

*Compiled by Beichuan Middle School*

# *The Students Chant for Love around Beichuan*

The story of teachers and students  
in Beichuan Middle School who  
experienced the Wenchuan earthquake

*This book is dedicated to the people who have helped us*





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The story of teachers and students  
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*On May 16th, 2008, Hu Jintao, The General Administrator of the CPC Central Committee, The President of China and Chairman of The Central Military Commission of the PRC, drove to Beichuan Qiang autonomous county, Mianyang, to visit local residents who had been through the disaster. He also guided the earthquake relief work. In Shengli village, Leigu Town of Beichuan County, Hu Jintao visited the special tent used to treat the victims of this disaster.*

*Reporter of Xinhua News Agency Ju Peng*





*On May 16th, 2008, Hu Jintao, The General Administrator of the CPC Central Committee, The President of China and Chairman of The Central Military Commission of the PRC, drove to Beichuan Qiang autonomous county, Mianyang, to visit local residents who had been through the disaster. He also guided the earthquake relief work. Hu Jintao suggested that doctors and nurses take good care of Luo Mengxi who had lost her mother in the earthquake.*

*Xinhua News Agency*





*Wen Jiabao, The Prime Minister of the State Council, and one of the leaders of The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC, was very concerned about Beichuan Middle School after the earthquake. He had been to Beichuan Middle School on six occasions, to encourage the children to be brave. This picture was taken when Premier Wen Jiabao went to Beichuan Middle School on his sixth visit and spent New Year together with the children there.*

*From Beichuan Middle School*



# 多難興邦

溫家寶

*Much distress regenerates a nation-Wen Jiabao*



集結全球愛心力量  
鑄造華夏愛心豐碑

*A united world helps to build a monument of love for China*



# 援建北川中学 新闻发布会

中国侨联 四川省人民政府  
2008年8月27日



*On August 27, 2008, The Overseas Chinese Union held a press conference, where the Chairman Lin Jun announced the start of the project to support reconstructing Beichuan Middle School.*





*The Chairman of The Overseas Chinese Union, Lin Jun, investigates Beichuan Middle School.*



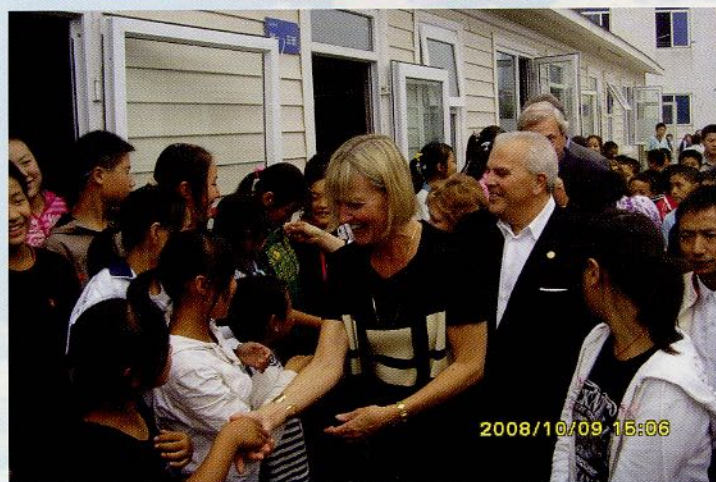
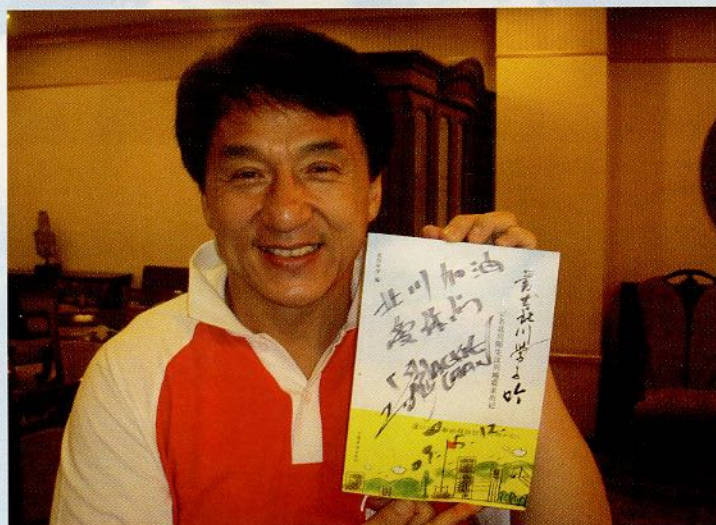


The vice Chairman of The Overseas Chinese Union, Lin Mingjiang, investigates the disaster area.



The vice Chairman of The Overseas Chinese Union, Dong Zhongyuan, praised Mrs. Linda Wong for her generous donation to Beichuan Middle School and awarded her a certificate.





*The general public would like to assist Beichuan Middle School, to help them recover from the disaster, and rebuild their new "home".*

*From Beichuan Middle School*





Students from Yihai School are reading the book < The Students Chant for Love around Beichuan>.







*We are together with Linda Wong, who we know as "mom".*



*Fredy Xin from HK-Canada international school is helping us with English.*







*Beichuan Middle School reopens: How happy we are!*



*Our military training  
after the earthquake.*

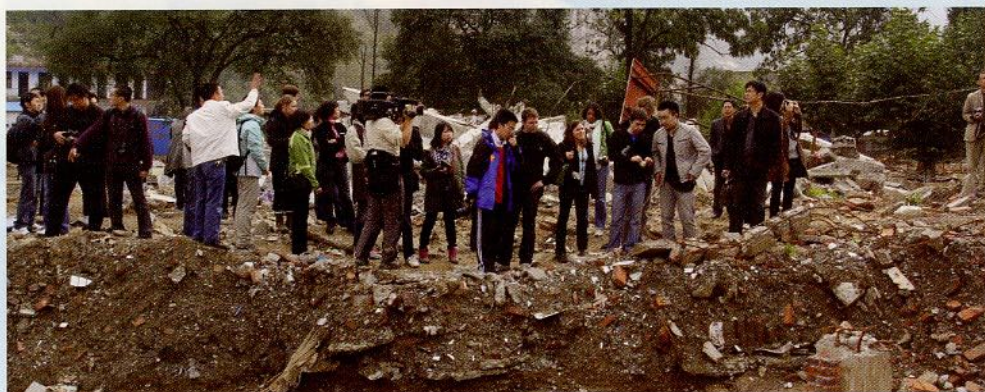


*The disabled students from Beichuan Middle  
School are playing the guitar at the book release  
conference.*





*The 12th meeting of the Beichuan Middle School reconstruction approval committee.*



*The architects are from MIT, Hong Kong University, Tsinghua University, Tongji University and Beijing Construction and Design Institution; the picture shows the team investigating the old site of Beichuan Middle School.*



*The architects from Beijing Construction and Design Institution are discussing the plan.*



# 援建北川中学开工典礼 中国侨联

2009年5月12日



*The first sod was turned for the rebuilding of Beichuan Middle School, on May 12th 2009.*



*The Director of The Chinese Overseas Affairs Office of The State Council, Li Haifeng, The Chairman of The Overseas Chinese Union, Lin Jun, The Vice Chairman of The Overseas Chinese Union, Lin Mingjiang, and one of the leaders of Sichuan CPC Li Dengju, turning the first sod.*



*The President of Yihai Group, Linda Wong, and The General Manager of China Railway Group Co., Tang Zhicheng, turning the first sod.*





*A model of the new Beichuan Middle School.*



## Preface

Beichuan Middle School, located in the only Qiang Autonomous County in China, was a thriving and active school with 2793 students and 197 teaching staff. All this changed when the school was devastated by a massive earthquake at 2:28 p.m. on May 12, 2008.

With the mountains collapsing and rivers roaring, the school's buildings, located at the foot of the mountain, were destroyed in an instant. More than 1,000 young students with a bright future died in the disaster, leaving the whole country in deep sorrow.

Many of the survivors of this disaster share painful memories of life and death and how they helped themselves and each other in the midst of the crisis. They have now expressed their post-disaster feelings in essays – written both by students and teachers – from a perspective only they can tell. These writings not only recall real-life events, they illustrate the tenacious will to survive as well as a vision for a beautiful future. The Students Chant for Love around Beichuan is a compilation of over seventy of these essays, written in a simple and touching style that will help you understand the spirit and passion of the writers: the spirit of inner strength and cooperation and the passion to rebuild their lives as well as their beloved school.



With the leadership and support of the CPC Central Committee, State Council and local officials, significant strides have been taken in the relief effort. Rebuilding has begun and the Sichuan Province is once again enjoying prosperity... and the support effort has just begun! Since the initiation of the Project of Rebuilding Beichuan Middle School – organized by the Association of Returned Overseas Chinese – a large number of compatriots and relatives from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan have graciously donated towards the ongoing efforts to rebuild the disaster-stricken area. On May 12, 2009, the Project of Rebuilding Beichuan Middle School officially started. With a global vision, we are now looking with anticipation and hope that people from around the world will join in the post-earthquake relief work and support the rebuilding efforts. It is my desire that together we can rebuild Beichuan Middle School into a safe, high-



quality, harmonious campus - a beautiful environment for students and teachers alike.

Lin Jun

Chairman of the Overseas Chinese Union

August 2009





## Preface

On May 12th, 2008, an earthquake destroyed Beichuan Middle School, leaving behind only dust, death and sorrow...

I was talking to my restaurant staff about how to control the increasing cost of food while ensuring that all our students could enjoy nutritious meals. Suddenly we felt the earthquake. I kept redialing an emergency number, but could not get through. Sinister yellow smoke rose from the building in front of me. A jagged gap in the student's hostel opened and closed while to my right, the students of senior two and senior three were screaming and yelling as if the end of the world had come. I struggled to my feet and ran to the school building on my right, handing my documents and notebook to a female student. I shouted to the students on third floor and told them to come down immediately; then I ran to the playground entrance to give orders to the students to enter the playground immediately so that there was room for the other students too. All these actions took me less than five minutes. I did not feel any pain at all, just an emergency which said, "Hurry!" I turned around and saw the school building in front of me collapse. I raced towards it, but it was too late to do anything. I had a brief discussion with two vice principals and then we began the rescue work using three groups. The students and teachers on the playground and farmers from the neighboring areas joined us... We sent two gym teachers, Zhao Dong and Luo Tao, to take a message to the town centre to inform the government about the situation. The two teachers soon returned and brought us the news that the town centre had been destroyed. Within twenty minutes, Mr. Song, the municipal secretary and many rescue workers arrived. Thinking about the students who had already died and the lives that we were trying to save I felt so guilt-ridden. Why was I still alive? My life had been saved for a reason. "I am Liu Yachuan. We are trying to save you. Take a little rest. You must save your energy..." If I heard someone calling for help, I ran over and shouted words of encouragement into the gap in the rubble. The rain was falling, and I returned to the playground to check on everyone before dark. I thought my smiling face was even uglier than my crying face. One of our teachers, Li Yong had serious head and leg injuries. His wife, who's also on our staff, He Qiong, tried





to comfort me. I thought of my wife and my child, students and teachers. Her words awoke a pain in my heart... but they inspired hope but not anguish. Hope exists as long as there are people around us.

On May 13th, the survivors moved to a different area; on May 16th, I left the school. All these events are now in the past. My only choice was to keep all of them locked deep inside my heart.

I felt I could do nothing more when I saw my students in such pain. All past success became meaningless. We shall remember instead, the people who gave us care and assistance.

President Hu Jintao came; Prime Minister came... the survivors in the disaster areas were comforted and encouraged by the compassion of the central party.

Thousands of fire fighters, soldiers, volunteers, cadres, and local people were all busy at the frontline of the rescue operation.

Reports from both the domestic and overseas media arrived to report on the rescue operation. International rescue teams had also arrived to help. Chinese people living abroad paid close attention to Beichuan Middle School.

Beichuan Middle School had always had a special place in our hearts but now the rebuilding of the school has become the focus of our society.

On May 19th, 2008, a ceremony, marking the resumption of Beichuan Middle School was held in Changhong Training Centre. The Beichuan Middle School flag hung proudly under the national flag. All the students and teachers of the school cried, "Please remember what we have experienced. Let us treasure today and create our future!" These were my special words to all teachers and students. From that moment on, Beichuan Middle School began its new life.

Shanghai Xiangyu Education Group, Capital Normal University, Yihai affiliate of Beijing NO. 8 Middle School, High School of Peking University, Changhong Company, national centre of science department, CETV, Tsinghua Tongfang and many other groups and organizations and individuals have contributed to the rebuilding of our school, provided support, helped to comfort students and teachers and helped all of us to endure the most difficult time. Their help has enabled us to resume class in record time, rebuild school management and return all things to normal.

The China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese and Yihai Group arranged international architects to start designing the new Beichuan Middle School even before its location was decided. In order to build a modern school, compliant





with international safety standards, without wasting any of the donations, the project of MIT, The University of Hong Kong, Tsinghua University, Tongji University, and Beijing Institute of Architectural Design was modified again and again and frequent meetings were held. To make the project perfect, the China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese and Yihai Group arranged the design teams to do on site inspections. Architectural, design and education experts were then invited to judge the projects. The plans for Beichuan Middle School have now been completed and the first sod will be turned on the anniversary of the earthquake. On September 1st of 2010, the opening ceremony of Beichuan Middle School will be held.

Before the earthquake, the 2793 students at Beichuan Middle School formed a vital group with their dreams, but now this group does not exist any more. Many students were buried in the ruins of Beichuan Middle School along with their dreams. Other people's dreams were shattered and their new dreams will be scarred by the earthquake.

This book presents over 80 stories written by students and teachers who have related their experiences of the earthquake. They share the great pain and injuries it brought to Beichuan Middle School and our community. These stories also reflect the strength, determination and hope of those who survived, to rebuild their lives. I would like to thank all those who offer Beichuan Middle School their love and care.



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Our only choice and obligation is to guide the emergence of a new Beichuan Middle School.

Together we are creating a new beginning. We believe in ourselves and are ready to face the future so "Please do not worry about us." We wish all the kind-hearted people, who have helped the school, a safe journey into the future with us.

Liu Yachun

Principal of Beichuan Middle School

March, 2009



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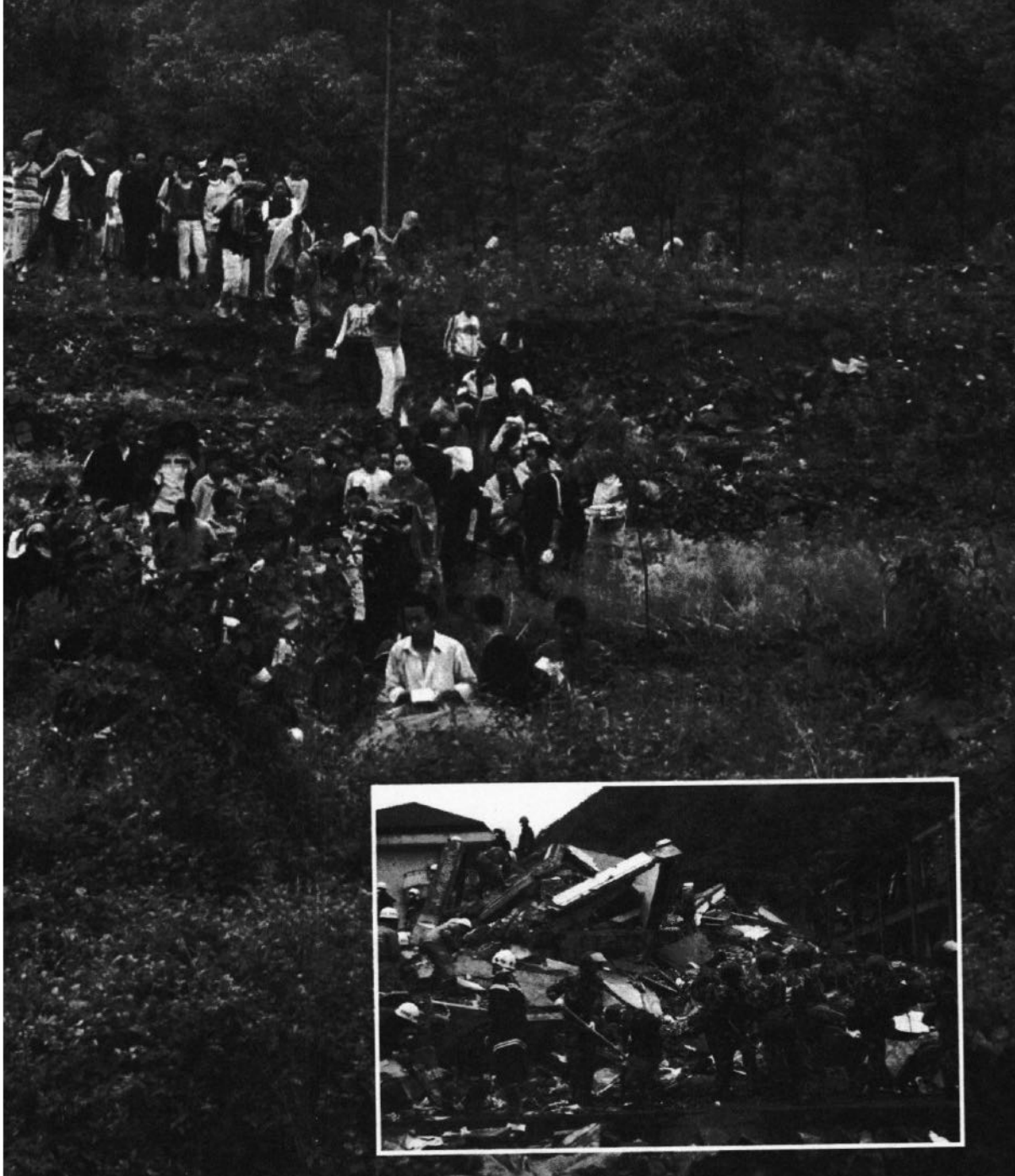


# 地震后北川中学老师积极组织学生向安全地



转移（天下大雨，公路垮塌，从山沟里行进）

*Beichuan Middle School was severely damaged and the teachers were arranging students to evacuate to safe areas*

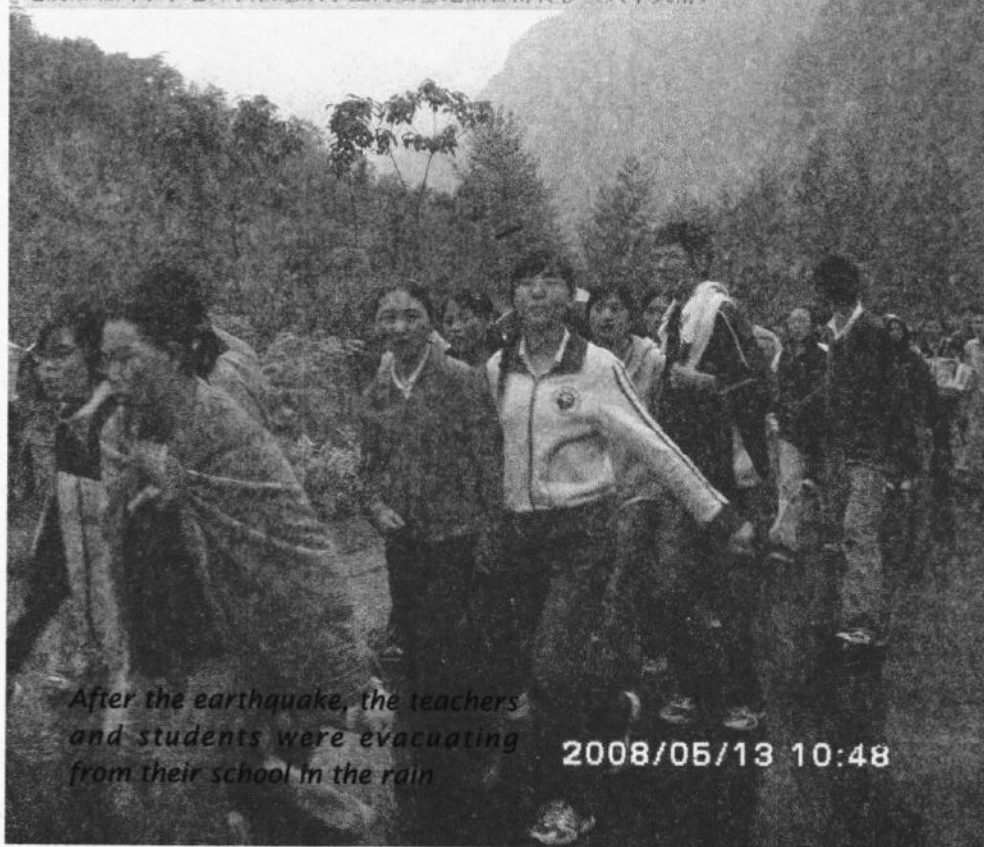




*We once had a beautiful campus  
There used to be the sound of songs and laughter  
Memories of our past school life  
Teachers' words  
We "carry" our friends with us  
But, everything ended on May 12th, 2008*

# May 12th, I am in Beichuan

地震后北川中学老师积极组织学生向安全地点冒雨转移（天下大雨）



*After the earthquake, the teachers  
and students were evacuating  
from their school in the rain*

2008/05/13 10:48

The sky was covered with black clouds, and the rain fell intermittently. It seems that god was also crying for this tragedy.

## **We moved in heavy rain**

Fu Xiuyin, teacher of Beichuan Middle School

Around 9am on May 13th, Beichuan Middle School was crowded with people, among who were the Chinese troops, rescuers, and escaping residents. People were pouring into this area. The injured were lying on the playground, some of them groaning, and some lying still. Lines of corpses were placed on the left side of the playground, where the horizontal bars and the parallel bars were located. There a mother was wailing beside her silent child. The sky was covered with black clouds, and the rain fell intermittently. It seems that God was also crying for this tragedy.



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After eating a piece of bread and a little water, I walked down from the earthquake rubble, and ran into Mr. Zhang, the school principal. He told me that maybe the head teacher of Class 5, Grade 12 had failed to survive, and asked me to act as the head teacher of this class immediately and guide the students outside. I asked him where he was going, but he said he did not know himself.


The rain became heavier. I followed the principal's instructions and moved the students to Renjiaping Gas Station, which was in a mess as it was filled with victims. Rescue cars were on the right side of the road, and more than 10 buses advertising "Chendu Travel" were here to help transfer students. There were ten or more policemen to maintain order.

I asked the students of Class 5, Grade 12 to board the buses and assigned two students to take care of the rest. Then I was just about to return to the school but some students caught hold of me and asked me to leave



together with them. I asked them to leave first, and told them that I would go back to see the situation of Class 8 and then I would leave with them, because their head teacher's stomach had been injured in the earthquake.

Then I returned to find Class 8. The heavy rain continued falling after the students left. Gaoping Tang, the head teacher of Class 8 and I, reached Renjiaping Gas Station, which was already crowded with people. Facing these frightened people, 10 policemen were not enough to control the situation. Students from Renjiaping Primary School were eagerly waiting to be transferred and they could not fit into the waiting cars. Many of the horror-struck students were wailing. Our students volunteered to maintain order and help primary students to get into the cars and I was moved and impressed by their calmness.



After two hours of hustle, when the primary students had left, it was already after 11am. There were no more cars to transfer students, while the rain fell heavier and heavier. Students from several classes were stranded here, and we did not know if there were cars coming back to transfer them. All of us were soaking wet. If we stayed longer, a lot of students would get sick. What should we do? We teachers had a brief talk and decided to lead the students outside. Where were we going? We did not know really. All we thought about was to walk beyond the mountainous area and find a safe place. To prevent more tragic injuries, we asked students to walk in line, with 3 to 5 persons in a line and to keep a distance of 3m to 5m between lines. Before we walked through a dangerous place, we made an observation for a while before we ran through the crumbling soil or loose rocks.

The rain was still falling and victims escaping all along the road, were soaking wet. The students were very thoughtful, greeting each other in the rain. I was feeling tired since I had not had a rest after the earthquake. Some boys saw it and dragged me along. I told them I was fine, and forced myself to move as fast as I could. We saw other students and kids along our route, among whom were several kids whose parents had not survived the

earthquake. One kid was only 5 years old, and could not walk, so some of our boys took turns to carry him on their backs.

When we arrived at Leigu Gas Station, there had been a landslide in front of it, with rubble rolling down from time to time. A policeman was standing there stopping people from crossing over. He told me that if rescue cars were coming up, he would help us to stop the cars to let students leave. So we had to stop. After waiting for quite a time, no cars had appeared. As more and more people were gathering here, the number soon exceeded 100. What should we do? Should we wait longer? No, some students were already trembling in cold rain, and they might catch a cold. What if the cars did not come? I talked with Tang, and we decided to move forward. We formed the students into columns and divided them into smaller groups, each group was assigned a leader. On the left side of the road was landslide, so we could not walk there. We had to lead the students through the Subao River on the right hand side of the road by walking on the path opposite the river, making a detour of the landslide-covered area, before crossing the river and walking along the road towards Yongan, a town in An county.



Halfway along this route, we ran into a woman teacher from our school, who was wearing a pair of cloth slippers. Her feet were bleeding and covered with blisters. She said she was too weak to walk any more, so I asked two boys to take care of her and help her to walk. However, she collapsed later. Our students stopped a car on the road and sent her to a hospital in Mianyang. She left after she was out of danger, the following day.

At 2pm in the afternoon, we walked out of the Beichuan valley and arrived in Yongan Town of An County. We met Mr. Zhengliang Huang, vice mayor of Mianyang city. He was there to superintend relief work. Mr. Huang arranged for us to stay in temporary tents which were still being pitched in the fields. There were people in raincoats who were pitching tents. The land



was muddy, and our feet were completely covered with mud when we stepped onto it. However, we did not think of it, as all we thought about at that time was to settle down the students.

The students were cold and hungry. It was lucky that we could get some relief steamed-bread to dispense to students. It was only at this time I realized that the number of our team had increased from 50 to around 200. Not very long after this, vice mayor Mr. Huang arranged to send us some dry clothes. Although the clothes were old, they were fine. We asked students to take off their wet clothes and put on the dry clothes, to prevent them from getting cold.

Finally we could have a rest and shelter from the rain. How I wanted to lie down for a good sleep! But the ground was muddy; we could not even sit down, let alone sleep. The students found some bricks to bring into the tent, and they asked me to sit down to have a rest. I was tired out, so had a nap while seated. It was already 4pm when I woke up, and I realized that it was impossible to stay in the tent. Some students were complaining, and others crying. So we went to find vice Mr. Huang. At around 5pm, a big bus arrived, and we were told that it was arranged especially to pick us up. Then we got on the bus and crowded together. At around 6pm, we finally arrived at Mianyang Jiuzhou Stadium.

The principal there told us to bring the students into the stadium. When half of the students were inside the stadium and half outside, prime minister Wen Jiabao entered looking very dignified after enduring the hardships of a long journey. The students moved forward and surrounded the prime minister, who walked around and shook hands with the students. Some people cried in front of the prime minister, and the minister said "Don't cry. This is a natural disaster. You have survived, and our government will take care of you all. We will take care of your life and your studies. You should live a good life. "

After the minister left, I found the students of Class 5 quickly. They gave

me their relief food, and told me to have some and take good care of myself. I was deeply touched, as it was as if they had grown up suddenly.

Finally we had a place where we could have a good sleep. After eating something I lay down on the ground and fell fast asleep. It was the next morning when I woke up. It was said that several people had been woken and frightened by aftershocks that night and had run outside. However, I knew nothing about it.

Although we had a lot of difficulties, we were soon settled down by our government. I finally got peace of mind. I said to myself, although the way forward was still long and we might face more difficulties, we would be able to recover because we had received such good care from our government, the love of our whole country, and support from our brothers and sisters from all over the world.





I realized after the earthquake that to the students now, the school is their home, the teacher is their parent, and classmates are their brothers and sisters.

## **A friend in need is a friend indeed**

Han Li, Class 15, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

Before the earthquake, I did not have special feelings for my school, my teacher, or my classmates. I realized after the earthquake that to the students now, the school is their home, the teacher is their parent, and classmates are their brothers and sisters.



When the earthquake began, a depressing sound was heard. I thought it was from the machines that were used to repair the houses nearby, but the sound was continuous, then a slight shaking followed. Our teacher walked towards the door to see what had happened. But before our teacher walked out of the door of our class, our school building started shaking violently. "Oh, god! Earthquake! Run!" The students stampeded out, and our teacher was standing at the staircase guiding students to evacuate. Frightened and in hurry, I tripped. Our teacher dragged me up and my desk mate pulled me along. Suddenly I realized that I forgotten one important belonging. It was just a pair of glasses, but it was given to me as a present by my parents who had worked hard to buy them, so I treasure them a lot. Then I turn around, when my desk mate shouted at me "Come back! It's dangerous!" "No! I must find my glasses! They are important to me!" I shouted back. "Your life is more important!" She shouted again. I was in such a hurry that I could not answer her and few to the classroom.

I turned my books inside out, but I could not find the glasses. I became

more and more flurried, my heart beating faster and faster and my hands shaking. The school building was shaking more and more violently. Shall I continue looking for them or give up? I did not know, but finally I crept under the desk, and turned the books inside out again, but in vain. I became nervous, anxious and afraid. I was just about to run out when the light fitting fell. I closed my eyes and felt I was going to die, and yelled "Mum!" I bent over on the ground, waiting for death. One second passed, two, then three... I felt I was going to die, but when I opened my eyes, I found myself safe under the desk. Seeing the empty room shaking, I was frightened to cry again, feeling I was all alone. It was just at this time that I heard a familiar and concerned voice calling my name. I looked up. It was my desk mate! I answered back with trembling voice "I... am... here." She ran to me, and dragged me out from under the desk. I hugged her, trembling. "Did you find your glasses?" She asked me urgently. I shook my head. Then she said "Let's run." and dragged me downstairs.



