

## **THIS PRACTICE MAKES ME GROW JACKIE MILLS, ST. LOUIS**

I have never been able to stand up to my father, especially when he was wrong. Before I left for the Florida Nature and Culture Center, he told my mom that he wouldn't support my brother and me if we decided to go to Soka University. My parents were in the midst of a divorce, so I had many obstacles in my life.

My mom, brother and I drove to the FNCC—22 hours! The first eight hours I cried. I felt terrible. I couldn't handle it anymore.

On the third evening at the FNCC, I was chanting and thinking about something I could do to challenge myself on my last night. I thought about my dad and the divorce. I thought about Soka University.

And then I cried. Not because I was sad, but because I felt more powerful than ever. I recalled someone saying that no matter what happens, everything will be OK because I practice Buddhism. I was finally happy for my parents getting a divorce. They would be happy, for once. It would be great. I decided that I would tell my father this. I also wanted to ask if he would support me—even the tiniest bit— in going to Soka University.

I cried all through gongyo. I felt great and powerful. After gongyo, I sprinted to my room. I called my dad and told him I was OK and happy for the divorce. Then I asked him, "Will you support me if I go to SUA?" He said not financially, but otherwise he said he would. It's taken me my whole life to say something like that to my dad. I had the courage to confront my father and showed him actual proof that this practice makes me grow.