 15 individuals being accepted from a field of 500 applicants.

"My sister, Aya, says this is my destiny," Nabeshima said. "She says my accident led me to meet a lot of people who care about me, and to go to medical school."

Nabeshima and her family were guests of honor at a dinner hosted by UD President and Mrs. David P. Roselle at the Blue and Gold Club on Aug. 24, where the president read a letter of appreciation he received from Shiho's parents.

The letter read:

"Three years ago, our daughter, Shiho, got into an accident in Delaware and was seriously injured. It was the most devastating experience of our lives. At that time, we could only pray and hope that she would survive.

"This was also our first time living abroad. We were confused and distressed, but because of your warm support, we were given the strength to pray beside her from sunrise to sunset each day. We know all of you were also praying for us.

"Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

"It is like a dream come true that

During this time, Nabeshima said she discovered an inner strength that helped her overcome the pain, hurt, depression and tears that she described as being part of her recovery.

"Rehabilitation was so hard, but I tried to see the positive in everything," Nabeshima said. "I became a very strong person because of the warm support I was given by my family and by so many friends both in Japan and America."

Nabeshima said that while the long period of hospitalization and rehabilitation also was a difficult time for her mother, Mieko, and dad, Yoshio, both parents said they believed that their daughter also gained something valuable from the experience.

"My mom said that she knows that many people supported us, and that I am a fighter who can turn a negative experience into



Family

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UDaily is produced by the Office of Public Relations
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we could visit Delaware with Shiho again. We cannot express how grateful we are for the love and support you've shown us. Thank you so much. We pray and wish you the best."



The Nabeshima family (from left): Mieko, Shiho, Yoshio and Aya

During the dinner, Newark Mayor Vance A. Funk III proclaimed Aug. 25 "Shiho Nabeshima Day" in the city. In his proclamation, Funk cited Diana Palladino, now a corporal in UD's Department of Public Safety, and members of the emergency medical team of Aetna Hose, Hook & Ladder, as well as doctors and medical staff at the Christiana Hospital Trauma Unit for their prompt, life-saving efforts. Palladino attended the dinner.

"Ms. Nabeshima's valiant fight for life inspired hundreds of University and community members to offer bedside comfort, prayer vigils and support for Shiho's parents," Funk said. "Shiho Nabeshima's life of courage, perseverance and sacrifice brings hope to every citizen of Newark that no problem is insurmountable."

Funk also noted that Nabeshima has visited many schools in her home country and "inspired countless children with her story of triumph over adversity."

Although she had to move when she began medical school, Nabeshima said that through e-mail she still keeps in touch with the parents and the children she has met.

As a doctor, Nabeshima plans to use her intimate understanding of physical and emotional suffering to bring healing to seriously ill children and their families.

"I can sympathize with what they and their parents are going through, because I have been there myself," Nabeshima said. "I tell them that I learned that one can find the strength to start anew. It is a good message for parents and children who are suffering from diseases or handicaps."

When not studying or counseling young patients and their families, Nabeshima said she likes to play the piano, cook and have dinner with her friends.

During their Delaware visit, the Nabeshimas were hosted by Colin Thorpe, professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the University, and his wife, Minori..

They went to Christiana Hospital for a reunion with friends made while Shiho was a patient there in 2002, and Nabeshima also was the keynote speaker at ELI's summer graduation ceremony.

"I want to pass on what I have been given," Nabeshima said. "I want to be a person who can give love to others the way it was given to me."

Article by Jerry Rhodes
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