We were just about to run out of the school building when a brick fell. She pushed me, but she was hit by the brick. She told me to run towards the playground, not caring about the injury. It was only when we arrived at the playground and stopped that I realized that her head was covered with blood, which was flowing down her neck.

At that moment, I finally knew that "A friend in need is a friend indeed!" I looked at her, feeling ashamed and sorry. I found the head teacher, who told us to stay in one place and not to run about. Then the head teacher drove her to hospital by motorcycle. I hugged her from behind, seeing her head and neck covered with blood. I cried... I felt so guilty. Was I mad? Why had I looked for the glasses? I would never forgive myself if she died from this!

She was badly injured but has recovered now without any consequences. I feel so relieved.

After this, I feel such deep affection for my teachers and classmates. I



feel that they are my relatives, who solved so many difficulties together with me and on whom I can rely.

I think we will never be defeated again after this tragedy.

## My Earthquake Diary

Liu Yunyun, Class 6, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

May 12th, Cloudy to Overcast

At noon, we did not go into the dormitory room, we just played in our classroom. "Hey, it's time to go to bed. Our head teacher is coming!" One classmate said loudly. I turned around, but found our head teacher was already standing in front of me. We were all frightened, thinking that he would shout at us. However, he smiled and said "Go to sleep. Stop playing around." "Yeah!" "He did not shout at us today!" Some classmates yelled. We filed out of the classroom, talking about our head teacher's behavior that day.



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In the afternoon when we had our first class, the floor began to shake, the windows started rattling, desks were moving around, books were flying, and the light fittings were falling down together with bricks. Our teacher held the door and shouted "It's an earthquake. Run!" We were so frightened that we began to run outside at full speed. Our classroom was on the second floor, but some classmates jumped out of the windows. I could not remember how I escaped. Houses were collapsing and you couldn't see the sky for dust. I was shaking all over, hugging other classmates, crying and shouting. I saw many of the houses collapse, and wondered how my sister was. She was in kindergarten! How were my parents? I could not lose them...

The head teacher arrived, dust covering his head. He was alive! He counted us quickly. Thank god! No one was missing, although several



students had minor injuries. He headed us to the playground and told us not to move. We did not know what to do, and had to follow the teacher's instructions. I looked around and all I could see were landslides, collapsing houses, and death. There were people crying, shouting, rescuing...

May 18th, Thundershower

Since the first day of the earthquake, we have been eating dry food like biscuits, bread, instant noodles, etc. How I longed for a bowl of vegetable soup!

My uncle came back from Beijing today. I went to see him. My brother told me about the miserable situation in Beichuan. He was frightened and ran around. His class was having physical education then, and saw many students die. He even watched sister Yun'er die. I could not control myself and cried.

At noon, it poured with rain and water flooded the tents. Some quilts were also soaked.

In the afternoon, relief supplies arrived. Each of us was given a T-shirt, a pair of pants, and an umbrella.

May 19th, Sunny

Today is the first day of national mourning for Sichuan earthquake victims. At 2:28pm, it was followed by the horns of vehicles, trains, ships and air raid sirens wailing in grief. Earthquake victims and rescue teams nationwide, paused in their efforts to find the living and bowed their heads to observe three minutes of silence, to mourn the dead in ruins, outside tents, and on the road. People were crying, because many families had lost their children, and many mothers were silently grieving.

I became a volunteer today, and my job was to deliver food for the victims, and help with relief work. Although I was busy, I felt it meant a lot and I was very happy to be able to help.

August 22nd, Sunny

Today we enrolled in Beichuan Middle School. This was the first time I had been to this new school, which was located in Changhong Training Centre in Mianyang. There were a lot of Pre-fabricated Houses, with good living conditions.

The campus was filled with laughter everywhere, and I could see beautiful green fields and energetic people.

It was very hot, but there were teachers and students who helped us to carry our luggage and arrange the dorm for us. I felt as if I was back home.

At night, teachers of "Earthquake Relief Project" arranged a party for us, a meaningful and delightful party. We played games, so that we could relax and forget!

September 1st, Sunny

We had our School Opening Ceremony today, which Prime Minister Wen Jiabao attended personally.

The Prime Minister stepped onto the flag platform and then he gave a speech "All our teachers and students. It has been 110 days since the earthquake happened. Beichuan has overcome the difficulties; Beichuan Middle School has overcome the difficulties. We fear nothing, we are persevering, and finally we are independent again!"

Loud applause came from the playground, with me applauding too.

"We have suffered a lot from this earthquake, which brought a lot of disasters to Beichuan people and to our students and teachers. But we overcame the difficulties, and we realized that as long as we are courageous, we can overcome difficulties and disasters, and win a new life."

Then the Prime Minister paused a little before continuing "What did we gain from this disaster? I think the most important thing we got to know is





how to face a bright future and be optimistic forever, just as the sun will always rise and always shine!"

The Prime Minister also said that disaster always brings about the advancement of a nation, but it depends on the hard work of the young. He also made a school motto for our school-- "Constantly strive to become stronger, never stop struggling".

Finally, the Prime Minister told us "The school opening ceremony today symbolizes the beginning of a new life and a new learning course. We students must learn from the experience of this disaster, work hard, and build a new and better Beichuan together with Beichuan characteristics! This is what I hope you can do, which I believe you can achieve."

Then the Prime Minister walked to 20 or more students who were sitting in wheelchairs because of injuries from the earthquake, and shook hands with every student. Finally, he looked at these students and said "Be strong!"

The Prime Minister's words encouraged me a lot. I said to myself that I must study hard to contribute my efforts to our country's future!

#### September 12th, Showers

The students were divided into different classes four days ago. I found that there were some disabled students in our class, and it was said that they were injured in the earthquake. Our teacher assigned some students to help the disabled students. I did not know them but I noticed that they were very easy going, always laughing and talking with the other students.

There was one disabled classmate sitting beside me. I asked his name and he told me and we soon became friends. I called him "Brother Fei". Although he'd had a leg amputated, he was very optimistic. He said I was stupid every day and we had an argument nearly every day, because all the time I turned to him for answers to questions I could not understand. I pushed his wheelchair and we had lunch together everyday and we were always laughing and talking. When we were having physical education,

he asked me to play basketball. Sometimes when I was looking at him, I felt sympathy for him, but at the same time, I admired him. Although he had suffered a serious injury, he had a strong spirit. Even though he still had sad memories, he always gave us his shiny laughter.

I think we will never be defeated again after this tragedy.





I will not fall asleep. Set your heart at rest. Because I have your support, your encouragement, and your love, I will hold on.

## **I am blessed to have you**

Wang Rui, Class 1, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

It sometimes appears on TV that a patient in a coma is lying in bed, and there is a person beside him holding his hand, telling stories and singing songs to him, encouraging him, consoling him. After some time, the patient becomes conscious, begins to cry, to laugh, to talk, and finally recovers. This scene used to be unrealistic to me. How could a person in a coma feel that? However, when I was in a coma, I felt that too. I felt that thousands of people were around me, encouraging me and holding my hands. They were my teachers, classmates, and other people that I have never met before. Thank you, for giving me strength and courage to live on.

As the dust disappeared, I saw the head teacher of our class through the gaps in the ruins. She ran from the corner, knelt down, and began to cry. All of a sudden, she saw me and threw herself on me. "My child. Why you did not escape..." Hearing such warm words and seeing the crying teacher, I felt so comforted that I began to cry myself. It was tears of deep affection. My dear teacher, thank you for giving me your warmth.

I was crying loudly when one of our boy students ran over. I called his name and he found me. He was quite calm, asking "Are you ok?" I was underneath a pile of panels, lying in bed. I supported my head with my hand, and answered back "I am fine." I was surprised myself how I could become so calm suddenly. Then I realized that it was his eyes that calmed me down. He asked again "Does it hurt?" "No. Actually my legs do not have

any feeling. Am I disabled?" He answered, "No. You will be rescued soon. Umm... Your pose is nice, like a sleeping beauty." He said. I smiled through my tears. Thank you, my classmate. Thank you for driving away fear for me.

When I was rescued, I was in a coma all the time, but I could feel there were warm and shaking hands that were holding my hands all the time, and that there was a person calling my name beside my ears. Who was this? I exerted all my strength to open my eyes, and saw that it was not one person, but many. Among them were my classmates, and other strangers who I had never met before. My classmates threw themselves at me and cried "Do not sleep; otherwise you will not wake up!" Looking at their anxious and worried faces, my tears rolled down my cheeks. Then my eyes closed again, but I struggled to be conscious. I will not fall asleep. Set your heart at rest. Because I have your support, your encouragement, your love, I will hold on. Thank you for giving me the courage to live on.





The warm hands and loving words deeply touched me. I shall keep your love in my heart forever.

## **The warmth of friendship can thaw an iceberg**

Ma Lin, Class 3, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

On May 12th, unfortunately, I was trapped in the school building by heavy bricks and could not escape. I spent hours in darkness, loneliness and desperation, before I was finally rescued by our teacher and classmates. I felt their warmth flowing into me.



Unfortunately my left foot was fractured. The severe pain reminded me of the horrible disaster and fear. Before long, my father accompanied me to Wuhan for therapy. When we arrived at the railway station, there were a lot of people who had come to meet us. One uncle carried me in his arms and put me into a car, and my father got onto the car later. Then an aunt gave us a gift of a huge bag of groceries. When we arrived at Wuhan Hospital in the Guangzhou Military Zone, many nurses were waiting for us in the burning sun. They showed us into ward, changed me into hospital clothes and entertained me. Although I suffered a lot of pain I had so many people who loved me, it made me feel warm and happy.

As June 1st Children's Day was approaching, many children in Wuhan came to see us to celebrate Children's Day with us. They put on many excellent shows for us and brought many gifts to us, like reading machines, color pencils, school bags, notebooks... which I could hardly hold in my arms. Their generous gifts made it a happy Children's Day for me.

When the Dragon Boat Festival came, the hospital delivered glutinous

rice dumplings to us. Beautiful girls from McDonalds in beautiful costumes brought McDonald combos to us, and a merry-andrew presented an excellent and funny performance for us, which made us laugh. We spent a Dragon Boat Festival without our family, but in a happy festival atmosphere.

The day before our departure, many young girls took us to see scenic spots in Wuhan. We visited the Yellow Crane tower, and saw a big crane standing in front of the tower. There were a lot of flowers in front of the crane which were very beautiful. It is possible to see the whole of Wuhan city from the top of the Yellow Crane tower. We also went to the East Lake, which was endless. The water was as blue as the sky and precious stones. We took many photos, which created a beautiful memory in my mind.

We lost our home, our school, our friends and relatives in the earthquake, but the whole world cared about us and helped us. We were surrounded by warmth, so we shall be content and grateful to all those who helped us.





I was trapped near the door and many feet were stepping on my hands. I felt too much pain to scream.

## **The moment the sky fell down**

Hao Xue, Class 6, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

I remember that I was still a light-hearted young boy before the horrifying moment came. I enjoyed love from my mother and spent many happy times with my younger brother. But at 14:28 on May 12th, everything changed...



Sunday was the day to return to school. I put on clean clothes, packed my things, and then asked for some pocket money from mom. Mom gave me 15 Yuan extra, which made me very happy, because I could buy some food for my younger brother. Then mom left for work, and before she left, she told me "Take care of yourself. Study hard." Then she left. Seeing her back disappearing in the distance, I said to myself "My mom, how many hardships you have had." Then my younger brother took out his favorite toys and asked me to play with him. I told him that I had to go to school then, and told him not to be too naughty at home with his aunt. He nodded his head and said he would behave himself and gave me a goodbye kiss. But I never thought that that would be the last kiss from my younger brother and these would be the last moments with my mom and younger brother.

It was a sunny day on May 12th as usual. Our class came to watch a performance in the County Hall. My teacher Liu divided us into groups and we walked outside from the class happily and excitedly. We walked in line on the road and arrived at the County Hall, where there were many

journalists and many actors wearing different kinds of costumes. The seats inside the hall were sofas and there were bright lights on. I sat on my seat and talked and laughed with my classmates. All of a sudden, the hall began shaking and the hall became dead silent. We thought they were playing music, but why had the music started before the performance? Teacher Liu and our music teacher were just talking about whether it was an earthquake, when the ground began to shake. Sometimes it was shaking to the left and sometimes to the right. It was shaking violently. Suddenly the whole hall moved forward and I was thrown out of my seat against the wall. We were surrounded by the sound of houses collapsing and ceilings falling down. The residential building behind the hall collapsed and pushed down half of the hall at the back. The ground was still shaking violently, and I was thrown against the seat again and then rebounded back again. The exit was jammed with a lot of people and the dancers all left the stage. I was trapped near the door and many feet were stepping on my hands. I felt too much pain to scream. Then the door fell down, and I crept out from under the door with the ground still shaking. Suddenly the ground cracked and the cracks were opening and closing from time to time. I felt that I would be swallowed by the cracks. The residential buildings and office building opposite were still collapsing, with bricks falling down continuously, the air filled with cement and lime dust. Later the sky lighted up and we were brought to the playground by our teacher, when we saw that everywhere was in a mess. The office building had collapsed, the residential building had split and even the solid cement had cracked. On the top floor of the residential building there was an old man crying for help, and there was a young woman trapped under the office building, her blood running into the ground. Near her was a woman whose skull had been crushed, her face covered with blood. A man's left hand was so injured that I could see the flesh and bones. He had felt so much pain that he had lost consciousness.



We later thought of our families after we escaped, and all of us began



to cry. My heart was aching very much and I was very worried about my younger brother in kindergarten. His school was just at the foot of Wangjia Hill. It had half collapsed and there were landslides from time to time. I cried out involuntarily, yelling his name. My mom worked at the Culture and Education Bureau in a five-floor office building at the foot of Wangjia Hill. I was worried about them, praying for them in my mind. Suddenly I received the bad news which came as a big shock and felt as if a knife had been stuck into my chest. I was so shocked that I almost fainted. My little brother! He was only four years old! He had lost his life before he had even started his life's journey. On the fourth day when his little body was uncovered, I saw the glittering stains of tears on his cheeks which had turned purple. He was wearing the pair of socks I had washed for him that day. I yelled at him, calling his name, but he did not reply. The sweet "Sister" I used to hear had become the most beautiful memory to me. My brother's pillow was bought for him by my mother and me. It had a big cloth bear embroidered on it and now he will sleep forever on this pillow. I felt so lonely without my mother and brother...

We had a lot of donations from kind-hearted people to help us survive the winter. It was the Changhong Group that made me feel at home, and it was the Yihai Group that gave me love and warmth. I did not feel lonely any more. We would not cry any more because the honorable Prime Minister and people all over the world were caring us. We were in a Sea of Love without tears. Kind brothers and sisters were taking care of us, propping up a blue sky of hope for us. Your love was like rain in winter, the rising sun in the morning, which brought the hope of life for us!

I wish a safe life to all the kind-hearted all over the world!

The bag was passed around the circle but no one ate. Twice! After the third time the amount still remained the same.

## **I shall always remember the touching moment**

Yang Feng, Class 8, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

On May 12th our houses collapsed, the ground cracked, and the sky turned dark. We lost our relatives, our homes, our food, and our clothes. We became penniless loafers. We sat on the clear field, in despair. How could we survive in such dangerous conditions with no food? All of us thought that we had come to the end of our lives, waiting for death. At this moment, our teachers took charge and told us what to do. They instructed the girls not to move and asked boys to help them search for food in the ruined street. They risked their lives to get into the shops which might have collapsed at any time. Although they searched hard for this "life giving food", they found only a little. The little food they found was not nearly enough for all the people. But we had no other way out.

The teachers collected all the food together and then asked us if we were hungry. All students answered together "No!" Among us were some boys who used to be very naughty. But in just a few hours after the earthquake, it seemed that they had grown up suddenly. The teachers said "We can not get in contact with the outside world because there are no communications and the road has been destroyed, so we might have to starve for the next few days. The food we have is for an emergency only. If you are hungry now, try not to think about it." Then the teacher was on the verge of tears.





In the evening, many students could not bear the feeling of hunger and held their stomachs with their hands. The teachers could not bear it any more and handed out one bag of snacks to each group of students. Our group had ten or more persons and we got one bag of snacks worth 0.5 Yuan. The bag was passed around the circle but no one ate. Twice! After the third time the amount still remained the same. Then a student said "Let's stop passing it around. The package has been opened. If we do not eat it, it will become inedible tomorrow." We thought about it and agreed with him and then we started eating. We ate slowly, because every one of us wanted to leave more for the other classmates. It was half an hour before we finally ate it up. Our throats seemed to be blocked up by something, and our eyes were filled with tears.

It was extremely cold after the earthquake, just like winter. Many students were so cold that they started to shiver. The teachers asked us to sit down on the ground, back to back to get warmth.

The few days which I spent with my classmates after the earthquake were the most difficult time for us. In those days, we shared many touching moments.

I shall never forget that sad time we shared with our teachers and classmates when we overcame our difficulties.

I said to myself "I must survive. I shall not only pass on he boy's words to his parents, but also fulfill the dream of the dead."

## Memories of the May 12th earthquake

Pang Yazhi, Class 4, Grade 7, Beichuan Middle School

Beichuan used to be a beautiful place, with green hills, blue water, singing birds, flowers giving forth their fragrance, and hardworking Qiang minorities living happily. However, all of this was destroyed by the terrible earthquake at 14:28 on May 12th, 2008, and I lost my feet in the earthquake...

I can still remember that it was a quiet day on May 12th. I got up with my grandmother early in the morning because my father was taking his annual leave then. He was going on holiday to Yunnan with my mother on May 9th, and would come back on May 13th so they asked my grandmother to take care of me while they were away. As it was a Monday, which was a school day, we went out and had rice noodles at the Zhongda Restaurant. My grandmother said to me "Yaya, I need to prepare lunch for your grandfather, so I must return to Leigu at noon. You have lunch in Maoba and I will come to see you again in the afternoon." I said "OK, grandma." When we reached the bus station, I said goodbye to my grandmother, and carried my school bag to go to Maoba for school.

At noon, I had lunch with some of my classmates. At that time, we did not know that this was the last lunch we had together. At 12:20, the bell rang, and we went and sat in our class room to watch TV. While we were watching TV and singing songs, the ground began to shake for the first time. We thought it was just a minor earthquake as in Beichuan we had one or





two minor earthquakes each year. Some of my classmates and I walked to the hall on the third floor in front of Class 1, Grade 6 to see what had happened. But no one knew that the earthquake had stopped after the first shaking, and then just like being angered, the earth began to shake violently. We were thrown onto the floor heavily. The air turned grey. The place where I lay down sank to the left. When I opened my eyes again, I was shocked. Our four-floor school building had become a two storey building. The school building had collapsed in the middle, while our Class 1, Grade 6 was just in the middle, so all the students were buried inside. Cries for help and weeping came from this area, and there were sounds of landslides and houses collapsing from time to time. When I turned my head, I saw one of my feet was smashed by a falling cement slab. One wood panel had shaved my stomach and crushed my whole right leg. But I did not cry because I had read in books that I should not cry at this moment, as crying would just make the bleeding worse. There were two girls beside me. The whole body of Yu Shengqi was crushed under a flagstone and blood was trickling out of her mouth all the time and her body was trembling. One of Yang Yang's feet was pressed in the space between me and Yu Shengqi. I moved a little and she withdrew her foot. A few other girls and I shouted at her. Li Dingyi's lower body was crushed under a big wood panel, and after groaning she had no breath. At this moment, Baiman Zeli, a boy who had moved to our school from Tibet in Grade 5, crept out from nowhere. Leaning against a flagstone and foaming at his mouth, he cried to me and told me to take a message for him to his parents, after I was rescued. Then he was silent. More and more classmates were dying, and some girls and I cried "Help! We are upstairs. A few classmates were already dead." People downstairs were discussing what to do, and shouted "Kids upstairs, do not cry. Keep your strength. Shout when we come to rescue you." There were many aftershocks, so students in the playground downstairs had to move to the playground of the County Government. At this moment, I heard a girl

from our class who shouted to us "You must hold on." Yes, Class 1, Grade 5 used to be a happy class. In the last semester of Grade 6, the class average score for mathematics reached 98.36, the highest score in the history of our school. Sadly, many of our classmates lost their lives. At this moment, a kind man showed up. It seemed as if I saw new hope and I exerted all my strength to shout "Help! Help!" The man looked at me and said "Hold on. I will call more people to help." Then the man climbed down from the school building and shouted "Come here. A little girl's foot has been smashed." I can not remember how long it took before I was dragged out from cement slabs which were held up by bricks underneath and flag poles sawn into several sections. The man carried me. I had lost so much blood that I fainted. The man slapped me on my face and said "Do not sleep, little girl, otherwise you will not wake up again." These words hung in my mind all the time, and I said to myself "I must survive. I shall not only pass on the boy's words to his parents, but also fulfill the dreams of the dead." Their dream was to enter a good college. I forced my eyes open, and all was blue. Then I was put onto the only stretcher and carried to the playground of the County Government. After a while, I heard someone from the old town talking "The old town has collapsed." Then I suddenly remembered my grandmother. What if my grandmother came to Beichuan from Leigu? I was too scared to think more. As it turned dark, I saw the shadow of my anxious grandfather. I shouted "Grandpa! Grandpa!" He heard me, and ran toward me. He was in great sorrow looking at me, his hands trembling and he turned back the quilt coving my feet and saw I had lost one foot. I asked my grandfather "Grandpa, where is grandma?" "Grandma is fine. She is in Leigu," he answered. I felt at ease now. Then I said "Grandpa, I lost my foot." Then my granduncle came. My grandpa and granduncle sent me to a transfusion centre for a transfusion. All my granduncles came to see me and then they returned to Leigu and drove the car of my granduncle to Renjiaping. Late at night when all my granduncles were together, my grandfather told them





"We must carry her out." Then my grandfather bundled me with safety belts on the stretcher. There was still rubble falling from the hill. It normally took 20 minutes only to walk from downtown to Renjiaping. But it took more than two hours for my grandfather and granduncles to carry me. When we arrived at Renjiaping, I was driven to Mianyang Central Hospital for an operation. When my right shoe was cut off, four of my toes were already smashed and only part of my right foot could be saved. I lost my left foot forever.

My parents finally returned on May 16th because of flight cancellations. When Mom saw how badly injured I was, she knelt down and cried "My god! What evil things did I do? Why are you so cruel to my little daughter?" My aunt and grandfather dragged mom out of my ward and my aunt told her, "Sister, do not cry. If you cry, your daughter will cry too." While my father walked to me and held my face, crying "Yaya, do not cry. We will be your feet." I felt sadder at his words. It was the first time I cried after the earthquake.

On May 19th, my right foot turned black. I had to have my right foot amputated. This was again a hard decision for my parents. In the morning, I was taken into the operating room and my father told me "My girl, do not be afraid. I will be waiting outside." "OK" I nodded my head. When I was in the operating room, the doctor was still busy with another operation so I had to wait for a while. I began to talk with some doctors from Beijing. I invited them to come to Beichuan again to enjoy some Beichuan Preserved Ham when the rebuilding was all finished. I did not have any fear at all when I was in the operating room. In the afternoon my operation was successfully completed. When I woke up I heard that the earthquake would happen again. My parents had to move me to a tent and I still needed another blood transfusion. Sometimes it was very painful.

On May 23rd, I was transferred to Wuhan city. I met Mr. Kong Weijia from Wuhan Union Hospital on the train. He smelt my feet and asked the doctors

to change my medication.

On May 24th, I was sent to Wuhan Union Hospital with another 27 patients. My Father told me that many Wuhan citizens would come to greet us. I was taken to a warm and clean ward by the doctors when I arrived. In the afternoon I had a check-up and my blood count was very low. That of a normal person is 11g to 12g, and mine was just half of that. On top of that my feet were severely infected. The hospital warned my parents and I was placed on the critical list.

On May 25th, I was taken into the operating theatre to have my third operation. My left foot was so severely infected that the hospital wanted to perform a high-level amputation. But with the efforts of the professor, only a small part was cut off. After the operation I suffered great pain but I refused to have anodyne, as it was not good for memory. It seemed as if I had dozens of tubes going in and out of my body. With the loving and intensive care of the professor and the nurse my hyperpyrexia and infection were brought under control.



On June 10th, I had my fourth operation. I began to recover, and had special care from many kind-hearted people. Volunteers accompanied me every day, helping me step out of a psychological shadow.

On June 24th, the professor gently took out my stitches. Although it hurt a little, I felt much better than I did during the last operation. Then I recovered slowly and went to the Sichuan Artificial Limb Factory where artificial limbs were fitted for me. Bending a leg is simple for a normal person. But for a patient like me who had been lying on a bed for a long period, it was a big challenge for me to bend my legs each time during rehabilitative training. After two months of hard training I finally stood up bravely on my artificial limbs.

I felt so happy that I could stand again after I had lost my feet. When I am sitting in classroom now, I think to myself "No pain, no gain. The earthquake has destroyed my body but it can not defeat my heart." Recalling the

love of my relatives and the strangers I made up my mind to study hard to make myself a useful person for our society. Although I am disabled, I can repay those who love and care for me with my work. I am certain that I will succeed.



My teacher said "How can I leave? What would you do if I left? There are no parents who leave their children behind and escape on their own."

## **Our hearts are linked together forever**

Liang Xiaoqing, Class 4, Grade 7, Beichuan Middle School

May 12th was a terrifying day, which made us sad and afraid.

I was still a student of Grade 6 then. At noon, the sky was grey and a little depressing. When we finished our class, we went outside to play for a short time. Later on at 2:28pm in the afternoon, it seemed as if the ground was shaking, and soon it began to shake violently.

I stopped to look at students on the playground who were obviously scared and running around. At this time, our head teacher ran to the door of our classroom, followed by many students, shouting "It's an earthquake. Run!" The students followed the teacher. We were in the aisle while the principal was yelling at us, asking us to come downstairs as quickly as possible fearing the building might collapse. But all of us were so frightened that our legs became too weak to run.


The teacher told us to cover our heads, in case something fell down and hit our heads. I looked at our teacher, and it seemed as if she was more worried than us. After a while, the earthquake subsided a little. The teacher told us to run fast, and some of us ran downstairs hand in hand. Finally we made it to the playground. There were still aftershocks. Our teacher kept us together and told us not to be afraid. But how could we not be afraid? Our homes were destroyed, and the green hills and blue water had disappeared. It was just at this time that the hill opposite collapsed again, which blocked the road ahead. The sky turned grey with dust and I was very



afraid. "Mom and dad, where are you? I am so afraid. Come to rescue me! I want to leave here." I felt helpless and lonely.

The sky turned dark and aftershocks shook the earth from time to time. My heart was trembling too. The principal told us to go to the hill at the back in case another landslide reached us here. We quickened our pace and climbed the hill as quickly as we could. I saw my classmates and teachers hands were hurt and still bleeding, which made me more scared.

Then the teacher came over, patted me on my shoulder and smiled. She was looking at me with her tender eyes, just as before. She patted me on my head, asking "what are you thinking about?" I said "I am thinking of my parents. I do not know how they are now." I began to cry then. "Don't cry, my child. If you want, pretend that I am your mother!" Hearing this I could not control my tears but cried...



After a while, my teacher told me slowly "I have a daughter too myself. But I do not know how she is now either." I asked "Why don't you go to find her?" My teacher said "How can I leave? What would you do if I left? There are no parents who leave their children behind and escape on their own."

Dear teacher your selflessness and fearlessness will always shine in my heart!

The sky was crying, but we did not cry. The earth was shaking, but we did not fear it! Student victims, we can overcome the difficulties, because we have our teachers just like our parents. Our hearts are linked together forever!

At the last minute of their lives, they told me "Yue, hold on.  
Do not give up."

## God, please stop

Li Shiyue, Class 2, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School

When I was only a small child, I liked to hold my mother's hands and look up into the blue sky at white clouds that looked like cotton candy. I used to think that the world was beautiful and I spent every day with a grateful heart. I never believed "When loved, even the gods could be dying." But now, the sky is no longer blue, and the world is not colorful any more. We are just teenaged students, but we have experienced death and loss at such an early age. We complain and we are dissatisfied.



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God, please stop! Do you know that your anger has made so many people leave us forever? Do you know how many families were broken apart because of your anger? It is widely known that environmental destruction has brought too much of a burden to our green world and we have been punished in return. So please stop treating us so cruelly.

God, please stop! Do you know that the few seconds, which might be a short flash to you, seemed longer than forever to me? In a few seconds I lost so much, far too much! My friends, my relatives and my home have all gone. I was kept in a small dark room. At that moment, I was so depressed and helpless that I could not imagine what it was like outside. But I was isolated from the outside world. I could not be seen or heard. I felt I was going to die with the smell of death surrounding me. Do you know about all this? I even thought of giving up at that moment in endless darkness and with no person around me. I turned on my mobile and wanted to send an



SMS of my last words to my parents. "My dear parents, I might be dead when you see this message. I am so grateful for your care over the past 14 years. Please forgive me if I can be with you any more. Please do not be sad. I am sorry. I want to be your daughter in my next lifetime..." Then my tears ran down my cheeks thinking about how I could not accompany my beloved parents and could not see my schoolmates any more, thinking of my promises to my classmates, and that I still had a lot of things that I had not done, and so many regrets...

When I felt most desperate, I heard a voice from a classmate beside me. She was also trapped underneath rubble. She encouraged me, saying "Hold on. There will be rescuers coming..." It was only at this moment I realized that there were many students who were trapped under fallen concrete just like me. But all of them had the hope to live on. However, none of them survived. At the last minute of their lives, they told me "Yue, hold on. Do not give up." I cried and nodded at them. I knew how they did not want to leave us, leave their parents and the world they loved.

When I was just about to become desperate I heard my father shouting, "Yue, where are you?" I thought it was just my imagination but again my father's voice echoed inside my ears. It was my father! My father has come! I cried out "Dad, I am here." Then I heard my father yelling "Here is a person. Come here!"...

