

**A LETTER TO MY FRIENDS**  
**ASTRID J. LUGO, PUERTO RICO**

It was a very special experience being at the Junior High and High School Division Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. It was wonderful to see so many people my age working for the same cause and practicing Buddhism. Many capable leaders encouraged us and became our true friends. I feel I grew a lot and that I took the seed they planted in my heart to encourage others in becoming truly happy. And I had so much fun! I could have lived there for all eternity. The place is just beautiful!

To those who have not yet gone to the FNCC, please—I'm telling you—make the determination to go! I struggled getting the money for the trip, but I just had to do it... and did it! It really wasn't easy since my mom is a single parent and there are three children in my family, but with determination and a lot of daimoku, nothing is impossible!

With gratitude,

Astrid