

## **For Women Helping Others Is the Noblest Way of Life**

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Introducing a friend to Buddhism, Kathy Olesky learns again how holding a lantern for someone else lights our own way.

As Buddhists, our greatest hope is the happiness not only of ourselves and those nearest and dearest to us but also that of our friends and fellow members," SGI President Ikeda has said. "I want this person and that one to become happy. I want to enable all members to enjoy themselves' — there is no more noble way of life than praying for and exerting ourselves for others' happiness."

In November 1995, the New England Region completed its geographic reorganization. I was overjoyed because, for the first time since I had moved to Newton, Mass., there was a discussion meeting five minutes from home. I felt refreshed and determined to spread the Mystic Law throughout my community.

However, I soon realized that the reorganization did not guarantee that people from my neighborhood would come beating down our doors to learn about Buddhism. Some of the district members gathered once a week to chant for the district to grow.

In August 1996, I gave birth to my third child. That was one way of increasing the membership, but I began to feel I would never introduce someone to the practice. I was challenging a difficult post-partum recovery and hardly left the house.

One day in November, my friend Kathy came to visit me and my new daughter. We had been friends since our boys were in kindergarten. She literally stumbled into my Gohonzon room instead of the nursery and exclaimed: "Wow, look at this — your own room dedicated to your spiritual practice! Did you ever tell any one else about this?"

From that day onward, Kathy began to practice. She seemed to naturally grasp the principles of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. She began chanting regularly, learned gongyo almost effortlessly, sent in her subscription to the publications and attended the discussion meetings. She received the Gohonzon this past October!

Our regular gongyo sessions have become the greatest source of encouragement for my own practice as I watch her deepen her faith. As the Daishonin mentioned in one of his writings, "If one holds a lantern for another, his or her way is illuminated" (*Gosho Zenshu*, p. 1598). Furthermore, she has a tremendous spirit to introduce others to the practice and constantly brings her family members and friends to meetings.

I am determined to pray to bring one more person into the Soka family. "A Ship to Cross the Sea of Suffering" reads: "You must realize that it is because of a deep karmic relationship from the past that you can teach others even a sentence or phrase of the Lotus Sutra. The sutra reads, 'It is extremely difficult to save those who are deaf to the True Law.' The 'True Law' means the Lotus Sutra" (*The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 1, p. 9). Now, in February, the women's division is focusing on propagation. Let's bring our friends to our great annual event, the women's division commemorative meeting.

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