It was later that I found out that my parents had stayed outside the ruin for 3 days and nights. My mother had no food at all. I can also understand their feelings that they wanted to rescue me but could do nothing. The first day was a rainy day. There was very heavy rain. My mother was shedding tears which combined with the rain while my father was digging and removing stones together with rescuers. On the second day my father held my hands and said with a husky voice, "Yue, you must hold on. I will buy any food you want after you are rescued."

God, please be so kind as to give us a stable home. Please do not let

fear break the serenity. We will always protect this land which looks after us.  
Will try our best to change our bad behavior and make you happy again!

It is said that the dead will become stars, guarding the people they treasured and loved before their death. Now I like to look up into the sky, staring at the shining stars silently and thinking of the past "life" I had with the "stars". I believe that they are guarding us in heaven and I will remember them forever.

You will always be in my heart!




Then all the boys moved forward quickly and yelled into the gaps "Hey, boys and girls. We are here to help you!"

## United group

Jing Tao, Class 3, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

On May 12th 2008, the mountains collapsed and the earth cracked open. The earth did not give us enough time for preparation. Following a roar, the sounds of reading in classes and cheering in the playground all stopped suddenly...



The boys of our class were playing basketball in the playground, but were thrown onto the ground by the sudden earthquake. While there was little time for us to understand what had happened, our physical education teacher yelled "Lie down! Lie down!" And all of us having physical education in the playground did that. At this moment, some students began to yell and others began to cry... I looked around, and saw the mountain beside our school disappearing in a landslide with big boulders rolling towards us and choking dust billowing out above us. Then the school building in front of us shook and collapsed. Instantly our dear teachers, classmates, and all familiar faces were buried in the ruin. White dust filled the air and the whole school became a blur.

Although the earthquake stopped, there were still intermittent aftershocks. Then our head teacher arrived. Seeing that all of us were safe he divided us into two groups, boys in one group and girls in another. The boys went to the ruins to help rescue the students that were buried under the rubble and the girls were assigned to go to the school infirmary to take care of the injured.



The girls also wanted to go to the ruins to look for the buried, but the boys pushed the girls aside and said "You girls cannot go there. It is too dangerous. Take care of the injured." Then all the boys moved forward quickly and yelled into the gaps "Hey, boys and girls. We are here to help you!" At this moment, there was a voice coming out of a corner of the ruin "Help..." Duan Shengdong and Pang Yongxin followed the voice and found the place where a girl was buried. "We've found one person. Come over here!" Pang Yongxin was removing the bricks with his hands. Slowly there appeared a gap, through which we could see there was the head of a girl inside, but her body was trapped down under the bricks. They continued to dig with the skin of their hands being torn off, but they did not say it hurt. The rescue continued and after a while the bricks on the body of the girl were removed, but her left leg was pinned down by a concrete pillar. We had to try to lever it up. Duan Shengdong ran around and found an iron bar. They sweated over levering up this "talon of death" and the girl was rescued. Pang Yongxin helped her to her feet and put her on Duan Shengdong's back, who carried her from the ruin to the playground so that we could take care of her.



Her face was covered with blood and she was covered in dust from head to toe. I found a bottle of mineral water for her and poured some into the lid. I dipped a cotton swab into the water to wipe away the sand from her eyes and wipe away the dust and blood from her face. She said she was thirsty but I could not let her drink water as drinking water would cause complications because of her serious injuries. All I could do was smear water on her lips with a cotton swab. She was so weak that she nearly fainted several times but I kept talking to her and encouraging her and told her that the rescue team would arrive soon. The rescue team came in a few hours. Pang Yongxin and I carried her to the doctor to take care of her, and then we devoted ourselves to the rescue work again...

Our beautiful schoolyard was destroyed in the earthquake but the spirit

of Beichuan Middle School students can not be destroyed. I am proud of our team and proud of our heroic class. I believe our class will always have this heroic spirit. We are a tough generation! We are helpful Chinese!

I cried "There are more people inside..."

## **Beginning again turned out to be so hard**

Li Guozhi, Class 6, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

It was still hot and suffocating. After our siesta, our classmates returned to the classroom with a little drowsiness as usual. There was dead silence and no one knew that danger was approaching us step by step after the calmness.

The first class was physics. I took out my book and put on my glasses. The air was full of the breath of our 70 lives, young and vigorous. It shouldn't happen this way! It really shouldn't! The ground began shaking and in just a few seconds our whole school building collapsed. I shall never forget the scene of our classmates rushing outside, which was the last time I ever saw them. My dearest friends! My deceased classmates of Class 9, senior 1! The panic and terror stopped all of us from escaping from our classroom. The shaking was so violent that I couldn't even stand upright. I struggled to run outside but the floor began to collapse when we left our seats. I saw bricks falling down in front of me in the darkness so I crouched out of instinct. I pulled my desk mate back so that she would not run forward and be injured by the falling bricks. I cannot remember what I saw at that time. All I could feel was that I was falling down with the collapsing floor. Both of us were crushed by the thick wall and I tried to touch her with my hand. I felt calmer after I had made sure that she was fine. The ground became more steady and I opened my eyes slowly. I could see nothing but a faint





light. I breathed slowly, feeling just like that faint light that could disappear at anytime. I endeavored to stay clear-headed and fortunately my head was not injured, but my waist and belly were aching so much that I could not bear it. My legs were pinned down by the body of my classmate and soon I lost all feeling in my legs. I thought all hope was lost and even if I was rescued, I would become disabled. I did not even know how long I would be trapped there.

I tried to calm myself down and then I heard a lot of crying and shouting voices surrounding me. I wanted to move myself because I would lose my breath if I stayed in this position, but I found only my hands and one of my feet could move. I tried to feel around, and finally I felt a pair of hands. I held the hands tightly, which were a little bit cold. "Is that you, Yang Qing?" There was no answer. I asked again desperately "Is that you, Yang Qing?" "It's me, GuoZhi." Her voice was so feeble but I came to know after I was rescued that those hands were not hers. Those were the hands of our monitor. Our dearest monitor, do you know who accompanied you on the last journey of your lifetime?

After half an hour, the oxygen under the ruin was almost used up by us and I felt it become harder and harder to breath. I fell into despair and felt I could not sustain my spirit any more. The rescuers outside were encouraging us to hold on and said they would rescue us soon, but it was not easy to remove the wall on top of my body. I prepared myself for death. My classmates beside me were shouting loudly, but to me, death was no longer something fearful. But my heart began hurting when I thought of my father, my mother, my grandfather, my grandmother, my teacher and my classmates. What if I die? I had not paid back the people who loved me. Would it be fair to them if I died? Thinking of this, I regained the faith to live. But the severe injury to my body made me fall unconscious. My classmates around me woke me up and I opened my eyes and saw the faint light again. I heard Liping's voice. She asked me "Guozhi, what shall we do?" I

forced myself to smile and said "I do not know. Maybe we will die!" I felt like a coward because the word "die" came out of my mouth so easily. I thought of a test called "Father and Son in an Earthquake". I used to have dreams, but now I give up so easily. I shouted as if I was mad "How can I realize my dreams if I die in this place? How I wanted to cry but my eyes were dry. I heard Tang Zhi talking to me "Guozhi, would you like to be my classmate and roommate in our next life?" I had no strength at all. "Sure! but if you can get out of here, you must tell my parents and my grandparents that I will repay them in my next life..." I could hardly continue as I choked with sobs and I felt my heart bleeding. Was it only in my next life that I could be in the same class with my classmates? Was it only in my next life that I could repay the ones who had raised me? The endless darkness was hanging over us. I closed my eyes silently and wanted to cry but I did not know how to do that. I knew that I wanted to live but I was so weak that I had lost the courage to live. I could hear my teacher's voice coming through the thick wall. Her voice was so gentle that I shouted desperately "Teacher, help us! Help us! I cannot hold on..." I heard our teacher crying and saying "My students hold on!" But I really did not know how I could hold on. I was just about to give up when the stone under my feet was removed. Light came flooding in but I did not dare to open my eyes to see it, as I was afraid it was just an illusion. My classmate over my legs was helped out and it was only at this moment that I came to believe that I would be rescued. I opened my eyes and had a pleasant surprise. The light hurt my eyes. I saw a big hand extended to me and I felt like I had been offered a second chance in life. But I was stuck so tightly that I could not be moved. I told the rescuers that I was not in an urgent situation and told them to pull out the people around me. Only then did I learn that the hands I was holding were dead cold and they were our monitor's hands. I saw our monitor with her face covered with blood and I could not recognise her facial features. What I could remember was the thick glasses on her face. I could no longer bear it and tears rolled



down my cheeks. "Monitor, monitor..." But she was laying there silently, her eyes closed and her face covered with blood...

Other classmates around me were rescued gradually and I could move myself a little then. I breathed the fresh air deeply because I knew this was the source of life. I had no strength at all. I had to tolerate the severe pain and moved myself from under the wall with the help of a desk. I came to know later that it was a student from senior 3 who had rescued me. I wanted to ask him for his name but they said that was not important... I cried "There are more people inside..."

The moment I saw the sky again, it was cloudy. The school building which had collapsed was like a cadaver in the flying dust. The smell of concrete was mixed with blood. I felt myself lucky to have been given a new chance in life but tears welled up in my eyes for the unlucky ones.

Looking into the sky, I was wondering where my future would be. Would there be a place for us to study in the future?



This Uncle was rescuing others in the ruin. He was not wearing gloves and his fingers were bleeding.

## Hello, Uncle

Hou Qi, Class 2, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

My dear Uncle,

how are you now?

In the afternoon of May 12th, many young lives were taken away by Azrael. I was lucky enough to escape from the hands of Azrael. Looking at the ruins and the people, I fell into despair. I thought of my parents in Beichuan, my elder sister who might be dead or alive and my relatives and friends. I searched for my elder sister on the playground. How I wanted to see her. All of a sudden, I saw a classmate of my elder sister. I ran towards him but I was told that my sister was trapped under the ruins. I ran towards the ruins and shouted myself hoarse "Sister, sister..." It was as if Azrael saw my sadness and was so touched that I heard the faint voice of my sister. I ran towards her voice. I heard her telling me to rescue her and then she told me to live a happy life. And then there was no sound. I could no longer control myself but cried, and began to remove the stones like mad.

At this moment, an Uncle showed up. He held my trembling shoulders. I turned around and grabbed his hands as if I had found a savior. I cried and told him "Uncle, could you please rescue my sister? Please..." Finally I choked with a sob. This Uncle sighed and told me "Hi, do not be sad. We will try our best! Your sister told you to live happily, you must realize her dream. It is dangerous here. Aftershocks may happen anytime. Go to a safe place first." I walked down from the ruin and saw that this Uncle was rescuing others in



the ruins. He was not wearing gloves and his fingers were bleeding, but it was as if he was not feeling the pain. I did not know where this Uncle came from, but I felt he was a hero. Suddenly, an aftershock came. I squatted. I lifted my head after that and saw the Uncle fall down from the ruins. I was worried and went over to comfort him. It seemed as if his hand was fractured. I asked him to have a rest, but he said "I can continue. Let me continue with the rescue work. There are so many children waiting for me to rescue them!" Then he rushed back onto the ruins.

My sister lost her life but the brave Uncle has stayed in my memory. I met him six months after the earthquake. He and I sat down and he told me his stories. He said "My name is Li Xingfeng. I live in downtown Beichuan. I lost my daughter and my wife in this earthquake. It was a shame that I could not rescue them." His eyes were red, tears rolling down. Seeing this big man weeping I did not know how to console him. I held his hands in mine and asked him to calm down. "Uncle, do not blame yourself. I think you are a great person. They have left you, but you should live happily for them." I told him. But he shook his head and said "I am not a great person. I saw so many children lose their lives, just like delicate flowers withering in a hot wind and I could do nothing about it." I knew he was blaming himself for not rescuing his wife and daughter but it wasn't his fault. was it? I was sleepless that night.

My dear uncle Li, how are you now? You are a good person, and will be repaid.

The girl had been bleeding since she was put in the car but she had covered up all her problems with her sweet laughter.

## **Little girl, I hope you will be happier**

Yang Yaopeng, Class 4, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

In the afternoon of May 12th, I was sent to Mianyang for treatment together with other injured people. But there were not enough cars for transporting the injured so the relatives and assistants could not go with them.

After getting into the car I held a little girl in my arms. Her head was bandaged up with a strip of cloth soaked by her blood, which dripped onto my arms. But the little girl did not cry or shout. I asked her "Does it hurt?" "No. I only feel a little tickle." "Really? I see you have a serious injury." "Not really. Just my scalp got hurt." "Fine. You will feel better after we get to the hospital. But, do not sleep." "Why?" She asked. "Because if you fall asleep, we will not give you candy when we arrive there." I told her. "Then I will not fall asleep." She answered. I moved my gaze to what lay outside, thinking of what had happened that day. From the shocking noise, to the moment I was trapped by the falling wall and then to the moment I was rescued by my classmates, and finally to this moment, when I was sent to the hospital. "Am I making a film?" I laughed at myself.

"Brother, were you scared?" The little girl asked me. "Yes. I was very scared." "Why are you laughing?" "To help take away my fear." "I do not want to be so scared either..." She began laughing. After a while, she stopped talking. I pushed her a little and asked "Are you asleep?" She did not answer. Suddenly I found my hands and legs were covered with blood. I was a little





scared and held up her wrist and felt her pulse. "Oh, I can feel your pulse." I felt more relaxed. There were so many things that had happened today that she might be too tired. A short sleep would not matter. We would arrive at the hospital soon.

After we got to the hospital I handed the little girl to a doctor and told the doctor "She has fallen asleep." The doctor used his stethoscope and then felt her pulse. He asked me "Are you her relative?" I said "Yes. I am her brother." I do not know why I answered like this. "I am sorry, but she passed away twenty minutes ago." "It's impossible. She talked to me just now..." "Sorry!" The doctor left. "Could you look at her again? She may be still alive. She talked with me just now..." I was at a loss then...

It was only when I climbed out of the car that I realized that my trousers were soaked with blood. Then I realized that the little girl had been bleeding since she was put in the car and she had been covering up all her problems with her sweet laughter. She was so sweet and optimistic...

Maybe this little girl has gone to a place more beautiful than our world so I wish her happiness with her sunny and sweet smile. I hope that all who have lost their relatives in the earthquake are as optimistic as the little girl.

Fear and loneliness were hanging over all of us. No one knew what would happen next.

## **True love appears only in big disasters**

Jing Xiaoyan, Class 5, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

"Holding your face in my hands tenderly, I wiped away your tears for you. My heart will always belong to you, and the warmth has not changed..." Every time I hear this familiar song, the touching scenes in the earthquake will appear in my eyes.

I will never forget the day of May 12th, when our schoolyard was turned into ruins so suddenly. What was more fearful was that lots of students were buried under the ruins. Some of them were not injured, but were just shouting for help under a floor slab with heart-breaking voices. Some were injured and also buried under a floor slab. Their voices were more miserable and their lives might end at any time. While there were some others that were dead. Our eyes had seen so many corpses in the thick smoke, which made our hair stand on end. As this was the first time we had experienced such a shocking moment we could not help ourselves but cry. Fear and loneliness were hanging over all of us. No one knew what would happen next. After the earthquake, our teachers did not panic. They arranged to send the rescued students to safe places. When we got to the safe places, some of our teachers stayed with us and others went to rescue those buried. But the floor slab was so thick that they could not find any way to remove it. All they could do was to look at the buried students. But they did not give up! If one person could not remove it, then two of them tried.



If two persons still couldn't succeed, then three of them came over... They believed that the floor slab would finally be removed. The students buried there were rescued one by one. Some injured senior students also joined in the rescue work and some of them were rescued hours later. All that was in their minds was the students and teachers buried under the ruins, who were still in great danger... As there were no tools, they had to remove the floor slab and the bricks with their own hands, which were covered with blood. Aftershocks happened from time to time and collapsing continued as Azrael still indulged in willful persecution. All of us were wandering at the brim of Azrael but our teachers stayed with us all the time, encouraging us to live on. But they could not take care of their own relatives at this moment. I learned after the earthquake that many of our teachers lost their relatives forever in this earthquake, but they stayed with us, working for the love of their students.



"Natural disasters are cruel, but we humans have love. True love appears only in big disasters." I lost so much in the earthquake, but I saw so many touching moments and for that I feel so grateful.



We ran outside in panic. When we were outside, the mist was so heavy that we could see nothing. We squatted on the lawn.

## **At the moment of the earthquake**

Jiang Wenjia, Class 6, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

The whole world cannot forget the May 12th earthquake, which threw the resourceful people of Beichuan into a disaster and turned beautiful Beichuan into ruins. The May 12th earthquake, which split many happy families, will be a dark memory in my mind forever.

At around 1 p.m. on the afternoon of May 12th, we were woken up by Teacher Liu, who called us to gather in the playground so that we could go to attend the commendation meeting at the county hall. The earthquake began just after we arrived at the hall and sat down. All of us squatted with our hands gripping our heads. Soon, the earthquake stopped and we ran outside in panic. When we were outside, the mist was so heavy that we could see nothing. We squatted on the lawn. Then after a few minutes teacher Liu told us to go to Beichuan Middle School.



Our way was blocked in many places by big stones which we had to bypass. When we returned to school, all of the students began to look for their own relatives. Finally I found my grandmother and I ran into her arms and cried. Before night fall, Grandfather Wen had rescued my younger brother from the kindergarten. My grandmother held my younger brother in her arms and her eyes were blurred by tears. There were small injuries all over my brother's body and he had a fractured leg. A lot of kind-hearted people came to help my brother. They brought water and food for him. At

night a strong wind blew and my uncle brought a thick quilt for my brother and grandmother, so that they would not get cold.

I could not forget another old grandma. She had injuries herself, but she carried her pan and cooking utensils on her back to cook porridge for us. She saw my brother was injured, so she brought him a bowl of porridge. I asked her where her relatives were, but she said she had no idea. They had been separated in the earthquake. All of a sudden I fell silent. She walked away in the distance, so lonely and old.

The following day, my brother was sent to Mianyang for treatment. We were taken care of by many volunteers, who gave us meticulous care.

Relief supplies were sent to us by different people. We returned to study in Beichuan Middle School with the help of Changhong Company. A lot of kind-hearted people donated their clothes, quilts and money to us, so that we would not suffer from cold and hunger again. They treated us just like their own children.

I will study hard and repay the kind-hearted people who cared for us. I feel indebted to those who have helped me.

We began to encourage each other. "As long as we can see some light, we will be rescued."

## Unforgettable Memories

Tang Yonghong, Class 4, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

Rain, wind, rainbows and hope are always mixed together. We are always deeply touched and warmed by true love in the world.

The unforgettable day is imprinted in our hearts and minds. It was a sunny day as usual and many of us were out in the sun.

After the afternoon nap, we went to our class room to begin our lessons. Our English teacher was teaching us a new lesson and all of us were listening carefully, when suddenly the school building began to shake. The whole school building was soon filled with screams. Some students already knew what was happening but others still did not know. The desks and chairs also began to shake, all in a mess. I was so shocked that I sat still in my chair until I was thrown onto the ground. Then I felt the school building begin to collapse, just like a person falling down from the sky. The fear I felt at that time was the first I had experienced till then. At the moment of falling, a long moment, I thought of many things. My parents, my teacher, my relatives, my friends... I could not believe this was true, and I thought I was just dreaming. The heavy ceiling collapsed and the desks and chairs fell onto our bodies. The screams and shouting filled the room... We were engulfed by darkness, and did not know how many teachers and classmates were buried in the building. You can imagine the terror at that time. I thought I would not live, as the aftershocks pressed me more and more tightly. It was hard for me to talk. Suddenly we saw a faint light entering. We began to encourage





each other. "As long as we can see some light, we will be rescued." "We shall maintain our strength now. Do not cry." "Listen. There are rescuers outside. They are working out a way to rescue us." "Let's sing a song, to let the teachers and classmates outside know that we are still alive." We began to sing with our hoarse voices and we talked about the Sports competition we had just played and talked about how excellently the boys of our class did in the game and that we would win the first place in the basketball competition next year.

We talked and asked for help. Before dark, some of the students and I were rescued. Looking at the rescuers, we felt that they had become older than they actually were. As I could not move my legs at that time, a girl about the same age as me, carried me on her back and took me to look for our head teacher. She checked my condition from time to time while walking. After about ten minutes, we met other students of our class who were rescued, all of them were bleeding. All I was thinking about at that moment was that we were so lucky to be rescued.

In the evening, the army came and began a massive rescue operation. The next day, we were taken to Jiuzhou Stadium by car. While I was in the car, all I could do was to pray that they could step out of the darkness safely...

I was rescued with her help at the last moment of her life.

## How can I forget?

Feng Jun, Class 4, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

Sometimes we forget things that we try hard to remember. But how can I forget this heart-breaking moment?

When leaves fall from a tree, they find a home and realize their dream. But the leaving of relatives is imprinted in people's hearts forever. I feel so much pain when I am alone and sad and this reminds me of the terrifying moment again.

The earth was shaking. Screams and cries were mixed with the dust in the air. Numbness, terror and panic were still so vivid. Hard stones, unmerciful ceilings, warm bodies, and books which were covered with dust, fell down on my body. Injury spread all over my body. I was sad, afraid and worried. All types of thoughts came into my mind.

"How are you, my father and mother?"

"How are you, my grandparents?"

"And how are you, my relatives, friends, classmates and teachers... I am so worried about you. Where are you?"

At that moment I felt desperate, I saw some light. I knew I had hope because I saw some light. I began to shout "Help". The shouting made me so exhausted that I felt I was a fool. I should maintain my strength.

"The stone over my head hurts me so much. Who will help me?" I asked. She heard me. She was at death's door, but she tried her best to remove the stone that were threatening my life. Finally her hands stopped and did not



move again. "He Chunyan? Do not stop. Do not stop. We will play together when we are out. No!" But she did not hear me any more. I was rescued with her help at the last moment of her life. She reduced my pain and led me to a new understanding!

You removed the stone above my head in the last moment of your life, and meantime you lost your life; like the falling leaves which realize their dream at the last moment of their lives. I have found the true meaning of life!



Even the faint light became luxurious in the darkness.

## The unforgettable memories

Zhang Dajun, Class 5, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

Not so long ago I was in the middle of the earthquake and those images are still in my mind. They have become unforgettable memories in my life.

Now I am going to begin the story which has a beginning without an ending.

The flowers in May and teenagers are so beautiful, but this moment did not last. God had a nap that day, which was memorized by millions of people. At that moment, millions of people were begging for a new life and I was among them. Buried down in the ruin of a school by the pressure of concrete I felt even a faint light had become a luxury in the darkness. My body was crushed by the reinforced concrete and my feet were trapped. It was even harder for me to breath, as all I could breathe was cement dust. I wanted to shout but I couldn't. At that time, my dream was to remove this abhorrent stuff. I could not move my body except for five fingers of my right hand which was caught under cold rough bricks. I could feel the body of another classmate with my hand, but I could do nothing but call her gently. I did not know if it was a boy or a girl.

I thought maybe it was a dream and I must keep conscious and maintain my strength as I waited for rescue. At that time, I was desperate and cried. But my loved ones were missing me, so I held on. I did not know how long it was before I heard voices above my head coming nearer and nearer. The aftershocks happened from time to time, which made it impossible for me

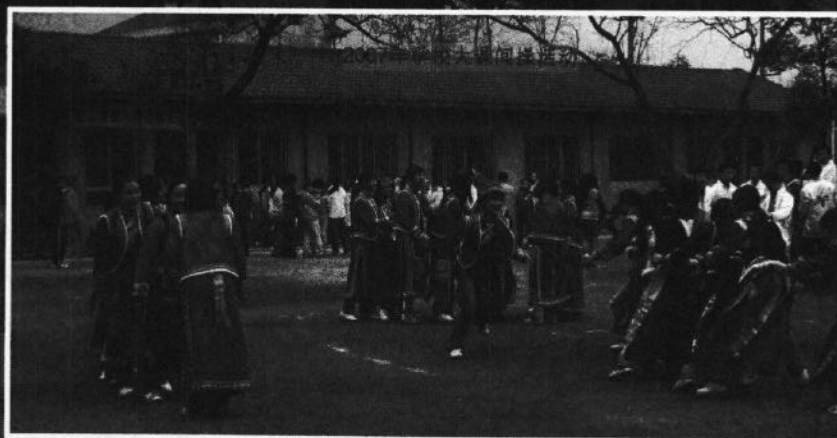


to feel relaxed. I felt like a cradle hanging between two cliffs which could fall into the abyss with each shaking. Noises could be heard from time to time. When I saw the glimmer of first light I knew that that was the light of my new life. My shoulders and legs were slowly uncovered but the hardest part was my head and feet, which were nipped between the cement. I had so little strength left to call out. The rescuers were students from Class 6 of Senior 3. I remember their faces and how they were dressed. The boy who was wearing a black T-shirt and a pair of glasses was digging and removing bricks. They said I was very lucky. I was pushed against the floor slab with my feet under the pillar. How I wanted to shout out "Why?" If it was just a dream, how come there was so much pain? Before the disaster, life was so peaceful. The beauty of the first week of May had gone and even the flowers appeared to be sad.

I will never forget that bitter period.









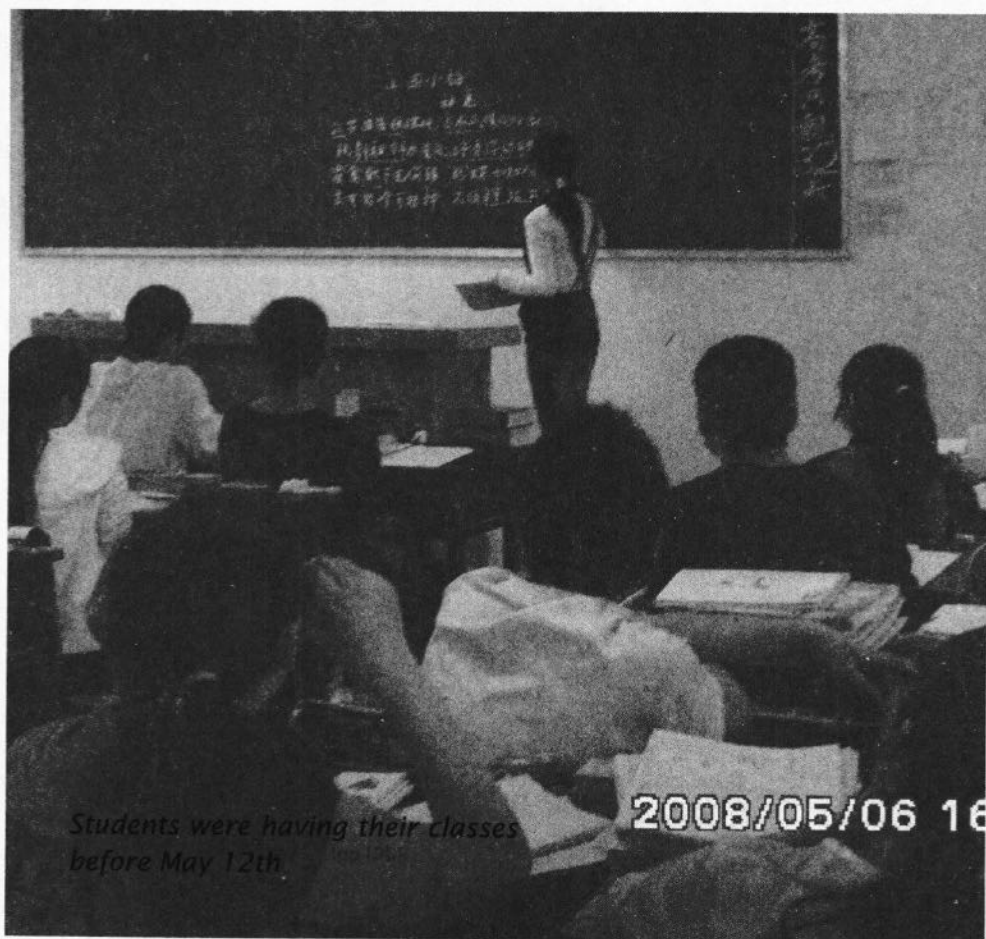
2008/05/11 17:38

*Beichuan Middle School before May  
12th earthquake*

2008/01/09 12:52

*Our beautiful old campus  
Lovely friends,  
Where have you been?  
We miss you...  
We will carry memories of you  
Live on with a brave heart*

My friends, where are you?



*Students were having their classes  
before May 12th.*



You selected Beichuan Middle School, where your father was the principal. And your reason was "If I do not trust Beichuan Middle School myself, will other students and teachers trust our school?"

## **My children, you are my lifelong pain**

--To my students who are victims in the earthquake

Zhao Jing, Teacher of Beichuan Middle School

My dear boys and girls,

The miserable song of "Death can never part us" came to our ears again, each note seeming to fly from the boundless and indistinct horizon, which made my heart ache. I thought I could sit in calm recalling your laughter and naughtiness and looking at your album, because time could cure my pain, half a year after the catastrophe. But every time I open the door of memories, pain and remorse wrap me up tightly. There seem to be dozens of eyes querying me "Teacher, why didn't you save us? Why did you abandon us?"



Yes. I told you I would arrange a homecoming to celebrate your graduation from college, and continue looking after Class 1, Grade 2007 in Beichuan Middle School. But now, we have reached a great divide. 30 students out of 63 are in heaven. The single thought of all of you crushed under the cold floor slab, lonely and bloody, and I unable to do anything but watch young lives passing away gradually makes me feel helplessly sad. I hated myself for being so helpless and insignificant in the face of the catastrophe, and I hated God for being so blind in taking the lives of the innocent children. My dear children, we have spent 3 years together, but

now you have passed away before me, young as you are. Your passing away has been the most painful experience of my life.

Wang Di and Wang Yue, I always thought that you were looking at me with hidden bitterness, asking me "Teacher, why do you force us to study? If we did not have to study at school and could do the things that we liked, we would be alive now!" I am so sorry, my children. I can not hope to receive your forgiveness because I am really a dead man. You were not interested in being students since you were just small children and you did not do well in junior high school. Both of you had told me that Wang Di would like to open a hairdressing Salon and Wang Yue liked business a lot. But I rejected your dream completely and forced you to study. Even during the holidays, I asked you to study at school. My children, I have come to understand now that you suffered so much inner pain then, although you did just what I asked you to do. I was so cruel. Please accept my apology once again. I hope you can do what you like in heaven, and find happiness there.

Liu Lingling, monitor of Class 1, Grade 2007, guided his classmates for 3 years and kept order in the class. Their class was known as the Excellent Class in our county and even in our city. The class average in junior middle school was 96% and you all entered the State Model Senior School with high scores. You asked me about my opinion on selecting the right school, and I told you that I hoped you could go to a place where there was fierce competition, because I believe you had the capability and strength. But when the new semester started, you selected Beichuan Middle School, where your father was the principal. And your reason was "If I do not trust Beichuan Middle School myself, will other students and teachers trust our school?" My child, why couldn't you have been more selfish? You lost your own life to support the development of Beichuan Middle School. I hope you will consider yourself more in your next life.

Qian Yun, the moonstruck little girl. I still remember that you were moved

to tears when we were learning the text of "A letter To my wife". You were so pretty, gentle, and kind. I can not remember a single occasion on which I had to criticize you in your 3 years of junior high school, because you were so lovely and sensible, and you liked literature a lot, and had a good grade in the courses. You were a rare student who developed in such a balanced way. For three years, you were responsible for the literature activities of our class, and you won many medals for your dances, comedy drama and comic dialogues. You knew calligraphy, and played the piano. Your dream was to enter the People's Liberation Army Institute of Arts. You were always smiling. My child, are you still arranging students to sing and dance in heaven?

Cheng Siqing, I was more strict with you than any of the other girls. You grew up in a single-parent family, and your father loved you very much, but you were a little selfish in Grade 7. Most of the time I tried to curb your fickleness, and that made you feel very frustrated. But you never hated me and you were open and kind to your classmates. Even when you entered senior school, you did not forget to send me an SMS and post cards during the holidays. You were so kind that once when the father of one classmate died, you cried with sorrow and arranged donations for this student. My lovely child, if I could be your teacher in the next life, I would be so gentle with you.



Xiong Weifan, a 1.8m tall handsome boy, used to be a "Bad Boy" in Beichuan, and was the "eyesore" in the eyes of the teachers in primary school. You were a little fussy, but honest and brave. You were the sports organizer, fond of basketball games, and some called you "flying feet". You called me Mummy Zhao in private and accepted my way of educating, and respected me very much. If you heard anyone being critical of me you would be irritated. After entering senior school, you also came to confide in me when you were feeling depressed. In the earthquake, you sacrificed your life in order to save your classmates. You were buried in the ruins



forever. Weifan, how painful it is to think of you yet how proud I am of the last moments of your life. You grew up to be a truly brave boy.

Young faces pass before my eyes. How time flies! But time can never take away the empty feeling of missing my 30 students. A cold wind blows, the hoar frost descends onto the mountain, and the wild geese are flying from north to south. Wild geese I hope you can take my yearnings for them. My dear children, I hope there are no earthquakes in heaven. I wish you peace and happiness in heaven.

That noon, you wanted to stay at home rather than go to school. I was not sure if you had foreseen the catastrophe.

## **Sadness flowing like a river**

Jing Tingyue, Class 15, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

The sky is blue and clear, like a calm sea. But the hand of destiny will soon destroy this fragile picture. On one side there is happiness and on the other side there is sadness.

On the horrible afternoon of May 12th, countless people lost their families and homes, and countless souls saddened. I do not want to mention this at all again because it has cut a deep scar into my heart. But now I will open the scar again which has not healed yet, because I want to face reality bravely.



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At that fateful moment, the earth began to shake with a scary sound, and the houses began to collapse. All of a sudden people seemed to be waking up from a nightmare and running away as fast as they could, to escape from the hands of Azrael. Heartbreaking screams filled the dusty air.

Although I was not in the centre of Beichuan at that time, I understood its ominous sound. A few days after the earthquake, my uncle returned after tramping over hill and dale, to bring me the sad news of the death of my younger brother. "What? Can you say that again? I do not understand! How could it be possible? You are joking, aren't you?" Although I was saying this, I burst into tears. I sat down on a chair, losing my mind completely, and began to cry.

My brother, you played with us last week, but I never expected that would be our last meeting. After class was over that noon, you saw

blooming purple roses on the street and did not want to leave. After going home, you cried to your mother for roses. The purple roses were said to be the symbol of disaster, but how could a seven-year-old boy, young as you were, see a disaster hiding behind the roses? My Aunt said "You are a boy. Why do you want roses? Aren't you feeling ashamed?" Then you stopped crying. But now my Aunt felt regret and said if she had known what would happen, she would have bought you the roses. But who could foresee this? If we could, then there would not have been so many victims! At noon that day, you did not want to go to school, and tried to find all kinds of excuses to stay at home. I did not know if you had foreseen the disaster. But you were afraid of your mother, so you went to school reluctantly. And we never knew this was our final parting. Even now we do not know where you were buried. After searching and searching, we were disappointed again and again. I do not know. Are you scared and alone?



To make your dream come true, we bought a big bunch of roses for you on the 100-day remembrance event. What we bought was not purple roses which symbolized disaster and death, but red roses symbolizing happiness. I think those roses will bring our blessings to you, and we hope that are happy in heaven. See, I am crying again. Your sister is not as brave as you are.

Let me sing gently for you "A drop of rain is with me to wait for tomorrow, and I am yearning for you with this last moment..." As I sing, a lovely boy appears in front of my eyes. His pink face and plump body makes everyone praise him "What a lovely boy!" His birth brought laughter to the whole family. Hanmo! That was you! How lovely and cute you were when you were just a small child. As you grew up day by day, your plump body did not change, but your eyebrows and eyes became more and more like your parents'. You were the proof of their love, and you inherited all their good features, big eyes and a small nose. Your head was a little big, but that made you cute. You followed me everyday, asking me to play with you. You always said "Sister, I like you the most." "Sister, you are the best." You would



always say this after you did something wrong. Looking at you behaving so sorrowfully, I became calm and forgave you finally. At these moments, you would always run over to me and hold my head in your arms, giving me a big kiss. Your lovely look was imprinted in my mind. You liked smiling the most, and showing your white teeth. Everybody who saw you wanted to play with you. You were loved by the teachers and other students at school and by grandpa and grandma at home.

Do you still remember the promise you made to me? You knew I like books the most. Once you saw me reading books eagerly, and said "Sister, when I earn lots of money when I grow up, I will buy you many books. What do you think?" At that time, I was touched by the serious look on your face, and asked "Really? Then you must study hard and buy me books in future! It's a deal!" You were very serious at that time, but now you've broken your promise.

We loved you so much. How could you leave us? Was it because we were so happy and even God became jealous, so God took you away from us? Mum said you were an angel given to us by God. Is it true? Angels only belong in heaven, not in the world. Maybe God allowed you to stay in the world for only seven years, so you had to return to heaven after seven years. Do you know that after you passed away, we cried everyday as we looked at your photo? I dreamed of you many times, seeing you smiling at me and calling me sister. How I hoped this was not a dream. In my dreams, I saw you disappearing in the far distance, and I used all my strength to chase you. Oh, how I wanted to catch you, but you disappeared like a mist. I shouted myself hoarse, but you did not reply. I cried.

Sadness flowing like a river, my tears dropped to the ground, forming a sad painting. The pains from the past already deposited into white photo. In the long days to come, I will be brave and keep my memories of you alive.




I don't think earthquakes will happen there, if you are in heaven.

## Are you happy in heaven?

Xi Zhengzhen, Class 15, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

When stars disappear in the sky, when rivers are no longer clear, and when the fields turn into deserts, will you be happy? I guess you will have another kind of happiness.

My friends in heaven, are you okay? I don't think earthquakes will happen there, if you are in heaven. I guess you must be smiling now.



This May, the anniversary of your passing, was so depressing. Although I was not affected by the earthquake directly I could not stop my tears flowing with the wind of May. Why is this? I finally came to know. It is because you left in such a hurry that you forgot to take everything with you. Why couldn't you have stayed longer, even for just one minute, or just one second?

Do you still remember the path we used when we walked to school together? Do you still remember the meals we usually shared? Do you still remember the grove of trees where we had our private talks? Have you forgotten our promise? We said we would enter college together and travel to Canada, and accompany our mothers to enjoy an elegant life in the city. I want to tell you I am studying and living in Beichuan Middle School now, and chasing my dream. Yes, the Beichuan Middle School now is not the same school it was. The reason you must know. But this is still the cradle of my dream.

The "oldies" always say when people die, they become stars in the sky.

Are you the most beautiful star in the sky now? I guess you are. Are you looking down at me from the sky and smiling at me? I guess you are. Will you expect our meeting again? I guess you will.

My friend, I give you my true love and wish you happiness in heaven forever!





When each snowflake falls, when every second passes, when each cloud drifts away, when the wind blows... They are all my yearnings for you. Sister, do you know that?

## I Miss You!

Chen Yanlin, Class 1, Grade 7, Beichuan Middle School

Do you know what it feels like to lose someone? The loss of someone you love brings such deep pain that it makes you cry.

In the earthquake on May 12th, I lost my elder sister. My sister cared about me so lovingly. We used to be close and happy together. We often looked at the stars together, and my sister always said "When I grow up, I will buy you a star!" And I said "Great, sister. Do not cheat me. Let's make a deal!" "Deal, Deal, we will never change in even one hundred years. Whoever changes is a pup." Then our laughter flew into the sky... Sister, how could you leave before you kept your promise to me?

Sister, do you know that every time I watch the stars at night, shining in the sky, they are all smiling at me. I stretch out my hands, and want to touch your warm, thin hands. But why is there nothing there? I cannot touch you. Sister, are these stars your eyes? They are looking at me, reminding me of following principles all the time and doing the right things...

To lose someone has turned out to be so painful. Sister, people always say "You will not treasure it until you lose it." Yes, I have lost you. It is nonsense to look at the yellow photo. Is that to miss you? No, my sister! I still remember and will remember forever that you told me to do things with principle and work hard and always try my best to improve myself.

Missing you has already become a piece of glass in my mind which holds the letters I write to you and the steam on it evaporates into the sky and

passes them on to you.

When each snowflake falls, when every second passes, when each cloud drifts away, when the wind blows... They are all my yearnings for you. Sister, do you know that?



I shall not be sad any more. I must make my parents' dreams mine.

## Live on with laughter

Wang Qingsi, Class 1, Grade 7, Beichuan Middle School

All parents hope their children understand them, but their biggest hope is that their children will live a better life than themselves. I think all parents have these hopes for their children but how many children fulfill their parents' hopes?

Take me, for example, I only satisfied my parents' first hope. I should be glad, but it is too late now. My parents passed away in the May 12th earthquake.

On the evening of new year's day, my aunt took me out to a restaurant to eat hot pot because she knew I liked that a lot. She selected some food for me but I could not help thinking of the times my family and I were together eating hot pot happily. Father and mother liked to select food for me too, so that I could have enough. Every time I thought of this, I felt such heartbreak. I put down my chopsticks and tears rolled down again, suddenly my mind feeling blank. Previously, every time I cried, my mother would always open her arms and hold me "My girl, don't cry. You do not look beautiful when you cry. Let's smile. Smile brings longevity." Every time I heard this, I began to smile. Every time I was going to write an exam, as I was leaving home, my mother would always say "Do the exam carefully and check carefully after you finish." And my father would always say "Just try your best. Remember, it is for your own good, not for us." I always felt relaxed after hearing these words, and calmly did the exam. In the afternoon, I



would always bring the examination paper with high scores to my parents. But now...

Now I feel deeply about how important it is to have parents around us. They can give us confidence, and their presence brings us happiness and ... Without parents, I feel less happy; without parents, I felt less confident; without parents, I...

My Aunt patted me on my shoulder and said tenderly "Qingqing, be strong. There are so many kind-hearted people who care about you and want to help you. You will become a good student as your parents hoped."

Yes, it has already been eight months since the May 12th earthquake happened. Let's treasure what we have now. I shall not be sad any more. I must make my parents' dreams mine. I must live happily for our hope!



Earthquake consequences-- I am always shocked by a sudden sound, and I am scared by the shaking of my desk because my desk mate bumped it.

## Imprinted in heart

Zhang Chunmei, Class 5, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

It has already been eight months since the May 12th earthquake happened, but I always feel it happened just yesterday. The grey sky and aftershocks and the people waiting to be rescued under the ruins... All these are remembered in my mind and imprinted in my heart, and I can never forget them. Earthquake consequences-- I am always shocked by a sudden sound, and I am scared by the shaking of my desk because my desk mate bumped it... I really want to forget the earthquake, but is it that easy?



The moment when the earthquake happened, we were having an English class. Our English teacher was He Haiping, a tall, thin, sensitive teacher who wore a pair of glasses. He was making us do dictation of English words when the earthquake happened. Suddenly, the school building began to shake, and I was so ignorant that I thought the shaking was caused by the moving garbage truck. I was not aware of that. However, the first reaction of Teacher He Haiping was to open the door and he said "Students. Run. It's an earthquake!" This was followed by students rushing out of the classroom, while Teacher He was leaning against the door to prevent it from becoming an obstacle for the escaping students. After all of the students of our class had run out, he ran to check Class 4. He was the head teacher of Class 4 and he wanted to make sure that there were no students of Class 4 left in the building. He knew that they were having physical education at that time but he was afraid that there were students

who would go back to the classroom. The last time I saw him, he was running into Class 4. He was always like this. He never forgot he was a head teacher. What a responsible teacher he was.

That moment was especially poignant...

It has already been 8 months since the earthquake happened. I miss it all so much...

I miss my hometown, my relatives, my teachers and my classmates. The cheerful chatter and laughter and routines... Now I can only think of all this with tears in my eyes.

I can still remember how we hated to learn English at that time, and every time we had English classes, we felt sleepy. Teacher He told us the story of what happened when he was studying English, especially the story of the bowl in his English class... After hearing that funny story, the whole class burst into laughter. Seeing us happy, he would lead us into the wonderful world of English...

Let us treasure all of these memories deep in our hearts. If we can not remember it, then why not bury it deep in our heart and let it become our lasting memory? As long as we are alive, we will not forget it. Then let's live on!



Was it because an angel was so lonely, you were taken away from me?

## Still together!

Zhu Jing, Class 1, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

I cannot find your familiar face. It seems that you have disappeared in a sea of faces. The memory of your gentle touch still remains in my hands. But who am I waiting for in the lonely night? Has your smile become luxury?

The lightning flashed and thunder roared; the mountain swayed and the earth trembled; the streaming rain drenched us. The world was in mourning on that day. You left on this day, without any sign. You left in the unexpected Sichuan Earthquake.

I lifted my head and all that I could see was an endless cloud. That season was called loneliness. After picking up a backpack, we began to run. We could not see the warm sun in the day, and could not see the moon at night. We had to do this with dancing tears. Maybe it was destiny, and no one could avoid it. Was it because an angel was so lonely, you were taken away from me?

Silently I went back to the place where we met. Broken walls, wasted land. I walked alone in the silent street, and the memories came into my eyes again and again.

I had not begun my walk and I was at the end. My dream has not started, but I could not wake up again. How regretful and depressed I was.

However, with a pure heart, you could not be so sad. When a door has been closed by God, a window will be opened for you. The angel fell into loneliness, and the tears of the angel turned into rain which fell down into



the world, and touched you. You were so moved that you left the land where you had lived for 17 years and you flew to heaven...

I was left behind, alone. I looked into the night sky studded with stars.

I was staring like this and that was the way I wanted it, with no illusions. The star in the distance was blinking, glittering with my sadness. The stars filled the sky, but I was only fond of this star, because of the special feeling I had.

Was it you?

Why is the star like your smiling eyes? It's you! We are still together!



How are you in another world? Have you drunk from the innocent spring? And do you still remember me?

## **When the Flowers of winter bloom sweetly again**

Zhang Mingming, Class 6, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School



When will the flowers of winter sweet at our school blossom again? Do you want to go with me to see it in the schoolyard? Do you want to accompany me to walk around the playground where two rows of winter sweet were grown? You told me once that you felt a feeling of happiness to walk in the sun light... Now the flowers of winter sweet are blossoming again. Standing alone in the empty schoolyard, with the nippy cold wind blowing, I did not feel warm at all. I was looking for you, and ran towards the playground, but I did not find you. Where have you gone? Do you still remember our promise?

You said we would live together till we become old. Do you forget that? Do you still remember that we used to wash our feet together, eat together, play together and study together? We chatted and played on the lawn in summer. I still remember that summer when the whole schoolyard was filled with gardenias and we became "Flower Robbers". In winter, you used to flaunt the flower of winter sweet in front of me, saying it symbolized strength. And I always said something to the contrary, like it symbolized being aloof and proud. Then you would become angry and I would laugh at you.

Do you still remember our happiness together? In the early morning, we would wake up to climb the mountain. We talked and laughed all the way. I walked fast on purpose and hid myself to scare you. You were always scared by me. So I liked to call you "foolish girl". Every time I laughed at

you, you would smile at me and said "OK. I am foolish. If I don't make it into college in future, you are the one to blame." We spent a lot of time enjoying such noisy chatter.

I used to say "Memories make us happy" but after May 12th, my memories are painful." That was the day we parted. You left with the other students, without saying a word. And you closed your eyes forever. Did you hear our shouting on that day? Did you hear our heartbreaking cries? Your mother cried and did not see you from the ruin.

So I began to hate you. I hated it that you did not keep your promise and you did not return, and you were not strong enough. Maybe if you could have held on for one more second, you could have experienced a miracle... I heard it was snowing in our school. I do not know what Beichuan Middle School looks like when snowflakes are flying over it. I am not sure if the snowflake is actually you?

I do not know how are you in another world? Have you drunk from the innocent spring? And do you still remember me? Maybe now only a photo can prove you have been to this world before. Maybe one letter you wrote me last year can remind me of how close you are to me. You told me "Even if we fall apart, you will be happy. Even if you become lost in this world, I will stay by your side."

Now, the blossoms of winter sweet are out again. You said the flower of winter sweet symbolized strength. I will be strong and live on, and follow your dream...



She knew Xing had not eaten two breakfasts, and gave the only breakfast to him...

## Eternal Star

Luo Guofeng, Class 9, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

### Chapter One

The night fell silently.

The wind crawled slowly up to the hill in front of her house, and went into the town centre which was not big, but beautiful. It was New Year's day today, and the town centre was shining. Even the outline of the houses became more beautiful at night. Besides there was another event, which was a must on every New Year's holiday. That was the fireworks.

Watching the beautiful fireworks, I thought of a saying which is "Life is like fireworks. Sometimes it is bright, but most times it is lonely and dark." We always think there are too few beautiful things in our life, and these things always exist for only a short period. But when beautiful things surround us, few of us appreciate them and admire them.

Looking up into the sky, the stars were just like a dream. Every star was a dream, a pure and lovely dream, deep in our hearts, untouchable. Fireworks are like dreams and stars are like dreams. How beautiful it was!

The wind reminded me of a blessing from one friend "I wish you and your loved ones a happy and healthy life." "The loved ones?" The wind was contemplating.

Who on the earth are my loved ones? Are they my parents? Maybe yes, because my mother has passed away, and father was the most loved one for me. But father was always so busy with his job that he could not come



home to accompany me even on the New Year's day and he left me alone at home. I had to walk up the hill and look down over the town to watch the fireworks and the happiness of other families. Although my father gave me pocket money each month and paid for my tuition, I still felt lonely. We seemed to be separated, and I could not feel the warmth of my father.

I did not feel lonely at school.

Was my teacher a loved one? I knew that the teacher was very nice to me and took good care of her, but the teacher was nice to every student. Because I was not a good student, I always kept a respectful distance from my teacher.

Was Xing a loved one? Xing was my classmate and was very nice to me. I woke up early every morning, and Xing always prepared breakfast for me. Every time I was depressed, Xing would smile and say "It doesn't matter." When I could not understand a subject like mathematics, Xing would always explain it to me... Xing was a very good student, and he was always among the top students in each examination. And he liked to tease me "You are so stupid. This is so easy. Have you done badly again?"



It was Xing that was stupid.

It was near to 1am in the morning, I was sleepy, so I walked down the hill and returned home. And I fell asleep lonely.

## Chapter Two

The new semester had started. I carried my school bag and said good bye to my lonely house.

All the students in our class had begun to study hard, including Xing. He was always a good student but he couldn't spend time with me any more, because the senior school entrance examination was not far off.

Soon it was May, and all of us became hard-working students. I took out my Chinese book which I had hardly touched before and began to recite from it. But my eyes were rarely on the book as I could only think of the

handsome face of Xing.

One day, I took out a mathematic exercise book for him and put a note inside it. I passed it to Xing, and said "Xing, I heard this is a really good exercise book. It's for you. I cannot do a single exercise in it! You might find it useful."

Xing did not refuse, and said "Thanks!", and he kept it.

At lunch, I was the only one in the classroom and I did not know if Xing would bring me lunch...

Xing came but there was no lunch for me. He was rather angry and took out the note from his pocket and put the note in front of me. I saw the poem immediately. It was "The furthest distance in the world" by the Indian poet Tagore. I had transcribed it and put it in the exercises book for Xing.

Xing asked "Is this your confession? I do not like it at all! You are still a little girl... I will not bring you lunch any more..."

My face turned red. Xing was nice to me, but I did not expect Xing would... I felt my heart beating violently, as if it was going to jump out of my chest. I felt embarrassed by Xing and could not stay there any longer. I rushed out of the classroom.

I rushed downstairs and ran into the playground. I hated Xing. How could he treat me like that! I would not talk to him any more.

I sat down on the lawn beside the playground with tears rolling down my cheeks. I swore that I would not talk with Xing any more, otherwise I would make a fool of myself.

Since then, Xing did not bring lunch for me any more, and I did not talk to Xing anymore. Xing seemed to become my enemy. But at the same time, I tended to pay more attention to Xing...

### Chapter Three

I did not expect to break my promise so quickly.

It was May 12th. I noticed that Xing did not have breakfast, so I put my

milk and bread into his desk.

In the afternoon, when we were having our first class, the school building began to shake suddenly, and our teacher told us to crouch under our desks...

Five seconds... 10 seconds... The school building was going to collapse! Xing and I were both buried in the ruins!

It was dark in the ruins and I was so scared that I began to cry. Suddenly I felt someone was touching my head.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am Xing."

I did not answer.

"Are you hurt?" Xing asked.

"I am not sure. It doesn't seem so." I answered.

"Xing, is it an earthquake?" I asked.

"Yes. Are you scared?"

"Yes. I am so scared!"

"Do not be scared. I am here with you!"

"Can we get out of here alive?"

"Sure. Some one will come to rescue us!"

Later, I told Xing "Xing, I am very hungry and thirsty!"

Xing passed me the milk and bread.

I asked "Xing, what about you?"

"I have had breakfast. This is the breakfast you gave me this morning. I saw you when you put it into my desk." Xing stopped and then continued "I bought breakfast for you too, so I have another here."

I drank some milk and had some bread.

After sometime, I felt depressed. "Xing, I cannot hold on. I feel I am going to die soon."

"Don't give up. You will not die."

"But I cannot hold on."



"Feng, you should not give up. Both of us should not give up. I love you."  
Xing's voice was weak and urgent.

I cried again.

"Do not be scared. I am here with you. Let me read a poem for you. After  
I read this poem, do not speak to me. We need to maintain our strength.

"OK."

His voice was weak, but he tried hard to let me hear him clearly.

The furthest distance in the world  
Is not between life and death  
But when I stand in front of you  
Yet you don't know that  
I love you



The furthest distance in the world  
Is not when I stand in front of you  
Yet you can't see my love  
But when undoubtedly knowing the love from both  
Yet cannot  
Be together

The furthest distance in the world  
Is not being apart while being in love  
But when plainly cannot resist the yearning  
Yet pretending  
You have never been in my heart  
...

He did not finish reading the poem.

I cried and I made up my mind to hold on and stay alive!

After 30 hours of being buried I was rescued. When I saw day light again,



I saw Xing with his eyes closed in peace, with one of his legs crushed by a piece of reinforced concrete. I searched around Xing, but did not find the milk box. I knew that Xing did not have another breakfast but gave the only breakfast to me...

#### Chapter Four

I was sent with the other survivors to Changhong Training Centre.

Later I heard from one of Xing's best friends that Xing did like a girl, but that girl was not me...

On the evening of December 29th of 2008 according to lunar calendar, I saw some wonderful fireworks in this strange city. Looking at the fireworks disappearing, I thought of the hill, the town and the poem which Xing did not finish. However, all these memories had vanished, like a dream. I came to know now that some dreams cannot be realized.

But I cannot forget Xing. In my mind, Xing was like the most beautiful firework that became an eternal star afterwards, shining in my mind. I think I will become a star too, bringing light to people...



"Sister, I can not hold on. Can you please help me reach my dream by entering college for me? I hope I can become the beautiful sunset glow. Remember to tell Dad and Mummy that I love them forever."

## **My sister, the sunset glow**

Xiao Ping, Class 16, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

The glow of the sunset appeared again on the horizon. It was a beautiful spectacle.

When we were little, some things seemed to be so far away, but still fresh in our memory. I remember both of us liked sugar cane at that time and we had an unpleasant experience because of it.

One day, you were given some sugar cane and were enjoying it and then I saw it. I asked you to give me a piece, but you refused. I got angry and found a tree branch and beat you. You were just standing there crying. We were so stupid then.

After we entered school, we did not get into the same school for some reason and we met on only a few occasions. So we treasured our meetings each time. We talked a lot about the future. We were both children from the countryside and wanted to go off to see the outside world. You said that we would go to senior school together and then go to college together. You laughed a lot at that time, and you looked so beautiful. At one time, we chatted for so long that we did not know when the sun had risen. Our parents were worried that this was not good for our rest, so they put us into different rooms. But even so, I would slip under your quilt and chat with you about the future. Sometimes we became sad, but all that has now passed. We felt happy. You were my soul mate rather than my elder sister.

Nine years of sweat and hard work brought me into senior school, but I never expected that we would be separated like this.

The sky was dark, with a few crows flying above us. The air was full of the smell of blood and cries for help. I held you tightly. At that moment, I could not use any words to describe what I felt. It was the first time I had experienced such a big catastrophe. It was the first time I had seen so many eyes filled with helplessness and hopelessness; it was the first time I had been so close to death; it was the first time I... All these were just like a joke played by God. Yesterday, there were sounds of reading books and bright birds song... But today, there was nothing left. You lifted up your only hand and touched my face, and said slowly "Sister, I cannot hold on. Can you please help me reach my dream by entering college for me? I hope I can become the beautiful sunset glow. Remember to tell Dad and Mummy that I'll love them forever." Then your hand slipped down from my face and left fresh fingerprints. Did you forget our promise to enter college together, my sister?



The wind dried up my tears, with endless pain...

The sunset glow appeared again on the horizon. My sister, is it you?

None of us knew where you were and none of us knew when you left...

## A Letter to heaven

Li Yang, Class 3, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School

My Dear Sister,

How are you in heaven? Do you know how much we miss you?

It has already been eight months since you left. Eight months is not long, but life was really hard for us without you. There are so many familiar faces that do not exist any more in our life. There is not so much fun around us. I begin to believe that this is the truth. I thought you had gone somewhere to study, and would return soon. But the truth is here, reminding me again and again "This is the truth. You will never come back again. I really miss you so much!"

You know what? Your parents have been so sad since you left, which made me sad. Your mother was strong. Even if she was thinking of you and felt sad, she would not cry in front of others. She tried hard to suppress her feelings and broke down only when there was no one around. I knew at that moment you might be watching in heaven and I felt sad. The rain was your tears, right?

Where were you when the earthquake happened? People said that you would run out because you always were an athlete but it was not like this... None of us knew where you were and none of us knew when you left...

In the noon of May 11th, we walked from home to school, and parted after we reached the boarding house. But I did not expect that that was to be our last meeting. At 14:28 on May 12th, all was destroyed, including our





promise to walk back home together the next Monday. It seemed that this promise was buried under the ruins forever. How much we miss you! Did you see all the changes in our hometown which was turned into a water land? We needed to take a boat to travel anywhere. The scenes from last year no longer exist. Many people have had to go to other places to find jobs. The laughter has disappeared too, with only groans left... There are many fish in the water, and I know that if you were here, you would go fishing with me...

Many people believe angels do exist. There are many angels, and I believe you are among them, the kindest one.

I will take good care of your parents. I hope you are happy in heaven!




She picked up a piece of brick from the ruins in the classroom. She seemed to smell her friends.

## That girl

Yu Qingrong, Class 2, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School

At the gate of the school which had already been turned into ruins, there was a girl. She stood there for a long time and did not want to enter. She was in deep contemplation, remembering and mourning.

"Go in and have a look." encouraged the old woman, who used to sell snack food outside the gate of the school, before she left with a sigh.

 The girl made up her mind and went in, but she moved back again. She did not dare to go inside. She was afraid to see the collapsed school building and she could still feel the pain. As she was just about to turn around and leave, two boys ran towards her. The taller boy was shouting at the shorter one, asking him to hurry so that they could play ping pong. The girl stood in amazement. The crazy and smiling girl used to ask her to play ping pong before. They liked to play ping pong so much that they often forgot to eat. But today... The girl's eyes were filled with tears. As if in a dream she followed the two boys into her beloved school.

She sat beside the ping pong table, watching them playing, tears rolling down her cheeks, one drop, two drops... Her memories haunting her, she ran to the tree, weeping. They used to play and chat under that tree. Her good friend seemed to be everywhere. She stopped crying and walked towards the spot in the ruins where her classroom used to be. She picked up a piece of brick from the ruins. She seemed to sense her friends.

With pain and confusion, the girl then went to the playground and sat

down on the ground near the basketball stand. She let her wandering thoughts take her back... It was the evening of May 12th, the worst night of her life, when she had felt so helpless and she recalled the saddest scenes. The students who were trapped in the ruins had left without warning. Their silent departure had left their parents behind, sad and depressed. It was here where she saw her elder sister die. Every night though, she still dreams about her. The girl sat there resting her chin on her knees. Then she closed her eyes, trying to forget all this, but she couldn't.

Suddenly the girl stood up and slapped away the dust on her trousers. She took a deep breath, turned around and walked towards the school gate. Looking back at the schoolyard which she used to be familiar with, she said a prayer for the dead students "The future of our school will improve!" She touched the gate post and said gently "Bye!" Then she left.


On the evening of that day, the girl looked into the grey sky outside her window for a long time. Suddenly, one, two stars and then three stars appeared from the dark sky, blinking at her. The girl said to her heart "Maybe you have become the stars in the sky. I shall miss you."



We should be strong, and live every day happily. We should let him see that his students are living in happiness.

## Goodbye, Teacher Gao

She Yiping, Class 2, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School



May 12th was the day that no people of Beichuan, Sichuan or even in the whole of China could ever forget. The unexpected earthquake destroyed our home, and we lost many relatives, friends and teachers. One of them was our head teacher, Gao, a good teacher. He liked to play with his students and play jokes on them, although he was already 50. In class, he was very strict, and did not allow any student to dream in class. He always arranged little homework for us, but because his teaching methods were good, our class was good at mathematics, and all students liked to attend his class.

Teacher Gao had a habit after a nap at noon, he would stand outside the window to see what we were doing, and to check if any student was copying or not focused on his work. But on the day of May 12th, he did not show up outside the window, and we did not see him again. Finally we heard that he had died in the earthquake. It was said that his wife had also died in the town centre. He had a daughter who worked in another city after she had graduated from college. She heard that there had been an earthquake in Sichuan, so she returned to find her parents. But who could have known that God would turn her into an orphan so cruelly.

I often dreamed at night, that Teacher Gao was teaching us and smiling and he said "You must hold on. I shall be back to see you." Then I would wake up and tears stained my face. I felt regret that other students and I



used to make fun of him. And I felt regret that we had said bad things about him behind his back... Now it is too late to say sorry.

Every time I thought of him, I would go to the memorial my classmates built for him on the internet. I would burn joss sticks for him and sing a song for him. Looking at his photo, tears rolled down my cheeks again. He was really like a father to all of his students, smiling brightly every day. He must be looking at us with his wife in heaven now, blessing us! We should be strong, and live every day happily. We should let him see that his students are living with happiness.

Goodbye, my dear Teacher Gao. Although you have left us, you live in our hearts forever. You are the greatest in our hearts. We hope you live happily in heaven!

Goodbye, my dear teacher Gao!




I was a lucky survivor in the May 12th earthquake, but on that day I lost my lovely teachers and classmates.

## **A privet hedge stands firm in the land of Qiang**

Li Zhongmei, Class 2, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

The year 2008 was not an ordinary year. We finally came through it. Looking back, I felt we suffered too much. It was shocking yet I felt how strong and great our country is.

 I was a lucky survivor in the May 12th earthquake, but on that day I lost my lovely teachers and classmates. All of a sudden, many Qiang people died there. My classmates and my teachers, you really left us like this? Privet hedge, my loved teacher used to like you very much, and you are still standing there in silence, accompanying the dead. You can absorb the noxious air, but you cannot absorb the pain in our hearts. It rained on that evening, and it seemed that God was crying for the Qiang people who had passed away. But Beichuan is strong. The continuation of Beichuan Middle School, the resumption of classes and the rebuilding after the earthquake are all deep yearnings. We did not have the right to cry. We never admit being defeated because we have the strong spirit of the Qiang people with 5000 years of Chinese spirit.

During the New Year's holiday, I walked to my school again. My heart was breaking. My teachers and classmates were buried under the ruins, sleeping deeply there. I stood before the ruins, looking at them. The shrubs had died. The dew was like pearls, trembling. The grass was overgrown beside the playground. Not even the previous evening's downpour could

wash away all the sadness. The place which was silent and clean did not exist any more. I was about to leave this heartbreaking place when I saw a privet hedge standing firm. I was filled with deep esteem for it, because there used to be beautiful stories here...

I walked beside you, and looked back again and again, finding there were small drops of water on the tree, so pure, beautiful and clear. I found out that you also cried. There was so much thought behind you.

China has a history of 5000 years, cultivating endless legends. From the Yellow River to the Yangtze River, from Qingzang Plateau to blackland in the northeast, from the Great Wall to the water towns south of the river, all these are our honors of our Chinese people. Our breathtaking mountains and clear running streams together give Beichuan the most beautiful scenery which attracts visitors from all over China.

The privet hedge standing on the ruins represents the spirit and existence of Beichuan Middle School. Your survival symbolizes the strength of Beichuan Middle School; your tears are the touching moments of Beichuan Middle School. All kind-hearted people hope the future of Beichuan Middle School will be better. Our tomorrow will be better because of the love from all over the world.



*People both home and abroad have not forgotten us  
We can smile once again,  
A new life is waiting for us...*

These days are hard to forget



Students of Beichuan Middle School were accepting donations from Yihai Group



I was very weak and unconscious at that time, but I could hear Grandpa Wen asking about the state of my injuries with my physician.

## **Unforgettable Grandpa Wen**

Duan Zhixiu, Class 13, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

May 26th of 2008 is the day I will never forget. I was lying in bed in Huaxi Hospital on that afternoon. Although I was struggling with death then, I was lucky enough to meet kind Grandpa Wen.

On the early morning of that day, I heard from the doctors that Prime Minister Wen Jiabao would come. I was not so excited. I thought Grandpa Wen was so busy with his job and the earthquake relief work was still going on, so he would not look at me even if he came. I could not even open my mouth to speak and I could die at any time.



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I was very weak and unconscious at that time but I could hear Grandpa Wen asking about the state of my injuries with my physician. Hearing that my condition was critical, he became more worried and his brows knitted closely. All the people there were worried about me and the atmosphere was oppressive.

Grandpa Wen held my injured left hand in his big warm hands and said "I have been to Beichuan Middle School three times already. You are a strong child. Cooperate with your doctor for treatment." I had not cried since my amputation on May 13th, and I did not make a sound and bit down on a towel when he changed my dressing. But at that moment, the tender part down in my heart was touched by Grandpa Wen. I was just like a child who had lost his way and had been returned to his mother. I could not control my tears, and all the sadness and excitement poured out at that time.

Grandpa Wen was consoling me. As my windpipe was cut open and I could not speak I wrote to Grandpa Wen "I felt no desire to go to class before but now I hope I can recover soon to go back to school to have lessons together with my classmates. I was forced to go to school before but now I want to go to school." Prime Minister Wen took my pen and paper and wrote down the hope and encouragement for me "Hold your head high, throw out your chest. Step forward, face the future, and live on strongly." Prime Minister Wen finished writing, and told me "My child. You should live on, study hard, and repay our country. If you still feel sad, think of my words." After hearing this, tears rolled down from my cheeks again.

Since the moment I was rescued, I was called "Strong Girl", because I never cried no matter how painful it was. I just set my teeth and pretended to be relaxed. But no one knew that I did not cry because there was too much pain and sadness inside my heart, and I did know for what I should cry. I did not cry because I could accept the tricks destiny had played on me, so I had to hide. I did not cry because I did not want others to see my weakness and offer sympathy to me. I did not cry because I was too tired and depressed... In fact, I am weak and sensitive. Now I can cry because although I was unlucky, I was lucky enough to receive the care from Grandpa Wen. I saw kind Grandpa Wen, as I saw my own grandpa. It was grandpa Wen's words which lighted up new hope for me and gave me courage to face reality. I have received so much love and care...

On the evening of December 29th of 2008 according to lunar calendar, Grandpa Wen came to see us again at Changhong Training Centre and had dinner with us. He picked dishes for me and asked about my health, study and life. He watched fireworks with me. I knew he wanted to express his care to all the children and all Chinese people through me.

Although I lost a leg and felt depressed and disappointed, I made it through with the immense love I felt from all the people of China. I am strong and brave now and nothing is going to defeat me. I will remember

Grandpa Wen's words "Live on, study hard, and repay our country."



Gratitude is not said but done.


## Be grateful to Mother Wang

Mu Xinyue, Class 5, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

"My grateful heart has you, companion, to make me courageous enough to be myself."

I learned to sing this song since I was little. I like this song very. After the May 12th earthquake, I sang it again and again.

Many kind-hearted people appeared around us, and I felt so touched. As a child, I cried little, but after the earthquake I was always crying.



On the school opening ceremony on September 1st, uncles and aunts from the Yihai Group came to see us. They saw we did not have school uniforms and hope we can wear school uniforms like students of other schools, so they made school uniforms for students of Beichuan Middle School when they came back to company. They wanted to dress up students of Beichuan Middle School, and let us feel the warmth of our country.

Soon after that, Mother Wang came to see us in our school. This Mother Wang was chairwoman of the Yihai Group. Because of her tenderness, we called her Mother Wang. I found a lot of features of a mother from her. It was not easy to make a school costume. You need to choose color and cloth and design. All these things would take a lot of time, but Mother Wang did this for us personally.

When she saw us wearing the school uniforms, she was so happy that her smiling face was like blooming flowers. In the moment when Mother Wang.




and the students were embracing each other, I was deeply touched. She did what a common person could not do. She worked hard for children that had no relationship with her at all. Every action of Mother Wang and the students was so natural and tender that I could not forget this moment for a long time.



Remember forever these great women, these beautiful angels!

## **Beichuan, never forget these beautiful angels**

Huang Anrong, Teacher of Beichuan Middle School

 This is a wonderful and beautiful land. Da Yu, the hero of water control, took a first step to help the world and society. The natural landscape is full of songs and rhymes from the remote antiquity to modern society. People here were enjoying the beauty of nature, and enjoying a peaceful and quiet life. Suddenly, the mountain swayed and the earth trembled. It turned out that heaven was just one step from hell. This disaster let the world remember one word: Beichuan. And it also let the world remember with great love the beautiful and brave angels who saved the students.

When Azrael came, our teachers did not care about their own lives or their relatives' lives. Many of them could have escaped safely, but they stuck to their post to evacuate and save the students, and finally many lost their precious lives, among them 20 women teachers. They were like angels, representing all teachers with their lives and blood. Beichuan, please remember these teachers: beautiful and gentle Li Jiaping, talented Peng Jian, loving Deng Xurong, pregnant Wei Mingfang, young and pretty Kan Qirong...

Raising the veil of tenderness, nature showed up its ugly face. Survivors from Azrael were facing family hardships. They were wrapped up by loneliness, helplessness and despair. The fragility of life and destroyed the dreams of many people.

They were coming from far and near, with great love and immense warmth. They were at the ruins, in tents, under trembling bricks and in wards where aftershocks were happening from time to time. They were everywhere that needed them. These great, honest and kind people were like angels, helping us rebuild our physical and spiritual homes. Beichuan won't forget these selfless and strong men and these beautiful and persevering women.

Bi Shumin and Yang Xia were experts in medicine and literature respectively. One was an expert in psychology. Although they had different professions, they had the same cares and worries for others. In the brutal heat of summer, they endured the hardships of a long journey and came to us, with kind faces.. Despite the long time tiring journey and the possibility of aftershocks any time, they listened attentively to the stories of the teachers and students, in the rough classroom of Changhong Training centre, on the playground, in the portable shelters, and even on the roads to the washroom and eatery. They gave instructions to each student and teacher. They gave unscripted speeches to help the students and teachers to step out from the nightmare, and to face reality.

I did not even knew her name, but what I knew was that she was mother of the famous anchorperson Yu Jia. In the beginning of June, she carried big and small bags and came here. Seventy years old as she was, she looked young and energetic. In the daytime she worked among the students and teachers, talked with us about the difficulties in our daily lives. At dark, she would always be in the tents, delivering towels, Mosquito Repellent, toothpaste and toothbrush, and even underwear to teachers and students. Only our own mothers would take care of us like this. She was a mother to all people in Beichuan Middle School.

From May until now, we often saw a black and slim intelligent woman wearing a pair of glasses. Sometimes she sat down and talked about daily matters with the students and teachers. And sometimes she sat down in



a quiet place, her fingers flying on the computer keyboard. She was Long Di, professor from the Institute of Psychology, CAS (Chinese Academy of Sciences). She and her team members had stayed here for almost seven months, easing the sorrows to teachers and students, providing psychological guidance to students, and helping the teachers to find shelter. In summer, through her effort, she created a fund, and arranged for teachers who suffered pains to have psychological treatment at beautiful Tiantai Hill. But her 12-year-old daughter could only talk with her over phone. She said her care in the disaster area would last forever.

Wang Liquan, expert of Psychology in China, with the rank of colonel, was a beautiful mother with passion. She said she was daughter of people in Sichuan and Beichuan. After the earthquake, she was working on the front line of earthquake relief. After she arrived at our school, she sensed that it would take long time to psychologically treat the students. And it would be hard to do this work only with the few psychological doctors here. It was necessary to let teachers join this work. So she walked everywhere and gathered a group of psychological experts in China, and opened a psychological nursing training class. She tutored us with basic and common knowledge, which laid a firm foundation for our education afterwards. During the national holiday she made a lot of contacts and arranged psychological treatment for around 100 students and teachers in Qinghuang Island.

She was brilliant and wise. She was sensitive and tender. Whenever she was asked about the situations in Sichuan after the earthquake, she would sob with tears. She is Yu Dan, professor of Beijing Normal University. I used to think she was unreachable, but in just a few months she came to Beichuan Middle School for four times. She came to us, and gave lessons to Senior 3 students. She tried to rebuild the spiritual mansion with 1000-year confusion culture. Her speech of "Respect to Life" touched 300 teachers and students and audiences.



I always doubt how a woman can have a beautiful and kind heart, and wisdom together. Last autumn, she came twice to Beichuan Middle School, bringing school uniforms to 3000 students, with hope and happiness. She helped us to get through the first winter after the disaster. She is Linda Wong, chairwoman of Yihai Group. She treated the students of Beichuan just as her own children, and all the children called her "Mother Wang". Teachers called her "Sister Wang". She was rich but unaffected. She was kind and tender, just as our sisters and mothers. The China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese were responsible for rebuilding Beichuan Middle School, bringing hope for teachers and students here. Ms. Linda Wong made a donation of two million yuan to rebuild Beichuan Middle School. Besides, she also invited three outstanding design teams from domestic and abroad to rebuild Beichuan Middle School. Led by her, many returned overseas Chinese made donations to rebuild Beichuan Middle School. On the eve of the Spring festival, our principal told our teachers a story at the school meeting. Ms. Linda Wong donated all the presents and money from her daughter's wedding to Beichuan Middle School.



Before the earthquake, we had suffered tremendous disasters. However, there is warmth and great love in the world. We are lucky. Beichuan, your future will be more brilliant, because you are surrounded by love.

Qiang is indeed a minority group that knows to return love. Beichuan, please remember forever these great women, these beautiful angels!

I can not describe everything to you by writing but I hope we can step to the wonderful future with clasped hands.

## **A letter to students of Class 4, Junior Grade 3**

Yan Li, teacher of Beichuan Middle School

My children, I have always wanted to write letters to you, but I always found excuses. Today, I am writing this letter to you, and hope this letter will give you direction. Of course, I hope you can put it into action so you can bring me surprises. I believe the sun is new everyday.



My dear children,

How are you?

With the pen in my hand, I do not know where I should begin.

In these three months, we have experienced too much. The collapsing of our class rooms and our homes. We parted with teachers, relatives and relatives. In a flash, the familiar and quiet life went away from us. Azrael came and life felt weak and short. We were angry, we cried, we were silent, and we shouted. We fell into contemplation calmly, and we grew up in disaster.

We were unlucky, but at the same time we were lucky. The Chang Hong Group opened their door to welcome us. We got milk, clothes, school bags and classrooms. Volunteers from all over the world came. They played with us and laughed with us. We were surrounded by love in these months. Yes, people gave love freely. We should know that we shall repay back their love. This is an excellent characteristic of Chinese people. So we are

not only students, we are also batons of love. We shall live a good life with blessings.

Looking at the words "Hold on Beichuan", I think you are as excited as I am. But my children, to hold on is not said, but done. We must face difficulties bravely and take down-to-earth actions and have the perseverance to go on. We should know that we live not only for ourselves, but also for our relatives, friends, teachers and students. We should continue what they did not finish. We should live on bravely, so that our relatives, teachers, friends and teachers are consoled.

In this class, there are some children I take special care of.

Qiao Hong and Yang Bo are two students that lost their parents in the earthquake. They cried so much, but in September I saw your smiles and laughter. Your smiles touched me and made me happy. However, let me tell you. My children, your life is harder than other children's and you need to make decisions on your own most of the times. Although you got help and assistance from kind-hearted people, you should understand. A person should live with dignity. Do not forget to repay the loving ones with your hard work. You must live a good life.



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Mu Daiquan, you are a child that makes me happy. I can not forget your smile. Your left hand was amputated, but you are always the best with housework. And you never find excuses for homework. Every time I ask you if you need any help, you always say "Teacher, I can do it." You are strong. I am so proud of you.

Cheng Guoqiang. The first day I became the head teacher of your class, you were drunk. You could hardly stand up when I came into the class, and you said "I will not do this again. I promise this is the first time, and also the last time." The reason why you were drunk was simple. That day was the birthday of your younger sister who died in the earthquake. Before the earthquake, you celebrate her birthday for her each year but after that you could do nothing but drink. My child, you forget that the more you drink,

the more depressed you will get. There are too many people that lost their relatives in this earthquake. Shall we all be like you? Be strong, my child! It has been half month since this happened. Although you are still naughty, you have become mature.

Xi Yao. You are the one who makes me most worried. All the other students except six of you have passed away, so you are apathetic and seldom smile. Child, your teacher and friends and relatives all wish you well. You should realize the dreams of your classmates that have passed away, and you should continue your studies for them. But won't your apathy make them more worried? Wake up, my child. There should be more optimistic and happy children in our class.

Ge Xiaolong is commissary in charge of students' lives, and classroom cleaning. We have a clean classroom because of you. Warm-hearted Zhang Xiaofeng and Mu Dandan; gentle and quiet Wen Wen; bright Yang Zhilong; sensible Si Wenchuan; straightforward Chen Xixi... My children, it is because of you that make this class is vital and energetic. I cannot describe all of you in writing but I hope we can step into the wonderful future with hands together.

I wish you happiness and health!

Your head teacher, Li Yan

September of 2008



Those dead have passed away  
Those alive are called BRAVE

## Commemoration

Su zhong and Lai Yuliang, teacher of Beichuan Middle  
School

The moment came so fast  
The baby was still sucking its mother's nipples  
The child had the pen in his hand  
The voice of the shepherd still hung in the sky  
Suddenly  
There was a severe convulsion  
Time flew  
Horror-struck faces still before my eyes  
The broken walls  
The fading flower on the ruins  
Those dead have passed away  
Those living are called BRAVE  
Cries and shouts were everywhere  
Our lives stopped at that moment  
Life perished at that moment  
Dreams were woken up  
The glories of Sichuan were destroyed  
This moment the whole country was shocked  
Wenchuan, Beichuan and Qingchuan drew the attention of all people  
Red, green, white and orange colours spread over the ruins  
It was a touching moment



The respectable prime minister came  
With tears in his eyes, he said  
"As long as there is even a little hope, we will redouble our efforts 100  
times and will never relax our efforts"

How awful life was  
Kind-hearted people cried  
How can we hear God?  
The tender pigeon still stays here  
It was listening to the students reading  
Or was it memorizing the smiling faces of the children?  
Those dead have passed away  
Those alive are called BRAVE  
We were consoling the souls in heaven with our hearts  
We are ready to carry bigger disasters on our shoulders  
So



The rolling stones  
Were turned into foot stones for new houses  
The wood cut down by the victims when they were alive  
Were turned into crossbeams of new houses

...

The beautiful new buildings on the ruins  
Are they monuments?  
The bricks have become the epigraph  
Yearning for the dead  
Symbolizing the hope of life for the alive  
I hope they can see this from heaven  
When I quiet down  
Maple leaves fall down  
I woke up from the nightmare  
I picked up the red


And put it gently on the gravestones  
This is the commemoration of November



The whole nation has taken actions. There is no Beichuan any more, but we can rebuild a new Beichuan.

## What does May 12th give us?

Xie Yanping, teacher of Beichuan Middle School



I tried to write many times, but usually had to put down my pen. I have always wanted to write something for May 12th, but did not know how to begin. Is it because I am too depressed? I do not want to write something that makes no sense. To a person that experienced May 12th earthquake, it is not easy to express my feelings and thoughts. The May 12th period, has brought us too much! Is it the same as the sea changes? Yes. Is it painful? Yes. Is it to part with relatives? Yes. Is it the glory of human nature? Is it great love? Yes. Yes, yes...

If anyone asks me what is left for us after May 12th, my answer is, "There are no choices left for us." Thousands of lives were suddenly gone. At that moment, we were waiting for justice from the devil. To live or to die! We knew it after the mountain broke.

What do we have after May 12th? We have choice. We have the choice to live. Wenchuan needs perseverance, and Beichuan needs perseverance too. We couldn't cure the pain in people's hearts after the earthquake. So we chose to cure the pain.

The living crawled out from the ruins, removing the bricks, and we decided to hold back our tears. And we tried hard not to think of the relatives who were buried under the ruins. They knew the best way to console the victims was to rebuild new homes.

The locals in the tents were busy with daily matters as before, and they



decided to forget the sorrows while working through their daily matters. They knew the best way to console those dead is to live happily as usual.

The students were reading in the classrooms, and they wanted to declare their existence to the world. They knew the best way to thank those who cared about them was to build new hopes.

Beichuan was destroyed. People all over the country are sad for this. Beichuan needs to stand up again, so people choose to help us.

What do we have after May 12th? Is it a display of love again? Yes. Is it the union of our nation again? Yes. Is it a test of our nation's spirit? Yes, yes!

If anyone asks me what is brought to our nation by May 12th, my answer is "Choice". Yes, the disaster area needs the whole nation, and the whole nation chooses to relieve the people in disaster.

The central party committee has taken action. The top leaders came to guide the relief work. They took fast action to help Beichuan hold on.

The rescue teams came. Thousands of armed forces were worked day and night in the disaster area, digging the ruins and removing bricks, looking for survivors. They helped transfer victims and rebuild homes. They reached out their strong arms to the victims, and gave them a reason to live on.

The whole nation has taken action. There is no Beichuan any more, but we can rebuild a new Beichuan. They chose to love and help. And they chose to be dedicated to the relief works in the disaster areas.

...

May 12th only let us to choose to be strong, but you, our relatives in the disaster area, you chose to give the reason for us to live on.



The school became stronger because of these lovely people.

## Lovely people

Yuan Xiuhua, teacher of Beichuan Middle School

In the earthquake, many teachers lost their homes and relatives. What hurt them wasn't their misfortune, but their relatives'. But because of the responsibilities they had, they endured their bitterness and sadness, and persisted in hardships through the years. They were dedicated to their work at the Changhong Training center. They are continuing their life in this unfamiliar city. The school became stronger because of these lovely people.



Zeng Maohua, a college graduate from Fujian province, was tall and handsome. He was a bit childish. I was not in the same class as him. I had little acquaintance with him, but later I learned he was badly injured in the earthquake and he did not leave the site, saying his students need to be taken care of. Later his brother came from Fujian and brought him home to a doctor, just in time to keep his left leg. The medical expenses were all paid by himself, and he missed the time for reimburse the medical expenses at the end of the year. In order to live, he had to save every penny for clothes, food and transportation. He had instant noodles everyday because he was not used to the local food. However, young and energetic as he was, he became a head teacher and gave P.E. classes for five classes from senior one to senior two. He had to get up early and went to sleep late. He worked hard and consoled the students. Looking at his thin and weak body and seeing his busy work in and outside students' dormitory, many colleagues

were touched. He is the second Xu Benyu.

Deng Jiajun, the head teacher of Grade 12 and English teacher of three classes had many other responsibilities. He always came early to school and left late. He had gout and I always saw him stumbling downstairs. He liked to play jokes. Wherever he was, there was laughter. In the earthquake, he lost his daughter who was in Grade 9. He was sad, but he was still leading students of Grade 12 to prepare for exams, while working with other school leaders for other jobs. In the new semester in September, he was the head teacher of Class 2 and Grade 10. There were many problem students. He would ask these students to talk with him privately, and dealt with them fairly and with patience. He always had a solution to help students. He was a finance minister, logistics minister and senior nurse for students in Class 2, Grade 10, just like their own fathers. His own daughter would have entered Grade 10 this year. Who knows what he feels when he looks at these students? That day he went out, and he asked me to take care of the class while he was away.



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Li Jun, head teacher of Class 1, Grade 10 and supervisor of Grade 10. He lost his daughter in the earthquake. Before the earthquake he was head teacher and math teacher of three classes of Grade 12. At the school opening ceremony, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao also asked to meet with him. He was a great teacher. He was kind to others. Now he asks his students to write weekly report, and from his comments, I know that he is trying to teach the students to gain more experience. How many people can be so thoughtful without experiencing disasters?

There are a lot more teachers like him in our school. I see most of the times their passion and patience in their work.

I am also a teacher at this school. But when I work here, I feel how great and strong teachers are.

I believe the earthquake is not a great gulf we can not cross over. We can cross it.

## Live a good life

He Yuhua, Class 4, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

May 12th has passed, but there is still something hiding in my heart. No matter how hard you try to break away from it, you will fail most times. A tender touch will make me feel the pain.

My relatives have left, my friends have left and my classmates have left. Everything happened so suddenly that I was on the verge of collapsing. I always think, if I live in such a pain, why not die? Then there will be no pain at all.

Once I was chatting with my parents over phone, and I said "Maybe I will feel happy if I choose to die." Hearing this, my mother choked with sobs. I thought she was crying. She told me again and again, "My girl, how can you think like this? How can you? Do not do stupid things." I fell into silence. However my father could not control his mood and said, "If you do this, I will be living in hell. I worry about you day and night. Do you know how lucky you are to be alive? If you chose to die, not only your parents but also your relatives, friends and classmates would not forgive you. You must pull yourself together and live happily forever. If you do that stupid thing, you will be my enemy. I will not only be your enemy in this life, but in generations to come. If you are irresponsible, I will lose my daughter." Hearing his anxious voice, I realized I was wrong. So many innocent lives have left us, leaving behind immense pain. However, they had no choice. Am I too selfish if I choose to die to hide from the pain in my heart?



I thought of a word from Shi Tiesheng's "In the Temple of earth": A person, since birth, is no longer a question that can be argued, but a fact given to him by GOD. When God is giving us this fact, the result is there. So death is not something you can get with anxiousness. Death is a day that will come definitely.

I think of friends and relatives living happily in heaven. They have become angels. Maybe they are watching at us from heaven everyday. Just like my father said, if I ended my life myself, they would scold me and never forgive me.

There are so many kind-hearted people who offered us help when Beichuan Middle School needed it. They helped us to go through difficult times. If I chose to escape, I would have become a ruthless person that did not know how to repay. I would not like that.

So I made up my mind: I must live happily and be a strong Beichuan Middle School student.

Since then, I turned into another person, and began my new life with passion. I believe the earthquake is not a great gulf we can not cross over. We can cross it. With millions of people's love, we can build a bridge to cross over victory. This is just a nightmare. When we open our eyes, nightmares will leave, and a hopeful dawn with sunshine will appear before our eyes.



After each aftershock, I bumped my head against the prefabricated panel, to make sure I was still alive.

## **My teacher's instructions saved me**

Ke Tianyang, Class 10, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

Recalling what happened on May 12th, I feel I was living in a different world. I always say to myself, if it was not for my teacher's instructions, I would have gone to another world already.

When the earthquake happened, I did not have time to respond before I was buried under the ruins. When I woke up, there was only darkness before my eyes and my right hand was crushed against a prefabricated panel, but I could not feel the pain at all. My foot was crushed against another student. I tried to move my foot, but I could not do it. I could not move it at all. I did not know if the student could still breathe, because he did not make a word at all and never moved. I called him, but he did not reply me. I didn't know if he was alive or dead.

I began to feel afraid. I might die in this darkness too. No! I cannot die! I must think of a way to survive. My teacher always told us to treasure our lives and be strong. I felt I had courage suddenly, and did not feel afraid at all. All I thought about was to live and survive!

But I did not know how long I would be buried and did not know how many people there were in this building like me. I felt hungry, thirsty, cold and sleepy. I even began to think that these were the signs for death. I did not know how long I could hold on. Every time I thought of death, I repeated a word by my teacher "Confidence is life; to give up is to lose."

I believed there must be someone up there rescuing us, because I could hear the disorder above. I must be strong! I must hold on! I must wait!

I really did not want to die, and did not want to die slowly. Whenever aftershocks happened, I closed my eyes, waiting. After each aftershock, I bumped my head against the prefabricated panel, to make sure I was still alive. I felt then how lucky and happy I was because I could feel the pain. When I found myself still alive, I said to myself "One hope out of ten thousand hopes always turns into 100% reality." This was said by our teacher. Then I became more confident...

After many aftershocks, I saw something shining. I fixed my eyes on it. It was light! I felt so excited, because I could see light again! I began to cry for help from time to time. Although my voice was weak, I felt someone was rescuing me.

Later, the prefabricated panels above my head were removed one after another one. I could see many soldiers. Some cranes were moving their arms. Then, the prefabricated panel pressing my arm and legs was removed. I was taken to the ambulance. Finally I was rescued! The nurse told me it was already 3:50pm in the afternoon of May 14th.

I wanted to cry and shout, but I did not have any strength. Soon after that I fainted.

Afterwards, I think, firstly I should thank all the rescuers who rescued me hard, among them were my teachers, classmates, armed forces, nurses and doctors. They gave me a second life. Secondly, I should also thank my teacher who gave me instructions, which brought tremendous spiritual power to me and helped me to survive and go through the difficult times!



A girl student and I are each keeping a watch.

## Two watches

Song Wenjie, Class 7, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

A girl student and I are each keeping a watch.

These are two common watches, but we are treasuring them.

After May 12th, our schoolyard was turned into ruins. There were also aftershocks at times, with dangers everywhere. The middle school entrance examination was going to be held. Around 600 students and teachers were sent to Zhangqiu of Shandong province to resume classes, me among them.

In Shandong, we entered a new school, and the locals were treating and caring for us just like their own children.

What impressed me the most happened on Father's Day. We went to Jiujun Market. With ten Yuan which were given by our school, we went to the market. Looking at the interesting things in local market, we felt excited. The street was not so prosperous, and the locals were not rich.

A girl and I went into a shop to buy watches. The shop was not big. Actually with five or six persons inside it would become crowded. In the shop was another customer, wearing plain clothes. He had a pair of big and rough hands, and deep wrinkles on his forehead. It was obvious he was not rich. He had a little girl, only five or six years old. The girl had two pigtailed. Hearing that our accent was different, the girl looked at us curiously.

Each of us chose a cheap watch, and when we wanted to pay, the man took out some money and put it on the counter, then he said something to the shop owner and left with the little girl. As they were talking with different



accent, we did not hear clearly what he said. The salesperson s  
already paid for these watches." "Why?" I asked, surprised.

"Hurry. Let's give back the money to him. We cannot accep  
without any reason," my companion said. Without thinking, I took the money  
and ran out of the shop. I looked around, and saw him. He was riding an  
old bicycle, carrying the little girl behind him. I ran to them and said "Uncle,  
thank you for your kindness, but we have money." He pretended he didn't  
hear me, but went faster. I passed the money to the little girl, but she did  
not speak or accept the money. The man saw me still chasing him, so he  
stopped. I said "Thanks for your kindness. We accept it with our hearts!" He  
was holding the handles of the bicycle and lowered down his head with  
grey hair. Tears rolled down his cheeks, and fell down to the ground. He said  
in mandarin with his accent "Sorry that I cannot offer bigger help!" Then he  
got on the bicycle and went away... I could not say a word then. With the  
money in my hand, I made a deep bow to him...



The girl student ran to me and asked if I had met the man. I told her what  
happened, and she fell into silence too.

Now, we are keeping the two watches with care. We know these  
watches are common, but for us they carry the weight of true emotion.

Teacher Zhang Jiachuan, he gave up all the chances to escape, and held the door frame firmly with his body. He saved around 40 young lives with his own life.

## Hope, sunshine

Wang Xilan, Class 8, Grade 12, Beichuan Middle School

Dante Alighieri said "The saddest thing is life without any hope." Hope is like warm sunshine. A soul without hope is gloomy and cold. It's you, the kind-hearted people who helped us in the disaster, that give us hope.

We will remember forever, how after the May 12th earthquake, the principal Liu Yachun did not sleep for many days from the time when rescue work started until the time we withdrew from disaster area. He had no time to think about his son and wife who were buried under the ruins. The secretary Zhang Dingwen had high blood pressure, but he rushed to the ruins again and again with blood of the injured on his shoulders. He also had no time to care about his wife who was buried under the ruins. The deputy principal Ma Qingping, who escaped from the ruins, organized students of senior 3 to save and transfer the injured. Teacher Zhang Jiachuan, gave up the chance to escape, and held the door frame firmly with his body. He saved around 40 young lives with his own life...

We will remember forever that employees in Leigu Cement Factory brought tools and came to our school right after the earthquake and joined rescue work in the ruins, without caring about their own safety. On the evening of May 12th, the armed forces came, and students were rescued one after another. Rescue teams of Xian Mobile Bureau came to our school within 24 hours of the earthquake and began the rescue work in the ruins. Luzhou Fire brigade worked hard to rescue students on May 20th...

We will remember forever that after the earthquake Prime minister Wen Jiabao came to see us six times in six months, bringing us the care from our party and the government. Changhong Group solved the problem of food, clothes and accommodations for us while the company itself was also suffering problems, they gave us a safe school. The Total and Yihai Groups brought winter clothes for us, bringing warmth of spring to us in the cold winter. Chen Jinbiao, Yu Dan, Long Di and many other kind-hearted people visited us time after time, and we still do not know the names of many of them. They brought relief supplies to us, and also helped us to cure pains in our hearts...

Gilbert said "There is sunshine after each black cloud, and there is hope under the sunshine." All that are caring for us, you are the warmest sunshine on earth. When we felt helpless, you brought hope and perseverance to us, dispersed the black clouds above our heads, and taught us to be brave. Thank you for bringing us sunshine, hope and strength to fly. There will be a day when we will be like you and bring hope to others and warm the world with our sunshine.



I am very luck in this disaster. I will realize the dream of the dead bud.

## **Come with love**

Luo Dan, Class 13, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

Once upon a time, the flowers on the hills were growing happily under the sunshine. The wind blew their dreams off of the hill and flew up to the blue sky.

But one day, the mountain collapsed and many flowers were buried. The surviving flowers that were injured were transplanted to a strange place, the Changhong Training Centre.

These flowers are the children of Beichuan Middle School. Although some flowers have lost their leaves, now they get more sunshine and rain and dew.

Although our home and schoolyard were destroyed, we have love with us, and we are living happily.

After we came here, we have food, water, houses, clothes and books, and all of these are free. They were donated by kind-hearted people. After the earthquake, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao came to our school for six times and attended the school opening ceremony in autumn of 2008, and gave us the spirit to "Constantly strive to be strong". The China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese came to see us, bringing aid from overseas Chinese. The Yihai group came; Capital Normal University came; the Xiangyu Education Group came; the Chinese ping pong team came; the Total Company came; psychology treatment came; Chen Jinbiao came; professor Yu Dan came; Deng Yongyu from Hong Kong came; Fu Peirong



came from Taiwan; the Chinese Mayor of USA came... Love came in from everywhere, helping us drive away the darkness and shadow of the disaster, and lighting up our hearts. Due to the disaster, our hearts came closer. Although it was cold in the winter of 2008, the children of Beichuan Middle School were living in warm. No matter it is Chinese or foreigners, volunteers are coming to us like the spring breeze. Many people are caring children of Beichuan Middle School, bringing love and hope.

I must say "Thank you" to those kind-hearted people. You were like trees, offering us shelter from the wind and rain; you are like the hill, giving us firm back. I will treasure all that was given to me by those kind-hearted people, and remember them in my heart forever.

I used to think my life only belonged to me and I lived only for myself. Now I am bathing in love and I have come to know that a person should live not only for oneself, but for society.

Now I understand that my life does not only belong to myself. With golden sunshine on me, and expectations of numerous people on my shoulders, I will walk on this disaster-stricken land. My eyes were filled with tears because my love to this land is deep. I will study hard and repay our society and country with a lifetime of hard work. I am ready for it no matter how hard it is. I know that I was very lucky in this disaster. I will realize the dream of a waiting bud. I hope all survivors are happy and healthy. I will love all of them, including myself.

I will continue to offer my love. This is my lifetime promise!



My dear classmates, the central party let us to step forward in this new semester, on the way ahead. Let's hold our heads high, and walk to the bright future!

## **A speech given on the autumn school opening ceremony of 2008**

Fu Liyin, Class 5, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School

Dear grandparents, uncles, aunts, and teachers,

How are you?

We have just experienced a catastrophe in summer and we but now walking towards a hopeful autumn. On the first day of September, we are here to celebrate the opening of new semester. We will move to our new dreams with perseverance.

We were the most unfortunate people in the world in this summer.

On May 12th of this summer, an unexpected catastrophe came upon us. In one moment, the mountain collapsed, houses collapsed, homes were destroyed, and the schoolyard was destroyed. Many students left us; many teachers left us; many relatives left us; many friends left us; many young lives left us! We, the survivors from Azrael, could do nothing but feel the pain in the ruins, part with our bloody loved ones, and cry.

In this ordinary summer, we became the luckiest people in the world!

We will never forget the care of our teacher. When the earthquake happened, many of our respectful teachers did not care about their own lives to save us, and some of them lost their own precious lives. I was rescued by teacher Zhang Jiachun, but he was buried under the ruins forever. The surviving teachers endured great pain and sorrow and led us to

safety. I want to express my respect to our teacher Zhang Jiachun, and all other teachers!

We will never forget the care and love of our government and the central party. After the earthquake, President Hu Jintao, and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao came, many leaders of our country came to see us, bringing us hope and warmth. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao came to the front line of relief work many times. He also came to Beichuan Middle School many times. Here, please allow me to show my greatest respect to president and prime minister and our government on behalf of all students of our school.

We will never forget the love of people from all over the country. The armed forces, the nurses, the Shandong people, the psychologists, the volunteers, the entrepreneurs... Love and care from everywhere poured in. Changhong Group made a special effort. They built us a new home and a new schoolyard, and offered us meticulous care. Please allow me to show my greatest respect to people who offered us love.

We will never forget the support we had from overseas Chinese. After the earthquake, many overseas Chinese made donations for us. They helped us from Europe, America, Australia, South Asia, East Asia, and East Asia. Help came from any place where Chinese people live. We heard some exciting news just days ago. A new Beichuan Middle School will be built under the organization of China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, with a foundation of overseas Chinese. The design teams are organized by the Yihai Group. This will be a first class and safe middle school. Blood is thicker than water. The hearts of all Chinese are linked together. Respect to all people from the world that cared for us and loved us.

Looking back, we have suffered too much pain, yet the same time we got much love and care. We learned to be strong in the disaster and we learned to love. Looking forward to the future, we have a brilliant future. My classmates, let us make sail, ride the winds, break the waves, and move forward. To be strong is not just a posture, it takes long term perseverance.



To repay is not a state, but a process of perseverance!

My dear classmates, the central party and government are with us; Sichuan Changhong is with us; the whole nation is with us; overseas Chinese people are with us; great love is with us. Let's hold our heads high, and walk to the bright future!



It made us lament. The disaster was cruel, but the world was warm.

## Let us be grateful

Ma Jing, Class 1, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

In the May 12th earthquake, Beichuan Middle School became a heavy disaster area. I dashed out of the classroom after the quake, and I was shocked by what I saw. A whole education building had collapsed and another teaching building had collapsed. Thousands of teachers and students were buried.

When rescue work was being carried on, the lucky survivors were being transferred to outside. In the afternoon of May 13th, we went to Jiuzhou Stadium in Mianyang. Sitting on the cold floor, in a daze, our eyes were filled with sorrow and despair. At that time, citizens of Mianyang brought us necessities and warmed our hearts. It made us lament. The disaster was cruel, but the world was warm.



Prime Minister Wen Jiabao came to Beichuan Middle School personally six times, bringing us care and hope. He said to us gently "Hold your head high, hold out your chest. Step forward, face the future, and live on strongly."

Then Changhong Company moved us to the Changhong Training Centre, providing us with necessities, clothes and food. They also showed us around Changhong factory and exhibition hall commemorating a 50 year anniversary of Changhong Company. We saw the humble and great side of human nature.

Love of people from all over the country poured in to us. Portable

shelters provided by the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China to us; Yihai Company made school uniforms and gloves for us, keeping us warm through winter; musical instruments were provided by Capital Normal University were appreciated by students; sports equipment donated by Etsong Group kept students' lives active.

The construction of new Beichuan Middle School was going to start. The China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese and the Yihai Group offered their love for this project. The China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese organized donations from overseas Chinese. the Yihai Group organized an international standard designing team. We are looking forward to seeing our new school.

I believe it will be beautiful, because it is not only a school, but a symbol of great love. Although the earthquake destroyed our homes and our school, it cannot extinguish the fire of hope in our hearts.

I believe that "The edge of a sword becomes keener through honing." "The fragrance of plum blossom sharpens in the bitter cold." As long as we study hard, we will become successful. We know better how precious life is and the responsibilities on our shoulders are because we have suffered so much pain yet are surrounded by endless love. Let us be grateful and pass on the love!

With my pain becoming less each day, I learned to smile again. I did not tremble in the coldness of wind and rain.

## Forever memories

Huang Xiao, Class 2, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

Unexpected Disaster,

The faint letters "5.12" on the blackboard came into my eyes clearly, and when I had to read the oscillation, helplessness and silent weeping came upon me. The tears flowed into my mouth, with the taste of dark blue seas. We lost too much in that catastrophe.

Time stopped on that day which at first looked peaceful. At 14:28, a symphony of death was put on. Sorrow, despair, crying, weeping and shouting filled the air. Azrael smiled, because he found it funny to look at the scared faces. The cunning smile cost rivers of blood. Finally, it stopped. And the work of Azrael appeared in front of us. We lost our home; our relatives and friends did not smile any more. All they could do was to protect their hometown with their unbreathing bodies, in the darkness, forever.

In a blink, my world became dark and helpless. The fairytale of life did not dance happily any more. I used to believe that I would realize my dream as long as I dared to dream. But my dream was broken apart, just like a broken mirror. My blood and my tears were mixed together. How painful my heart was! I looked up into the sky. Where was my sunshine? I was lost.

Light in haze,

In the darkness, I saw the candle light. I felt the warmth again and did not tremble any more. I stood up from the corner where I cried. What was this? Uncles and aunts with smiling faces were holding candles in their hands, the



fire dancing at the top of the candles. Beautiful music poured from the sky, and my heart began to dance with it. "My child, be strong. You still have us with you." The song broke the darkness and silence, and I felt great love again. Even if they were strangers to us, they were like our brothers and sisters. Love was unselfish.

So I summoned up my courage and walked out of the door, a ray of sunshine on my face, which I did not feel for a long time. I came to know that warm sunshine was from outside the house, but I did not have the courage to open the door. Now I opened it, and discovered that sunshine was around us. Numerous donations made us feel warm. "Mother Wang" from the Yihai Group came to visit us many times, and organized funding for the rebuilding of our school. They brought school uniforms to us from a great distance away; the Total Group made jackets for us; many loving persons donated quilts and winter clothes to us, bringing warmth to us in cold winter. They were writing a gorgeous music book with their hard work, and love was the theme. Mid Autumn Festival should be a time for family gatherings. But we cannot call our relatives back to us. I sighed with sorrow. But then Changhong Group sent moon cakes to us. I felt so warm inside that I cried again. I cried because I was so touched. With my pain becoming lesser each day, I learned to smile again. I did not tremble in the coldness of wind and rain.

Gratitude,

I am grateful because I was touched. With a grateful heart, I will live and pursue my dream. Thank you for giving us sunshine; thank you for giving us hope; thank you for what you did for us. Thank you so much! My gratitude is a lamp. No matter where we will be, we will move and repay people around us with the warmth of this lamp. I believe we can do it!



The moment the disaster came, we were so scared that we did not dare to move forward in our lives.

## **Gratitude is to live a good life**

Li Jing, Class 9, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

When a small tree is grown up, it should think like this, "I must live on, regardless of the wind and rain. I will provide shelter for people from the rain, and provide homes for the birds." When a flower is going to bloom, it should think like this, "I will bloom beautiful flowers for people to enjoy, bringing happiness to them." When a person is born, he should learn to live a good life.



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The moment the disaster came, we were so scared that we did not dare to move forward in our lives. The beautiful lives disappeared; beautiful dreams were broken apart; our hearts were broken; our hearts were bleeding. Cold and hunger were torturing us; Azrael was wandering around us, looking for souls to bring them to heaven. However, how many souls wanted to leave their bodies? They were struggling, protesting, and challenging Azrael. But we were without any food we lost our school... There were so many questions around us.

At this time, love from the world was thrown to us, bringing us hope and courage to live on. People who had no blood relationship with us offered us love. They let us be brave enough to defeat Azrael. They drove away the cold and hunger from us, and cured the pain of our hearts. They helped us to rebuild our lives.

We accepted their help, with more responsibilities on our shoulders.

The angels were giving us their blessings. They have passed away, nostalgic about the world. They could not stay on this beautiful world, but they hope we can live happily for them and treat people around us well. They were nostalgic not because they were seeking ease and console. A good life is to be honest, brave and to realize our dreams. This is to live with gratitude. To live a good life is to be grateful, because we can help others and let more people live happily.

Gratitude is to live a good life.

The persevering lives under the ruins, the blasted flowers, and the souls flying to heaven, brought us unforgettable pain.

## Love leads to hope

Yang Qian, Class 16, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

Outside the window, cold moonlight was spread over the dark roads. The dancing shadows of the trees became more blurred through the treetops... Memories were pouring to me like tidewater.

At 14:28 on that afternoon, the earth began to shake, breaking the silence and peace, leaving only the sounds of flowing blood and dropping tears. The whole Beichuan county was turned into ruins in a moment; houses were destroyed in a second; relatives and friends were separated suddenly.

"Bashan Mountain is bowing its head, and Shu water is shedding tears!"

Looking at the shadow from the moonlight, I lifted my head and stared at the bright moon. It was so far away, clear and pure.

The persevering lives under the ruins, the blasted flowers, and the souls flying to heaven, brought us memorable pains. We, students of Beichuan Middle School, were lucky survivors in the disaster. We lived through each hard day, hand in hand with our teachers. We were brave, because we never gave up. We turned our sorrow into strength.

Sad tears were already gone. Crying to us, has become eternity of a moment when tears were rolling down our cheeks. Familiar forms appeared again on this strange land. Our colorful dreams are spreading over the land of Changhong.

"When disaster strikes, help comes from all sides." We are encouraged by love of all people.



Prime Minister Wen Jiabao came. "Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation!" This is the encourage and expectation of Prime Minister to Beichuan Middle School. Although we lost our relatives, we have more relatives now. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao is our grandpa. We have the confidence to defeat disaster, and we have the ability to rebuild beautiful homes, because we have a strong nation!

Cold winter came, but we felt warm, because Mother Wang of Yihai Group from Beijing brought school clothes for us. They wished all children of Beichuan Middle School happiness. Without a word, they passed purity, warmth and happiness to us. 3000 students were wearing the beautiful school uniforms, our school filled with the joys of youth...

This winter, we were warmed by winter jackets and scarves and love.

Sisters and brothers from Capital Normal University came. Their arrival added happiness to our life. The shiny musical instruments and the dancing notes they produced songs of praise of love. We learned a lot from them. In the evening of the Art Festival, Beichuan's first wind and guitar wheelchair band made their first appearance. It was inspiring and exciting.

Numerous volunteers and kind-hearted people came to Beichuan Middle School. Was there any excuse for us not to be strong?

"Big sound is rare, and great love is boundless." We were scared by the earthquake, but Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, Mother Wang, brothers and sisters from Capital Normal University helped us to find happiness again. It's you and you and you who let us have the warmest winter in our lives. Carrying the care and love of the nation, we are confident to rebuild our houses. Thank you, because your love leads to hope. We will build a better Beichuan in the sunshine.



In the mind of Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, he never forgot the children in the disaster area. It was our greatest honor to have him visit us.

## **Wings of love**

Song Hongrong, Class 11, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

The May 12th earthquake goes further away from us, day by day. The new term began. On August 21st, many students came to enroll in school to resume class.

On September 1st, we had our school opening ceremony. The students were wearing white T-shirt, like angels, welcoming the first school term after the earthquake, and also welcome a new beginning and new future, all of them smiling.

At the ceremony, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao told us "You are the hope of Beichuan, and you are the future of Beichuan. You should study hard from now on, and get more knowledge, to lay a firm foundation to rebuild Sichuan, Beichuan and Beichuan Middle School. You should have perseverance. The earthquake cannot defeat your will or the Qiang people." We were greatly encouraged by him.

He is the Prime Minister, and needs to attend to numerous affairs everyday, but he did not forget us. He spared time to visit us and encourage us. He let us know that we are not alone and that we have many responsibilities on our shoulders.

As the time flew, it has been half semester since we resumed class. One day, our teacher told us "Today, our respectable Prime Minister Wen Jiabao will come to see us." All students were happy to hear this, with happy smiles on their faces. It was in the evening when the Prime Minister



came, and we were having our evening self-study then. When he stepped into our classroom, we were surprised at first, because there were so many classes and the Prime Minister walked into our classroom. We were so lucky. Then the whole class stood up to greet the Prime Minister "Good evening, Grandpa Wen!" Loud applause followed. Grandpa Wen smiled and said "Good evening, students. Let's sit down. I am so glad to see all of you happy." As a Prime Minister, he should be serious in our memories, but Grandpa Wen was not serious at all. He laughed with us closely.

This was the fifth time Grandpa Wen came to our school, but I had two previous chances to see him so closely. Prime minister Wen Jiabao, never forgot the children in the disaster area. It was our greatest honor to have him visit us.

His smile came from his great love and true affections for our country. What touched us the most was that we have a great country and a good Prime Minister. How should I repay our country and Grandpa Wen? The only way is to study hard and repay our society and contribute to our country!

Love has a pair of wings, leading us through wind and rain, flying towards a bright future.

They tried to study hard, be strong, walk from shadow to sunshine, and walk to their future.

## Inspired

Wang Jing, Class 11, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

The heaven falling and the earth cracking, the spirit of Beichuan Middle School will never disappear. Beichuan Middle School is strong, standing through the earthquake, enduring the violent wind and driving rain.

Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends. After the earthquake, kind-hearted people from all over the world stretched out their hands of help to the victims; the armed forces were working day and night to rescue the victims. They did not rest, ate and drank little, but they were always working on the front line of the earthquake relief work. Every time I saw the touching moment on TV, tears rolled down my cheeks, and at the same time I was inspired. Now, I have become a student in Class 1, Grade 10 of Beichuan Middle School, but I am still touched by many moments.



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I was touched by two persons of Beichuan Middle School. One is a sister from Grade 11. No one knows her name. She lost her right hand in the disaster, so she could not study normally. But she did not give up. She practiced to write diary and learn new lessons with her left hand during the period before assembling artificial limb. When she was in Grade 12, she did as good as other students in study. When she was interviewed on TV, and was asked "Were you sad when you lost your right hand? Have you worried about your study and life in future?" She answered calmly "Other people have lost more than I have. Why shall I be sad? I am writing with my left hand, and I am doing as good as other students in my studies. What shall I

be worried about?" The reporter was inspired by her words and her strong will, and said she would become a successful person in future for sure. However, I was overcome by her calm smile, so sweet that it could melt the ice and snow like the sunshine of early spring.

Another person is a brother from Grade 12. He was not injured, but he could not recover psychologically. He lost his classmates and relatives in the disaster, which really hurt him emotionally. He was silent most of the times, but he would cheer up when we talked about school with him. He said a word that touched me and others very much "It makes me happy to study, and I will never give up studying even if I am sad. I will never give up unless I die." I was moved to tears at these words. There are many more that are like this brother. They are studying in the shadow of the earthquake. It was the hope of their relatives, students and classmates to study hard. It became the cure for their pain to study hard. They tried to study hard, be strong, walk from shadow to sunshine, and walk to their future.

I could see a lot of wheelchairs outside the portable shelters in Beichuan Middle School. If you look closely, you would find many of them are with artificial limbs, so they could not walk freely like normal persons. They straightened their backs, with confident smiles on their faces, which consoled Grandpa Wen.

Beichuan Middle School was under reconstruction now. There are a lot of difficulties in the process of reconstruction. However, whatever the difficulty is, students and teachers of Beichuan Middle School will not be defeated and will walk out of the difficulty, moving towards the beautiful rainbow.



I will be a doctor after graduation to repay society.

## The turning point of my life

Ge Tingting, Class 11, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

I was a naïve and naughty child before the earthquake, and I always believed that we should enjoy our lives when we are alive. So I often hung around on the street with my friends, wasted much time and never thought about my future seriously.

Great disaster and endless pain were brought to Beichuan people by May 12th earthquake. I was also inspired deeply and I came to know what love is. I found my life dream after that.



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I was sent to the hospital because of heavy injuries after the earthquake. A beautiful nurse was busy with the injured and the dead. She chatted with the injured just after she arranged the sick. As there was not enough medicine at that time, many injured people did not have proper treatment, so they were having severe pains. She would always chat with the injured, to distract us, and we often did not notice that. We confided in her the sorrow and sadness in our hearts while chatting with her. Day after day, she was so tired up that she became sick. Looking at her falling into to the bosom of another nurse, I cried. Although I tried hard to hold my tears, I shed my tears. She was so tired that she did not know when she fell down to the ground, and even the noise did not wake her up. I suddenly came to understand how selfish I was to ask her to chat with us while she was so tired. Finally she woke up. She insisted on going back to work, regardless of our advice. She said "There are many people that need my attendance. If I was taken care

by others, how can I be a nurse?" We gave up and let her continue doing what she should do. We asked her to take good care of herself, but she was always dedicated to her work, trying to help all people who needed help.

Looking at this beautiful angel, I cried again. She made me understand life and made me grow up, and she made me understand that I should not waste any more time... The period when I was in hospital was the turning point of my life, because I found my own dream because of it. I will be a doctor after graduation to repay society. Now I understand how I should live a meaningful life!

However, the new teacher led us to sunshine in a common way.

## Let our souls set sail

Wang Xiangyu, Class 14, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

The new term began in hot summer. I tried hard to forget the pains of the cruel scenes I had seen. I became a senior student and stepped into our new school which was warm and welcoming.

The new Beichuan Middle School was located in Changhong Training Centre, with a brand-new look. The green lawn and songs of the birds in the trees were agreeable. But I could not find myself. Standing at the crossroad, I could not find my direction... With confusion, my classmates and I began our new school term. I did not know how our new teacher would face our perplexed eyes or how to disperse the darkness in our hearts... However, the new teacher led us to sunshine in a common way. Life was like a cherry, so lovely and so fresh. Regardless of the past, we were blessed by God, so we must treasure our lives. Firstly, we should have a positive attitude toward all things in our lives, because attitude decides everything. Too many words would only make us worried. The teachers tried not to talk about the earthquake. I felt their expectations, perseverance, calmness and trust.

As the time passed, I forgot the pain with a busy life in senior school. I feel the future is not far away from us. Gradually, I began my school life in senior high school, and began to like my life and study in senior high school. I always sing the song "My future is not my dream..." Let us believe in ourselves, and when we have enough strength, we will fly higher and farther.



The first school term was going to finish. Now in the cold winter, I had gained a lot. I have had good achievement in my study, and I also have a soul ready to set sail!



How can I repay you? My home country and my people!

## Feel grateful

Lin Yang, Class 4, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School

If my country is the sea, then I am a drop of water; if my country is the desert, I am a grain of sand. I will try my best to repay our country and our people.

On May 12th, when we were unprepared, the cruel earthquake attacked us. Our classroom collapsed, and our houses collapsed. Many students and I were injured. In the evening, we were rescued from the ruins, and were transferred to safe places from the danger when the aftershocks were happening.



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When we came to the hospital, it was already the evening of May 14th. In the following nights, we were rushing about ceaselessly, and the doctors came to ask about our symptoms. The locals brought us steaming hot porridge, and we were touched to tears. It was the first time we had enough food after the earthquake. The porridge was made by locals who did not care about their own lives in their homes when the aftershocks were still happening. It was a collection of love.

Later on, we were transferred to Yunnan because there were too many patients at the hospital. And we were warmly welcomed by locals there.

I was moved to tears again when I entered the ward. The smiling faces, bundles of flowers, blessings... In the room, necessities were put beside our beds in order. There were also telephones and TV sets in the ward. There was a special psychological treatment room for students. During that period, the

workers, students from local schools, government officials, representatives from companies and organizations came to visit us. Many foreigners came to give us lessons and to chat with us. Many spent Tomb-sweeping Day with us...

In Yunnan, the doctors and nurses took great care of us, and we were helped by kind-hearted persons from the world. All of this made me feel the warmth of home again. Their love poured into our hearts in a warm current.

Love for people was reflected into every corner of the disaster area, which made us feel warm, relieved and hopeful. Thanks to our country and our people. It is you that encouraged me to face everyday with smile. How can I repay you? My country and my people! I know I must study hard in future and become a person that can contribute to our society. This is a lesson given by our country. I finally have come to know the meaning of life-to repay our country.

One day, I will be a person like you, helping others and bringing warmth and happiness to them.

## Thanks without a word

Li Yuanyuan, Class 4, Grade 9, Beichuan Middle School

Everyone will face difficulties and tragedies in life, which we cannot anticipate. We should face catastrophes with courage. We were touched and inspired by the great love offered to us...

The world was watching us. After the earthquake, rescue teams from different countries came to the disaster areas, and rescued many lives with continuous efforts. They saved us, but we can only say thank you to them. Thank you for everything you did for us, and thank you for rescuing our classmates, countrymen and teachers.



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When I was still sad and could not face the reality, many volunteers came. They took away my sorrow and gave me happiness. I gradually recovered and learned how to face reality. I was happy when I was with them. Although sometimes I complained about the ruthlessness of God, it was just my way to release the pain and pressure in my heart. One day, I will be a person like you, helping and bringing warmth and happiness to others. I believe in myself. If I try hard to do everything, I will be able to give my care and love to others. A life subsidy to poverty stricken students is important to many of us, because we lost everything in the disaster. As a result, we should study hard to repay society. We gained many things from this big family, and we often asked ourselves "With so much help, shouldn't I study hard?" We should learn to feel content and grateful, and we should pass the love to others, to thank them with our actions. We are telling you with our

actions that we are strong and confident. We will not let you down. I do not know how to describe my feelings with words, and the only thing I can say is "Thank you. You let us have confidence in life and we will study hard for future."



We shall not only stand up, but we should hold our head high to see the beautiful scenery.

## Stand up

Liu Huarong, Class 2, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

I can still remember the moment when peace was broken, and I remember the young faces and cries under the ruins. In Sichuan, in Beichuan and in Beichuan Middle School, the life stories were told everywhere and a legend was made.

On May 12th, the dark day, we saw the face of Azrael; we saw the tears of struggling; we saw the sad world... We lost too much; many things had gone awry; the school which used to be filled with laughter was turned into ruins; the learned teachers who were giving lessons on the platform were no longer there.



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On May 19th, a sunny day came, when around 1000 students and teachers resumed class. With the care and love of Changhong Group, we started class in a new school and in new homes. With the care of people from society, we have learned to be strong and to stand up straight and chase the dream of the youth.

Today, with grateful tears in our eyes and hope and dream in our hearts, we are walking toward the brilliant future. We are grateful for the word by Grandpa Wen "Through disaster prospers a nation"; we are grateful for "A Psalm of Life" by Yu Dan; we are grateful for "Stand tall" by ambassador Lorens.

"Heaven is in a wild flower. Hold infinity in the palm of your hand." Let us treasure the feeling of being touched, and let us strive hard with



a grateful heart. I cannot forget "As long as there is love, hope exists." I cannot forget "Stand Tall".

We shall not only stand up, but we should hold high our head to see the beautiful scenery.

In order to keep conscious, I hit the broken glass on the ground.

## Enshrine and Feel grateful

Zhang Zhenghuan, Class 6, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

"With grateful heart, and with gratitude I am your companion. You make me courageous enough to be myself..." This song "Grateful heart" is sung all over our country, and it expresses our gratitude. The candle light of May warmed our hearts and lit up the road ahead. Our hope is there, so we must be brave and walk forward, and we will never forget to remember and feel grateful.



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On that tragic day, we experienced the separation of loved ones; ; and we were shocked by the disaster on that day. I cried, because I felt I was destroyed. The haze hanging over was all that I had, and I was so desperate that I wanted to close my eyes and wait for death. But I told myself not to do this. In order to keep conscious, I hit the broken glass on the ground. In that moment, I bit my lips and swore to myself "I must stay alive. Mum is waiting for me at home. I can save my teachers, my classmates and my friends and even other persons under the ruins. I want to see the sweet osmanthus tree in our hometown..."

However, many people went to heaven. It's said that there is no separation, sadness or earthquakes in heaven, so they must be living happily there. I must live bravely with this hope.

It was on that day that I witnessed the love that does not change until death; I witnessed the rescue work which was so touching. We were wandering on the edge of life, and then were gathered together by

destiny. This was not coincidence. I came to know what was meant by "When disaster struck, help came from all sides." and by "boundless love". I understood the true meaning of gratitude.

If the earthquake did not happen, we would still be together for class and dinner, we would cry and laugh together, we would experience the sadness and happiness of youth together, and we would listen to the words of our teachers and parents. But my silence left only pity for me. Since then, there was no chance.

Every time I lowered my head, I seemed to hear the sound of reading of my classmates; every time I closed my eyes, their faces appeared in my mind. I did not dare to forget their desperate shouting, and the mountain cracking in Beichuan. It became dark suddenly, and the sun hid in the clouds. God gave us a test.

Tears blurred my eyes. No one would come to rescue us. No one would think of coming here.

Then the brave armed forces came; the doctors and nurses came; the reporters came; the volunteers came. They brought us hope for life, and helped us to break away from the talons of Azrael. They opened a gap for us to let the light come through; they reported the disaster to Beijing regardless of the aftershocks.

When we felt helpless, Grandpa Wen Jiabao came. He brought love and care to us, and his plain words touched our hearts. His word of "Through disaster prospers a nation." made us confident. "Hold your head high, push out your chest. Step forward, face the future, and live on strongly." We did not need gorgeous words, this one sentence sufficed... At the threshold of danger, our country did not forget us.

Experiencing the past, we would not give up our future. "Once I belonged to Azrael, but the future will belong to me". This was such a nice a sentence. I thought of another sentence, "Constantly strive to be stronger". I again saw the national flag flying above the new Beichuan Middle School.

Who gave us this chance? We should learn to be grateful to others.

China... Enshrine... Feel grateful... Your name was supreme, even when facing disaster. Your integrity, your determination and your knowledge were spread all over the world. What made us feel proud was that you stood up time and time again after each disaster.

At 14:28 of May 19th, air raid sirens, and car, train and ship horns wailed and people stood for three minutes in silence. Flags were flying at half-mast across the country, and the dignity of life rose up. The whole country was mourning the tens of thousands who died in last week's earthquake. The words "Nation's song of the dead" was printed on newspapers, and tears and shouts were touching.

"Wenchuan, hold on! Beichuan, hold on! Sichuan, hold on! China, hold on!" The shouting hung over Asia and the world! Don't cry, Beichuan. The whole nation was waiting for you to stand up... Stand up, Beichuan!

Let all of us pray that we live a safe and happy life.

Let us embrace gratitude, and repay people who loved us and helped us.


Enshrine... feel grateful...



To enjoy happiness takes the same ability as it takes to endure the pain.

## Thought of May 12th

Ren Jiayu, teacher of Beichuan Middle School



It had been eight months from May 12th to today. The 240 days and nights, from hot summer to cool autumn, everyday, we were suffering the pains brought by May 12th. Our hearts were feeling cool, then cold and finally warm. The sadness and senses were mixed together, without any order. Sometimes I felt it was hard to calm down. For example, today, January 12th of 2009, was another 12th, which was a horrific and sad day for us. Maybe on the 12th of each month I would have the same feeling, which would only increase and never decrease. If someone asks me how I feel after the May 12th earthquake, I would tell them "complex." We have many thoughts and more experiences. The days that were mixed tears must be days with bitterness.

People who have suffered great pain have the right to prove to the world that to enjoy happiness takes the same ability as it takes to endure the pain. May 12th earthquake destroyed mountains and houses, as well as hope; the broken tiles swallowed our relatives and friends. The dead were desperate. The earthquake was frightful, but what was more frightful than the earthquake was the ignorance to future. The physical homes were destroyed, but how about our psychological home? Had it been broken too? I need a home to set down my heart. From the moment the earthquake happened to the moment when the buried students were rescued to the moment when I transferred, I felt emaciated. We were living



in Changhong at that time, so we had endured too much. We had gone through the earthquake, but would there be greater disasters? If you could not hold on after the earthquake, then give up. Fortunately, the brave disaster victims struggled hard to live until now. I thought although the earthquake destroyed everything, leaving a tragic result to us. And it would take us a long time and power to get used to it.

Disasters and catastrophes tend to change a person's world view and life philosophy easily. We can understand things we could not understand before; we can endure things that we could not endure before.

The dead were at rest under the ground, and the living must continue living, no matter how hard it is, we need to rebuild our home.

Fall was gone and winter came, and the hardest time will go past soon. I believe we can live happily this next winter.



When the Prime Minister wrote down on the blackboard the powerful word "Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation", I said to myself "Teach for China to rise."

## Enshrine

Song Daiyong, teacher of Beichuan Middle School

May 23rd of 2008 was an unforgettable day. I was giving a class at 8am on the hot topic of college entrance examination "Possible tops of May 12th earthquake" to students of Class 1 of liberal arts, Senior 3. At that moment, a familiar face came before me. (I did not believe that the Prime Minister would come), and thunderous applause was made by the students. A gentle voice came into my ears "Could I take a minute from you?" I said "Please." (After the Prime Minister left, the students told me that he stepped back a little when he saw me giving a class when he came in.) Then he shook hands with me and wrote down on the blackboard "Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation." He said to us "I can understand and feel your sorrow as you experienced the big catastrophe. Let's remember the May 12th earthquake; let's remember Beichuan where you live; let's remember Beichuan Middle School where you study. Then you will understand life is not flat like a road. Life is bumpy. We should struggle with disasters bravely in our life. But people, especially young people, were the hope of our country and the whole nation. I see hope when I see you here. I see the hope of our country. When the earthquake happened, I asked you to be calm and brave and have confidence and power. Now I hope you can face the bright future." After that, the Prime Minister walked down from the platform to console the students and ask them about the situation of

their family. After the Prime Minister left, the students and I cried. We had the same feeling that the Prime Minister was so kind, gentle and strong!

When the Prime Minister wrote down on the blackboard the powerful word "Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation", I said to myself "Teach for China to rise." I was sick and my wife did not have a job, but if we wanted the rainbow, you must put up with the rain.

"Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation" There was so much meaning inside it. The children studied much harder than before after the disaster. The disaster was gone, but we still have our children, so we have hope for future. After the Prime Minister left, I told the students "We lost our home, but we should not lose courage. Without our relatives and classmates, we must learn to be strong."

As a result of the earthquake, the college entrance examination of 2008 was postponed by one month. We experienced a hot June, and sometimes the temperature reached 40 degree in the tents, and rain sometimes leak into the tents. But we were encouraged by the words of the Prime Minister. We insisted and got through it together. Finally we got excellent results in the 2008 college entrance examination. We finally won!




I like Grandpa Wen so much. His smile took away the fears from me, and his word "Constantly strive to become stronger, never stop struggling" helped me to find my way.

## Move forward with love

Jin Fan, Class 6, Grade 12, Beichuan Middle School

A person can see through himself and hear his inner voice when he is alone. When I quieted down and thought of what happened in the last half year, my heart felt warmth. The touching moment and encouraging words were mixed up into a song of love, accompanying me on my way ahead through rain or sunshine.



I thought you would be by my side as long as we were there. But when the curtain of your life was lifted up, and before you began dancing, the curtain fell suddenly. Life was like a magician, who made a person disappear suddenly. And we are now back to normal life, having class, writing homework, having holidays and returning home. We kept sadness in our hearts.

You must be watching us usually, to stop us from getting into trouble, and to support us in life. Then you pray for us, don't you? Don't worry, my friends. We have new friends to teach us to live a better life and to help us to grow up bravely.

They led us to move forward to the future with their warm hearts. The winter jackets, scarves and books gave us power. The lectures by scholars cured the pains of our hearts. We learned to know what to pursue and what responsibilities to carry.

I like Grandpa Wen so much. His smile took the fears away from me,

and his word "Constantly strive to become stronger, never stop struggling" helped me to find my way. Each of his visits made me feel more confident about the future.

We cherish the love that was offered to us, and we walked forward with gratitude. So I told myself "I should not disappoint the ones that loved and cared for us. I must move forward with my greatest effort, because I need to pass the love and great human nature to others and let it nourish others."

Yes, I must say "Thanks" to all that love us. I will move forward with love.






Lying in bed and looking at the ceiling, I told my self "I must persist."

## **The name of May is persistence**

Li Xuelian, Class 6, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

In the afternoon of May 12th, the sun was partly hidden and partly visible and the sky was sometimes cloudy and sometimes sunny. It seemed to foreshadow something. I felt unease without any reason.



When we were having a politics test in the first class in the afternoon, the earth suddenly shook, followed by a violent earthquake. My spur-of-the-moment choice was to bend down under the table, my eyes closed. With great pain, I opened my eyes to the darkness in front of my eyes and I could not move myself. I felt bricks and mud everywhere. I was in such a pain at that time. I wanted to cry, but I couldn't. I missed my parents, and I did not know how they were at that time. Were they still alive? I could do nothing but wait...

Luckily, I was rescued the following afternoon, and the nurse told me that I was rescued at 3:30pm in the afternoon of May 14th.

In the evening, I was sleeping in a bed in the tent, and a doctor brought me a box of milk and some biscuits. At that moment, I cried, because I was so touched. I did not know before what being touched meant, but at that moment I felt it. I never cried in pain or in the darkness, but I cried at that moment. Finally, I could only drank the milk because my throat got stuck by the desk frame for one day and one night. Then I was transferred to another hospital.

When I arrived at Xiehe hospital, a nurse saw I was so unkempt that she brought me the clothes which she bought recently for her daughter and asked me to wear it. After I changed my clothes, I felt warm all over, tears rolled down my cheeks. She made me understand what great love was.

Then I was transferred to a hospital outside our province on May 18th because my situation got worse. When I got there, the doctors sent me to ward immediately and the nurses bathed me. When I took off my clothes, pains were all over my body, and there was even sand in my bellybutton.

Watching them cleaning away the dust and sand over my body, I knew what was happiness. I was the happiest person in the world at that moment.

At that time, I thought of my friend. She was buried down the ruins like me, but I did not know if she was still alive. I thought she must be alive, because she was braver and stronger than me. But I was wrong. My classmates told me she was dead. She went to heaven. From my heart, I said, "Take care of yourself. The angels in heaven will look after you on my behalf. You must be happy there." Then I turned around and wiped my tears.



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The nurse consoled me, but I could not help crying. Although I knew the name of May is persistence, and there were so many people caring for me, and I did not feel lonely then, my heart was still bleeding. I knew nature was ruthless, and would not stop its movement because of human sadness.

Lying in bed and looking at the ceiling, I told my self "I must persist." I knew that we must persist. The name of May should be persistence. Facing the disaster, we should not give up; suffering great pain and sadness, we should not give up, because 1.3 billion Chinese were standing behind us. A great nation was standing behind us!

I thought I lost everything. My home, my friends, my relatives, my hope, my future... But it finally turned out that I still had all these.

## Be grateful forever

Dong Dan, Class 3, Grade 12, Beichuan Middle School

At 14:28 on May 12th, 2008, the earth was shaken violently, and we lost our home, our school, our friends, our relatives, and our classmates. Strong Earthquake M 8 took away all the beautiful things in our life, and brought us the greatest grief, the most unforgettable experience and bone-deep memories.



However, we felt great love after the disaster. Rescue teams from all directions came to rescue us after the earthquake; people from all walks of life made donations to us. Some donated money and some donated clothes. Nongfu Spring Company organized overtime work to make spring water for the disaster area and quickly sent lifesaving water to the disaster areas. Some other companies organized tents and delivered them to the hands of victims in the disaster areas in time. Volunteers from Tangshan, which was hit by an earthquake in 1976, also came to the disaster area... Because of the love and care from the society, the disaster victims of the worst-hit area felt warmth again in their hearts. The fire of hope was rekindled in their hearts.

Our school, Beichuan Middle School, collapsed within 18 minutes after we began the first class in the afternoon. One teaching building collapsed and the second floor of the other building sank, and students and teachers were buried under the ruins in a moment. Only the students of senior 3 escaped then, and the others were all buried. All of a sudden, many

teachers and students of our school lost their lives... There was crying and shouting everywhere, which was heart-wrenching.

I thought I lost everything. My home, my friends, my relatives, my hope, my future... But it finally turned out that I still had all these. I had a home in portable shelter in Yongxing; I had friends by my side and afar; I had schools in Changhong and Yongchang; I had hope and future in my heart!

Changhong had been helping us after the earthquake, and they helped us level the ground in the shortest time. Uncles from Qingdao of Shandong province worked day and night to build the portable shelters for us as our school. This gave us hope, and helped us to rebuild confidence after the earthquake. They are still standing by our side today, just like our family members.

After the Olympic games, Olympic champions of the Chinese ping pong team came to visit students and teachers of Beichuan Middle School, and donated physical instruments and money to us. They chatted with us to encourage us. Stars like Zhang Jie, Xie Na, Zhen Zidan, Lu Yi, Liu Xuan and others came to Beichuan Middle School to put on performances and play games with students. Although it seemed that the students were chasing stars, they were actually encouraging us.

It had been 8 months since the earthquake happened. There were many people who helped and cared for us. We could not repay every kind-hearted person. What we could do was just to repay them with our actions and achievements. We could just say, "Thank you. We will step forward to pursue our dreams. We will always remember what you have done for us."

With blessed hearts, let us work hard for the future.



When I was beside teacher Zeng, he was walking in and he left a way for us to go out.

## **Please take good care of yourself, teacher Zeng**

Liu Qing, Class 11, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

I have seen many teachers in 16 years, but my most respected and loved teacher was teacher Zeng, whom I will remember till the end of my life.

His full name was Zeng Changyou. He was the head teacher of Grade 7 and Grade 8. He was humorous, kind and gentle, just like father. However, he could not be our head teacher when we were in Grade 8. With this news, we were agitated, and we did not want to accept a new head teacher. After teacher Zeng heard this, he found an opportunity and told us "You should not do this. Follow your new teacher and study hard. I will still be your teacher." After hearing this, we made up our mind to study hard and to enter a good senior school, to repay teacher Zeng.

On May 12th, when the senior school entrance examination was going to be held, we were preparing for the examination with teacher Zeng. The first class in the afternoon was the Chinese class of teacher Zeng. Suddenly the floor began to shake making a depressing sound. The teacher urgently said, "Run out!" We ran outward with bewilderment. The earth was shaking violently. I was beside teacher Zeng whence was walking in and he left a way for us to go out. When the students were rushing out, the teaching building collapsed. I could see nothing through the yellow dust. After a few seconds, I heard students shouting downstairs, "Jump down. Jump down." I was jittery, but I jumped down. It was not high from the second floor then.



I jumped down to the first floor and then ran to the playground. I saw the teaching building was no longer there. It had been turned into ugly ruins.

"Where are my teachers and classmates? Where are you, teacher Zeng?" There was no reply... Only crying and shouting. After an hour, I heard shocking news, which was that teacher Zeng had died. I cried out loudly. "No, it's impossible. He was with us one hour ago, giving us class. How could he pass away? Impossible! Where is his daughter?" I asked, but the students were only shaking their heads. Later on, I came to know that his daughter was also dead. His wife and parents were all dead in this earthquake.

My teacher, why couldn't you be a little selfish? Why didn't you think of your parents? Why not run out like us? Why did you run inside? We were saved because of your decisive order and alertness. You were so quick in your response then. You were our benefactor! You gave us new life! Thank you!

Please take good care of yourself, teacher Zeng. These are the only words we could say and also this was our most sincere blessing. Now, it was too late. Now we can only wish to show our respect to you!

Please rest in peace, teacher Zeng. We would remember you forever, and we will carry forward your great spirit!



When she woke up, she found someone lying beside her. She came to know that the teacher had warded off the bricks to protect her.

## Being moved in the sun

Li Xiaoxia, Class 2, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

It was always sunny in May, and we were studying hard in the sun light. However, at that moment, the earth was split, houses were broken, trees and everything. All of a sudden, the sky turned dark, and people were waiting anxiously in the darkness...

An unprecedented massive earthquake had destroyed our schoolyard which used to be filled with laughter. Heart-wrenching cries hung over the grey playground. After a while, the injured were rescued by survived students and teachers. At around 5pm in the afternoon, I saw an elder sister being rescued. I went beside her to take care of her. She could say nothing and her eyes were red. It seemed her leg was fractured. I looked at her and said "Sister, it must be hurting. Don't be afraid. I will be with you." Her tears rolled down her cheeks and she told me a touching story.

When the earthquake happened, they were having a class on the third floor of the teaching building. The desks were shaking, windows fell down, and the door was crushed. All the students were rushing outside. Suddenly the teaching building collapsed and she was buried underneath. When she woke up, she found someone lying beside her. She came to know that the teacher had warded off the bricks to protect her. She cried and tried to wake up the teacher, but the teacher's waist was stuck. She wanted to crawl over and help the teacher, but her legs were jammed and she could not move. The teacher said he was very tired and wanted to rest. So she

sang a song for the teacher, and talked with him, to stop him from sleeping. Just when she was trying to wake up the teacher, aftershocks came. The bricks and stones fell down violently and the teacher was pressed down heavily again. Blood came out of his mouth, and she was frightened. The teacher said "My child, do not be sad. You must live... go out alive and study... study hard. Remember... this." Then his hands dropped down. She shouted for the teacher not to leave her, but in vain. Finally, the rescuers found her and rescued her, but this teacher had left forever.

Hearing this story, I could not help myself. I was deeply touched by the great spirit of this teacher. My teacher, although I did not know you, I do believe you were a great teacher. We were so lucky to have a teacher like you. You will be our honorable model forever. Please take good care of yourself in heaven!

There were many teachers like him in this disaster. They helped us with their unselfish love, cared for us and warmed our hearts. It might be just a greeting, a helping hand or an encouraging look, but you helped us to rebuild our home.

A friend in need is a friend indeed. We were touched by many things after the earthquake. We feel the details of life and sincere love; let's pass it on to the whole world to warm everyone.



The ice in my heart thawed in these days.

## **To treasure is also a way to express gratitude**

Li Jiaqi, Class 3, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

As the old saying goes "The favor of a drop of water has been rewarded with the gratitude of a fountain of water." The grass give thanks to the earth because the earth gives it a home and nourishment to let it grow up happily; the bird gives thanks to the blue sky which provides the place for the bird to fly free; each leaf gives thanks to the rivulet which... We should also give thanks to society and our parents...



My parents gave me life, and let me come into the wonderful world to experience all kinds of things. The best way to give thanks to our parents is to treasure our wonderful life. My life is carrying the love of my parents. I will treasure my life to let youth and hope stay! When I treasure other people's dedication, it is the best way to repay the dedicators.

After the earthquake, I left Jiuzhou Stadium and was taken to a family who I never met before. I was a stranger there, and my weak heart was shaking ceaselessly. All was so terrible and awful... I always dreamed that the earthquake evil was looking for me with its ferocious face. All I felt was fear, fear and fear! The following morning, I was so tired as I did not sleep well because of the nightmare. I sat down on the unmerciful ground. It was then when Uncle Jiang in that family brought me a box of milk and a piece of bread and a fried bread stick. "My child, have some breakfast. Be careful." I got the breakfast from him and drank a little of the milk. "Wow, it's

so nice. It has been long time since I last drank it." The milk was so sweet that my heart warmed up suddenly and I began to eat... Thinking of the coldness and hunger in the evening of the day when the earthquake happened, I did not dare to close my eyes or move. I was so scared that the evil might swallow me, and I was more scared that my parents might be swallowed by the evil. The ice in my heart thawed in these days. I could not express with words my gratitude to Uncle Jiang. I thought I should treasure those days and everything around me. I should study hard and begin to express my new life. "Camellias" by Dumas became my best companion for a happy period.

In fact, to treasure is also a way of feeling gratitude. The best way to be grateful to our society is by treasuring the things around us.

Let's treasure everything and add glory to the world!





I used to complain that others did not love me , but on the day of May 12th I found the love I had lost for so many years.

## **Love turned out to be all around me**

Long Ying, Class 4, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

I used to complain that others did not love me, but on the day of May 12th I found the love I had lost for so many years. Love turned out to be all around me.

It would have been a normal moment at 14:28 on May 12th of 2008, if the earthquake did not happen. I can still remember clearly, I came to the classroom with drowsiness on that day. The first class was history. After ten minutes, I felt myself shaking. Innocently, I thought the student sitting behind me was pushing his desk, but the shouting of our head teacher made me understand that it was an earthquake! Instantly, the door was jammed by rushing students, and I was pushed into the crowd. Before we realized it, the classroom began to collapse. My head was hit many times by the falling bricks, and my ears were filled with sounds of crying and shouting and the voice of our teacher keeping order. All was in darkness, and I thought no one would pay attention to me, and I thought I would die. However, I was wrong. The shouting of students came from afar, and I felt myself filled with power. Then I removed the bricks from my body, and I did not know my head was hit by a falling brick. I felt dizzy and blood blurred my eyes. I had to look for my classmates listening for them carefully. They were frightened when they saw me, and they helped me wipe the blood off my face with a napkin. At that moment, tears rolled down my cheek, because I found the

love I had been longing for a long time...

My classmates helped me to come to the playground. Many students from senior school brought scarves and helped me to dress my the wound, and they tried to console me all the time to keep me conscious and awake. I felt my heart being filled with something, and I did not feel lonely or scared. It was the power of love.

The night walked towards us with heavy steps. It was even colder in May than in winter, and we did not know how to go through this winter-cold night. A classmate seemed to read my mind and said "Longying, you are injured. Sleep here. I have a quilt here. Let me change places with you because I feel better than you do." Gratitude welled up in me.

That night was the warmest night since I was born. It was the feeling of love.

The following morning, I was woken up by hunger. I did not eat for a whole day. Some warm-hearted students brought food to me that was delivered to them. However, I could not eat it because I felt suddenly there was much food in my stomach, and I was not hungry any more. I knew it was love...



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Later on, I was transferred to Changhong Training Centre where love from all directions poured in to me. At that moment, I felt the happiness of being loved. It was love...

I got to know what love was after May 12th. Love is something for you to feel but not to express; love was something to make you feel warm and powerful; love is always around me...

We felt the beauty and splendor of human nature, because of the selfless love by kind-hearted people from all walks of life.

## Being grateful

Xu Yihong, Class 6, Grade 8, Beichuan Middle School

The catastrophe was walking away from us, and we were having another new year. Let us pray for our relatives, friends, classmates and teachers who passed away in this disaster, and bless the living. Although we lost our homes in the disaster, we felt the beauty and splendor of human nature and the sincere friendship between people.



In the autumn of 2008, the new school term began. In the morning of that day, we had our school opening ceremony. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao came from Beijing to visit us and gave an important speech. Afterwards, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited and encouraged the injured and disabled students in wheelchairs.

In this school term, every student got a quilt, winter jackets and other relief supplies donated by Yihai, Total and other loving organizations, which made us feel especially warm in this cold winter. Many students got a life subsidy between ¥150 to ¥300 each. Before the term ended, an additional subsidy of ¥375 would be given to each junior student. At the same time, Wang Liqin, well-known world champion of ping pong games and China National Table Tennis Team donated money and relief supplies to us. They brought us woolen hats, scarves, gloves, and other things to keep us warm in a cold winter. Students could not wait to put on these hats and gloves and went back home happily. In the first month of the new school term, food for 3000 students and teachers of our school was supplied for free

by Changhong Company. After the May 12th earthquake, Changhong Company sent workers to help with relief work in the disaster areas and arranged shelter for around 1000 students and teachers. In the autumn of 2008, our school held recruitment for new teachers with the help from Changhong Company, and it was successful.

"Constantly strive to become stronger, never stop struggling" has always been our motto. These words are always echoed in the ears of the 3000 students and teachers of our school, and have pushed me to do things that I should do. Our principal Liu Yachuan also told us to study hard and to contribute to our country in the future and repay those that helped us before. A person should live with gratitude.



I knew the answer instantly. The warm smile made the ice inside my heart thaw.

## The flowers were still

Zhang Yuming, Class 2, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

At 14:28 on May 12th, the earth began to shake violently. After that, we lost our houses, our family members and many of our classmates.

Depressed, we were transferred to the former address of Beichuan Middle School. In the days to come, we received assistance and help from all parts of the country. The one that offered the fastest hand of help was Changhong Group. When we arrived at Changhong, our hearts were cold, but I found all kinds of beauty here, which warmed our hearts.

Brothers and sisters provided psychological treatment were among the creators of beauty. They built two tents in the corners of our school as their working rooms. Small though they were, many students were inside. They were angry before stepping in, and laughing after they came out. I was so curious about this that I wanted to try it myself. So I walked inside timidly, and a sister with a pair of glasses walked over to me and asked "Hi, what kind of book do you want?"

I knew the answer instantly. Her warm smile made the ice inside my heart thaw. Facing such warm reception, I turned around abashedly and left, while the sister was asking "Hi, why don't you speak?"

It is not that I did not want to talk. I told myself "This passion is enough to warm the cold hearts of the children in the disaster areas."

The children in the disaster areas might lose the opportunity to go to school because of this earthquake, but these respectable people warmed



our cold and terrified hearts. Shouldn't we be grateful to these respectable people? We were like flowers in spring, which were so delicate that wind could have destroyed us. However you were the ones that warded off the wind for us.

How grateful I am to you! You are beautiful scenery in our life, and you irrigated the flowers after the earthquake and left the schoolyard filled with fragrance. We will not disappoint you. We will face the difficulties with courage, and create a beautiful future with our own hands!




You can fly without wings.

## Be a happy child

Li Zhuolin, Class 1, Grade 12, Beichuan Middle School

There is no shadow in life if you turn your face to the sun. Face today with the least pain and face the future with hope. When you find you cannot change the environment or weather, you can choose to change your mood. I came to realize this after I was out from Chongqing 324 Hospital of PLA.



My friend and I went to Chongqing to visit my injured classmates in the summer holiday. We thought of many ways to face the children injured in the earthquake, and we stayed a long time in the supermarket. We didn't want to hurt them. It was 11pm in the evening when we got to the hospital. They should have been asleep then, but they were lying awake in bed, waiting for us to come. We first went to the third floor to see my younger sister. She was buried under the ruins and was rescued the second day. As it took a long time, she had her left leg amputated. When she saw us walking into the ward, her face took on an affectionate expression. She told us to sit down. I did not have the heart to look at her left leg, as my heart went blank when I saw where her leg should have been. She told us stories that happened in the hospital with excitement, and told us she would have an artificial limb next month. "It must be painful, but I am not scared at all." She stuck her tongue out and continued with her stories. When she was talking about the amputation, she felt proud. She told us "Let me tell you. Almost all students of our school did not have anesthetic." She stopped and looked at our surprise, she said again "Isn't it good? The anesthetic will do harm to the cranial nerve. We do not want that. What if we become stupid? I want to

continue studying to enter college after I get out of the hospital!" I felt she had grown up suddenly and had become strong. I stood up and touched her short hair which was as short as a boy's. I told her to sleep a little and that we could chat tomorrow.

We spent the following months together with those children. Everyday we pushed their wheelchairs to accompany them to the garden. Sometimes they sat in wheelchairs and sometimes they walked with crutches. We went shopping when we were in a good mood we would read a book. Without sadness or tears, I bought them each a chrysanthemum , which symbolized happy sunshine. I thought there was no need to bless them for health, because all of them can laugh. They had already become the most healthy and happy children.



I cried my heart out at night, to give a complete end to my past.

## Love brought me back to school from the cliff

Peng Yang, Class 2, Grade 10, Beichuan Middle School

At the moment when the mountain swayed and the earth trembled on May 12th, my house, result of my parents' painstaking efforts, was destroyed. The home of our soul, was also destroyed. The hearts of the people in the disaster area were also broken. Numerous sons and daughters were crying over the bodies of their parents; numerous parents were crying over the bodies of the children; numerous children and parents could not find a trace of their relatives, tears all over their faces. After May 12th, my heart was on the cliff, and I did not know whether I should climb up with perseverance or close my eyes and jump into the rapids. When I felt most helpless and at a loss, she stretched out her powerful hands to me and pulled me up, giving me the reason and confidence to continue my life, which was love.

In a moment, which was just tens of seconds, everything was changed. Houses collapsed, family members were separated, my grandparents and my dad left me forever. It seemed the sky was only dark grey, without any other color. I felt at a loss, and did not know which direction I should take. My heart stopped at this moment, and I stopped to think of the meaning of crying. Nothing seemed to matter at that moment...

"Please. You should not be like this. You are not the GM Peng which we knew before. Where is GM Peng, who liked to talk and play with girls and bicker with boys? You who swore that you will become a GM in the future. Where have you gone? GM Peng should not be this numb body before

my eyes. Please give me a response, no matter it is crying or laughter. Tell us that you are thinking. You have promised your grandparents that you would buy a good house for them. Although your parents have passed away now, how could you eat your words so easily?" I was suddenly touched by my friend's words. Grandpa and Grandma were two persons that I loved the most in my life. I loved them more than I loved my parents. They worked hard all their life, without a single day of vacation. I wanted to become a rich person because I wanted my grandparents to live a better life. However, the earthquake took away my parents and my dream from me, which was nearly all that I had, so I was going to give up my dream. My friends were accompanying me after the earthquake, and they enlightened me. Day by day, I walked out from behind the glass wall which was blocking me, thin as it was. My friends and I joined the volunteers to help those in need. While other people smiled to us and said thanks to us, I felt so grateful to my friends, because they saved my heart with their love.



What I had then was only my dream, but I could not pursue it immediately, because my heart was at the cliff.

"All roads lead to Rome." I must work out my path to go ahead, otherwise, I will fall into the abyss with a single mistake. Many of my friends got a letter of admission for Nanshan School, Mianzhong Middle School or Beichuan Middle School, and they enrolled in their schools. This seemed to point out a direction for me, but the road ahead was full of brambles, as I needed to pay for the big sum of living expenses and tuition fees if I wanted to have a senior school education. I was feeling hopeless when I heard the news that the tuition would be free in Beichuan Middle School. It was good news for all my family members. I thought God might be guiding me to realize my dream of having a senior school education, so I was given a chance. It was the love of our school that removed the brambles out of the road ahead for me, and directed me to step forward.

At that moment, my heart was out of the dangerous area, and I was



brought back to school by the love of my friends and our school. I was no longer at a loss, because I had made my next plan already, which was to enter a good university. I cried my heart out one night, to give a complete end to my past. A new me was being created, and I found out the meaning living and crying. I would not let my heart die with my passing relatives.

I was always wondering afterwards why others could find the meaning of life immediately after the earthquake, while it took several months for me. Maybe it was because I did not know what the true meaning of love was at that time. Love was not something to show, but was something deep in our hearts. My heart was saved by the love of others!

Love is great and makes no difference for different nations and different people. Love will grow in any environment. It was love that saved me before I fell down. I will also pull up a person that I saw falling down in the path ahead of me, because it makes love everlasting.

"A person should not lose conscience, and what is more, he should not forget sympathy." I should be thankful for all that stretched out their helpful hands to me, to people in Sichuan, and to all Chinese. I am grateful that love brought me back to school from the cliff!

"Don't worry. We are the elite. We are the future of our nation. How could we die so easily?"

## Love froze the tears

Tang Yuting, Class 1, Grade 11, Beichuan Middle School

"Pain, loneliness, tragedy, and tears are all useful to a person's life. They sublimate our lives. But if you can not forget them, they become the burden of our life." Seeing these words, my heart lit up. My heart was filled with love. I was touched and glad, and I shouted in my heart. "I am living in a complex yet colorful world!"

The year 2008 was ground to fragments by the wheel of time, and I did not want to pick them up. The year 2009 had been with me for a long time. The eyes of love and the brightness of tears froze tears into a new life. The endless love and care stopped me from falling down and gave me hope. The fire in my heart was lit up by love, and enthusiasm filled the present and the future.



Although disasters were hard to foresee, my future would still be in my hands as long as live.

I could not forget the desperate horror and panicky blankness during the earthquake. But these were pressed down in my heart and hope was sparkling on the ruins. I could not forget the encouragement between classmates and the accompaniment of our teachers in the dark world. "Don't worry. We are the elite. We are the future of our nation. How could we die so easily?" I came to know how important it is to keep optimistic, and my heart was touched by a slight wind then. No one could imagine our calmness under the ruins. We promised to keep our class together. "We will

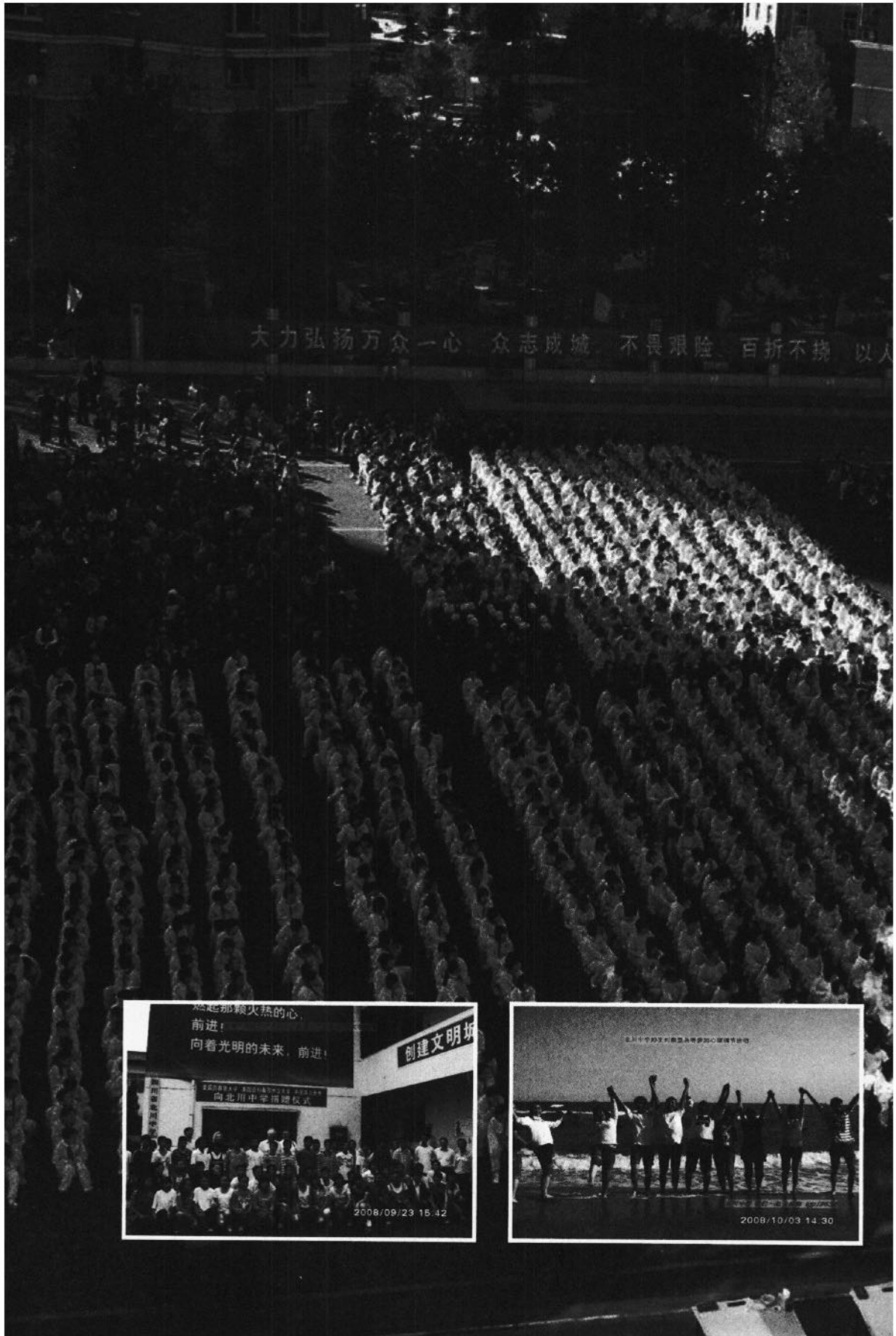
celebrate our birthday together on May 12th each year in the future." I was convinced by you, because the students of Class 1, grade 2010 could still smile under the ruins and dust.

The life of each student of Beichuan Middle School was carrying the love which stirred the world.

Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited the disaster area personally to oversee relief work when aftershocks were happening. The word "Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation" encouraged all students and teachers of Beichuan Middle School. In the hopeful morning of September 1st of 2008, the red sun was going to rise to the blue sky. "The disaster of a nation will always be compensated by its progress." The kind and amiable words encouraged all survivors. Let us remember it in our hearts and repay it with our actions. Then the care from the world and assistance from the society followed. The banner of the donation ceremony beside the school plate was changed constantly. What shall I say? I had nothing to say. Let's work hard and not waste our lives, which are so valuable. Love was passed in the world, and humanity is creating a miracle with love. Let us face the past without regrets, face the present without waste, and face the future with more dreams! Every morning when I wake up, I am grateful for what love brought me and I am grateful for a new 24 hours of life.

The love of the world and China froze the tears I was going to shed.





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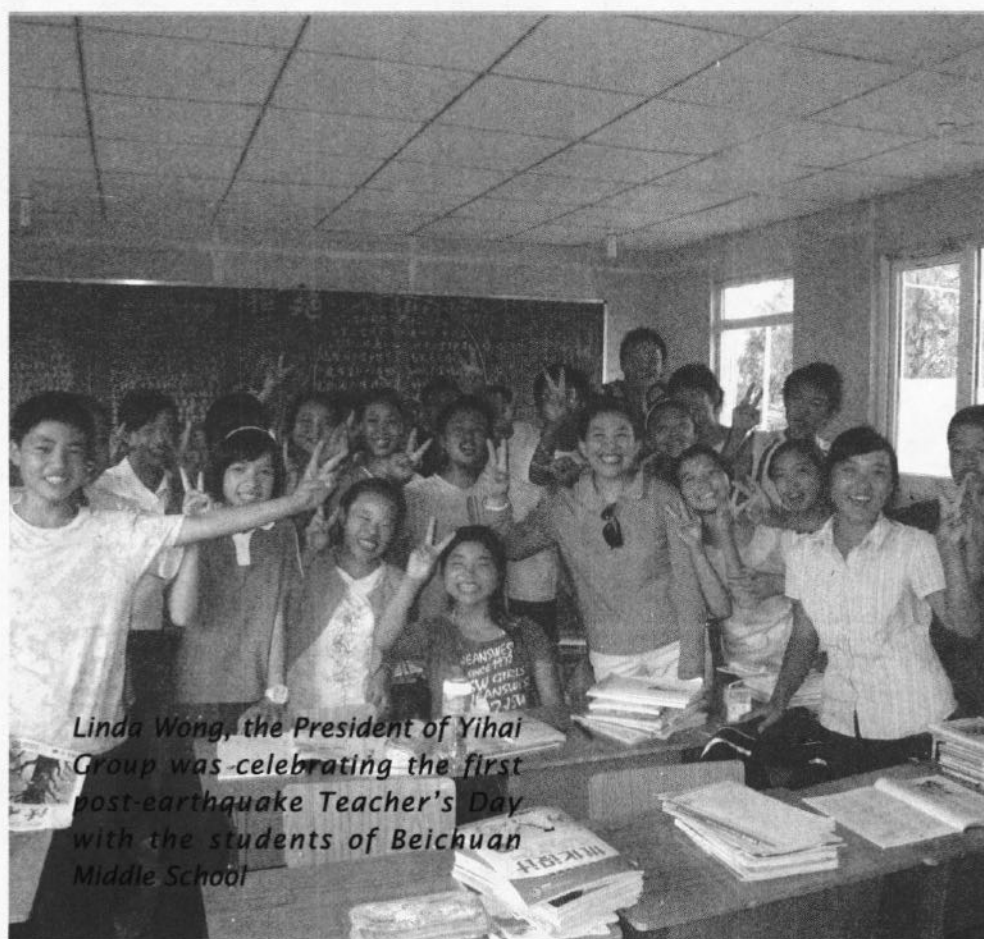
*On Oct. 27th, 2008, a large community donation of 6,000 people was held by Yihai Group to support the rebuilding of Beichuan Middle School*

科学的伟大抗震救灾精神 援建北川中学



*The Overseas Chinese Union  
A call to all Chinese people around the world  
Help us to rebuild the school  
We anticipate...  
We will start a successful new life...*

Beichuan Middle School; let's support it



Linda Wong, the President of Yihai Group was celebrating the first post-earthquake Teacher's Day with the students of Beichuan Middle School

Who could rebuild Beichuan Middle School but me!

## **Brave team, eternal soul of teachers**

Li Zhimeng, volunteer teacher in Beichuan Middle School

I had a brave team around me, which was formed by the teachers of Beichuan Middle School. Each teacher of Beichuan Middle School has got a brilliant story of touching achievement.

The teachers of Beichuan Middle School were brave. They and their family members suffered great losses during the May 12th earthquake; the infrastructure of our school was destroyed, and the environment of our school was demolished. The teachers faced all these things bravely and began to rescue other people instead of themselves, composing poems full of power and grandeur with their actions. "Think about the pains after they are over, and the pains are really painful." The teachers continued their actions despite pain. With the help of Changhong Company, students of Beichuan Middle School resumed class in Changhong Training Centre in Mianyang on May 19th, and teachers resumed their teaching again. They transformed the pains and injuries into a dedication to work, and they carried on with their responsibility to teaching and nurture. They passed on the culture of Beichuan. Beichuan Middle School stood up finally in disaster.

The teachers of Beichuan Middle School worked hard. The conditions of working, living and studying were all bad, and they were short of information sources and teaching instruments. So they made up their teaching plans all on their own. Everyday they were moving only in offices, classrooms and



dorms. Since we resumed our classes, they had been working hard and diligently. They began work early and stayed up late everyday, and never left the school. The income of the teachers was very low. They got their salary from the government. The school was short of money and teachers and students were living in hard conditions.

The teachers of Beichuan Middle School were very dedicated. The students of Beichuan Middle School were lovely, but they did not do well in school, and they did not have enough confidence in their studies. We knew it was a tough time for the students too. It would take a long time for them to adjust themselves after the earthquake. But this did not affect the mood of the teachers and their love for the students. They faced each student sincerely and carried the responsibility of taking care of the students. Over 20 teachers of Beichuan Middle School lost their children in the earthquake, so they treated their students as their own children. They were both parents and teachers of the students. They thought of everything for the students, they thought of every student and they did everything for the students. They did not miss a class and did not give up any student. Patiently, they tried to adjust the students' moods and let them grow up healthily.

The teachers of Beichuan Middle School loved learning. Within two months after the earthquake, all teachers of our school were giving class and studying with the guidance of well-known experts from the Affiliated School of Beijing NO.8 Middle School in Yihai, High School Of Peking University, XIANGYU EDUCATION GROUP (Shanghai) and other prestigious schools in China. They were trying hard to improve their expertise and teaching skills quickly. There was a dense atmosphere of learning in Beichuan Middle School when practical teaching activities were carried out. They knew that they must turn Beichuan Middle School into a worldly prestigious school, so they need to improve and perfect themselves, so that they could keep up with the pace of the times. Who could rebuild Beichuan Middle School but me!

Our teachers were good at rebuilding the school culture. "Silent and soft, the rain moistens everything." They were writing and putting many encouraging slogans in our school, which attracted and touched all students. "Beichuan Middle School has stood up." "Constantly strive to become stronger, never stop struggling". The words expressed the determination and willpower of the teachers. The words of Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, "Trials and tribulations serve only to revitalize a nation." , were everywhere and in each classroom. The five-star red flags were pasted on the blackboard. Strong slogans for each class were written everywhere. "Pursue the truth and adore the beauty"; "persevering and practical." In the dorms were these words: "Class for life and examination room for personality" and "Window for school civilization". On the playgrounds, there were such words as "Be healthy, exercise and be happy." The advanced school culture was enriching the minds of all students, encouraging them, and touching them.

"Hold high my head, straighten up my back, and light up my warm heart." The teachers walked out from shadows, stepped forward, faced the reality bravely, took good care of the students, stayed dedicated to their jobs, focused on their learning, and had a sharp understanding of education. They gave their love and never gained anything. They showed magnificent virtue and the eternal soul of teachers in Beichuan Middle School. Beichuan Middle School was standing up after the earthquake, and had resumed the vigor and strength of prestigious schools of the Qiang people. We believe that such a brave team of teachers has made the future of Beichuan Middle School better.






Let's walk out of the pain-surrounded city hand in hand,  
and face the brilliant future and enjoy the poetry life  
"Facing the sea, with spring flowers blossoming."

## **Let us help the teachers walk away from the pain with our love.**

Xu Xiongying, volunteer teacher in Beichuan Middle  
School



"On this day last year, both pink cheeks and pink peach-blossoms smiled upon me; but, now, the pink cheeks disappear, though the peach-blossoms still smile as they smiled last year." This is a Tang poem which all Chinese know. Since I was small, I read it over and over again. When I was small, I felt its artistic conception. When I grew up, I felt the sadness and disappointment in life. I came to be volunteer teacher in Beichuan Middle School and accompanied the director of "Leng Nuan Ren Sheng" Zheng Fuzhou (a famous TV program of Phoenix TV), to interview two teachers, Qian Shaoqi and Liu Quan. Afterwards we knew how much pain the teachers of Beichuan Middle School suffered from losing relatives. We finally came to understand the sensibility of this poem.

On the eve of the New Year, I accompanied director Zheng Fuzhou to visit teacher Qian at her home. Teacher Qian was a music teacher. She and her husband were living in a small room on the first floor of the boarding room in Changhong Training Centre. In the same room, four iron beds for students were put against the wall, and there were two pianos in the centre of the room. This was the place where teacher Qian gave piano lessons to students and where she had rest. She touched the old piano with deep affection, and told us that it was the only instrument left in her school after

the earthquake. Her daughter used to play this piano, so every time she saw this piano, she would think of her daughter. Her daughter was very beautiful, 1.7m tall, good at playing piano and studying, and had artistic temperament. Her daughter was buried under the ruins in the earthquake. When teacher Qiang was rescuing the other students, she heard the voice of her father and he told her to save other students first. After a few hours, the rescue team rescued her daughter, but she left the world, her parents and the grandpa she loved. Teacher Qiang was trying to keep busy with her job every day, so that she would not think of her daughter. However, when night fell, her daughter appeared in her mind, and tears rolled down her cheeks and she could not sleep. What was more unbearable was she did not know how to explain to her father who was lying in bed after a stroke. Her father was taken care of by her mother before the earthquake, but was dead in the earthquake. She did not dare to tell her father the truth, and only thing she told him was that her mother was lost. However, her daughter was the most loved grand daughter for her father. How could he endure such a blow? She had to lie to him and did not let him know. But it was impossible to keep lying. One day he would know the truth. What could she do then? After teacher Qian finished, her face was filled with bitterness, and she was at a loss.



Teacher Liu Quan was also with us, in pain. Teacher Liu's wife, teacher Li Jiaping, was dead in the earthquake. She was having morality class in Class 4, Grade 8 when the earthquake happened. She could have been the first one to escape from the classroom when the earthquake happened, but she made way for the students and pushed the students out of the classroom. One second, two seconds...

Thirty students were saved, but she was buried under the fallen floor and her head was trapped and immobilized. Her thigh was locked down by broken stones, bleeding. In order to give confidence to the students buried together with her, she held back her pain, talked to the children, told them

stories, and told jokes to them. The students regained courage and started to save themselves with her encouragement. When the dawn came, teacher Li closed her eyes. Now whenever teacher Liu was free, his tender and virtuous wife would appear in front of his eyes. His daughter also missed her mother a lot. The daughter and father spent every day with tears. The spring festival was coming. His father-in-law and mother-in-law were living in the countryside of Beichuan, and the road to the countryside was usually blocked by ice and snow. But however hard it was, he must go back to see them. And at the thought of seeing them crying, he felt sad.

There are a lot more teachers like Qian Shaoqi and Liu Quan in Beichuan Middle School who were suffering private pains. In this disaster, over 30 teachers lost their children, and 70 more teachers lost their loved ones and parents. They endured the pain and dedicated themselves to their jobs with passion. But when they were not busy, they suffered great private pain, especially on the holidays. The pain of missing relatives would pour down on them. The Spring Festival was coming in around 10 days, and they would miss their relatives even more during the festival period. When they thought of the happy family gathering during last year's Spring Festival, they would feel especially lonely and sad.

After the earthquake, Beichuan Middle School got the support and love from the party and society, and the teachers and students faced the disaster with courage. "Hold high my head, and straighten up my back." Let us devote ourselves to rebuild the Beichuan Middle School. The school resumed classes soon after. But the inner pains of the teachers could not be taken away so fast. Psychologists pointed out that the peak period of psychological problems would come half a year after the disaster. The Spring Festival is coming, I kindly ask kind-hearted people from our society to give more care and help to the teachers of Beichuan Middle School, and to console their hearts with our love. I would also like to ask our teachers to face the pains bravely, to walk out of the pain-surrounded city, and to

treasure what they have now. Your relatives that passed away also hope you can live a happy life. As one philosopher said, "You can't stretch life's length, but you can determine life's width." Let's walk out of the pain-surrounded city hand in hand, and face the brilliant future and enjoy the poetic life of "Facing the sea, with spring flowers blossoming."



My friends asked me why I became a volunteer teacher, and I answered calmly "It is a sense of responsibility."

## Step forward to the brilliant future

Zhang Muyuan, volunteer teacher in Beichuan Middle School

I was assigned by Mianyang Education Bureau to Beichuan Middle School as a volunteer teacher on December 1st, 2008. I became the deputy principal and English teacher for the senior class.



Before that, I always wanted to come to the worst stricken disaster area, Dujiangyan in Chengdu or Beichuan county in Mianyang, to be a volunteer teacher. But I was so busy at that time with resuming class for around 5000 students in Mianyang Experimental Senior School, that my dream was not realized. I felt a little pity, but now my dream was realized and I felt glad.

I came to Beichuan Middle School three times, and after the earthquake, I accompanied Mr. Fu Jianjun from Mianyang Experimental Senior School to visit students of Senior 3 who resumed class. The college entrance examination was going to be held soon, but the students did not have enough books and testing papers, so we sent some to them, and the students liked that very much. I felt comfort when I saw the students got the books. In mid-October, I heard all students were having class in portable shelters, so I wanted to see them, and I went there alone. When I heard the sounds of reading coming from the portable shelters, I felt much respect, but I could not tell whether I felt respectful to the students or to the teachers or for both. At the end of November, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao pointed out that we would build new Beichuan Middle School to be a prestigious



school. I was so inspired that a strong desire drove me to walk near the students. When I walked into the classroom, I was confused by what I saw. The students were sitting face to face, with six in a group. Some were studying, some were discussing, some were making presentations before the blackboard, some were having tests, and some teachers were giving excellent lessons...

I began to understand gradually as my works carried on. After the earthquake, the teaching work did not remain on the original level, and the principal realized the interim was a good opportunity for reform. The earthquake destroyed the original calmness, but the rebuilding work gave birth to reform. At that time, new teaching format was taking place in Sichuan Province to explore reform in teaching concepts and methodologies in the new environment. Our arrival sped up the preparation works for the reform. I felt the big responsibility of my job, and looking forward to the new teaching reform, I began to study the theory and practice related to the new courses, and at the same time, I began to pay special attention to the possible problems and experiences of the those areas where the new courses were already implemented.



The teaching and management was carried out in order, and I got familiar with this persevering teachers team.

My friends asked me why I became a volunteer teacher, and I answered calmly "It is a sense of responsibility."

Reporters from Sichuan TV asked me if I had any plan for 2009, and I said "I will remember the great trust from the Prime Minister and cultivate good students together with teachers of Beichuan Middle School. Our country fostered me for so many years, and now I am at my middle age. I will try my best to educate the students, communicate with the teachers, and do more research to progress with them together. As a teacher, I can feel how strong our country is. I am clear about my responsibilities to help the students get through the difficult times. I believe I will step forward, no matter how

hard it will be."

The party and our country are paying a lot of attention to the rebuilding of Beichuan Middle School and the winter life of students and teachers. The Prime Minister cared about the relief work and he attended our school opening ceremony. He came to see sick and injured students in hospitals and school, and he oversaw the rebuilding of a middle school. This was unprecedented in Chinese history. During the Spring Festival of this year, the Prime Minister came to Beichuan Middle School for the sixth time, and spent the New Year with teachers and students in the school. He even lit fireworks, had New Year Supper and sang "Speak highly of our motherland" with students and teachers.

Overseas Chinese were also showing their love to Beichuan Middle School. The construction of the new Beichuan Middle School, co-built by the China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, was going to begin soon. Locals of Beichuan hoped that the children were learning happily in the Changhong Training Centre, and would study happily in the new Beichuan Middle School. Kind-hearted people from all walks of life came to see the teachers and students continuously.

The teachers were recovering psychologically, and so were the students. As I got more familiar with things, I esteemed the students here, and I esteemed even more the teachers there. After the earthquake, teacher and student survivors joined each other in their minds. The teachers stayed with the students and protected them. They chose to stay with their students in the last moments of their lives, and carried the weight of life with their strong bodies. Compared to what they did, what I did was too insignificant. I realized from them the true meaning of life and the blaze of human nature. Life is a part of nature. They chose to save other lives with their own lives with no fear. Some of them were suffering from the great pain of losing their relatives, but they stayed with their students at school, and resumed classes and stayed on their duty. They only gave but without gaining anything. They

overcame unimaginable difficulties, and gave up their own happiness for the sake of others. They believed that a good job meant a good life. Their modesty, perseverance, and their great love would be valuable fortune which would benefit my whole life and encourage me to strive forward. They walked out of the ruins, and each of them had a story. Every story had a meaningful background.

The teachers said "We saved the students, but the students saved us too. We will give them a good education, otherwise I will feel ashamed to our country and our conscience. We will live even better."

The teachers said "As was mentioned by Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, hold high my head, straighten up my back, and light up my warm heart. Let's move towards the bright future. His words are encouraging us and we are feeling grateful."

The teachers said, "The earthquake destroyed our home and our school, but it cannot destroy our will."

The students said, "The students of Beichuan Middle School will study hard, with unbending spirit and magnificent character, for our nation and the dream of human kind, to pursue progress and win glory and dignity."

The students said "We believe we will success. This earthquake brought great disasters for students and teachers of our school and to people of Beichuan. We learned a lesson, and came to understand that as long as we can face disasters bravely and straighten up our backs, we will overcome difficulties and disasters, and win a better new life."

At the class-resume ceremony on May 19th, the principal said to the teachers and students "We have survived, and we will live bravely. We should remember all those who have helped us. Let us be grateful and be useful to our society."

"The people of Beichuan Middle School did not give up. We now are grateful and stand up."

"Morality, peace, practical and creativity" are the ideas of Beichuan



Middle School. We inherited the spirit of the slogan, "Explore, persist, work hard and pursue the truth". With the care from our party and our country, we will rebuild our school and find glory again.

I firmly believe we will move towards the bright future together.



## Postscript

Dear readers,

In reading this book, you may have cried many tears or had your heart broken, just as if you had experienced this shocking earthquake yourself. At the same time, you may have realized how you should treasure your own life.

The Beichuan Middle School was lucky after the earthquake, as it has received love and care from the Central Party Committee, the State Council, people from all works of life, and overseas Chinese. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao was always thinking of the children. He paid six visits to Beichuan to see the students and children there. People all over the country made donations. The China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese helped to rebuild the school with support from countless Chinese citizens. However, the real rebuilding work will be carried out by the students themselves with their thoughts and actions. They will build their own futures after their long and gloomy days.



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As an overseas Chinese, I am lucky to take part in the project to rebuild the Beichuan Middle School. On September 10th, 2008, when I stepped into one Beichuan Middle School class, I was deeply touched by the heartfelt words of the children, their dedicated eyes, and their deep sense of appreciation. They need our help so much. After a few more visits, I had become a part of this group. I hope more people will get close to these children, get to know them, care for them and help them.

I came to the Beichuan Middle School again just before the 2009 Spring Festival, bringing the students some gloves, hoping to give them some warmth. The children felt indebted, so they wrote many letters to me, telling me their thoughts and feelings. That's how the idea of writing this book came to me. I wanted people to know the thoughts and feelings of the students and teachers of Beichuan Middle School, and to know of the trials that the earthquake brought them. Finally, I want people to see the true love our society is capable of giving.

I felt it was a big obligation to rebuild the Beichuan Middle School. The new Beichuan Middle School is not a common school, because now it has the care



of the Central Party Committee and our country, the hope of our society, and the dreams of its students and teachers. We hope the new Beichuan Middle School will be modern, international, but also traditionally Chinese. We hope the new Beichuan Middle School will be a record of history, while it simultaneously faces the future. We hope the new Beichuan Middle School will be great, but not luxurious, simple but dignified. We hope the new Beichuan Middle School will be green, safe and cultured. We should say that it is not easy to rebuild this school, but it will be even more difficult to improve the quality of education in the future. There is a long way for us to go to build a really prestigious school.

Looking back, I know that we need not only benevolence to participate in charity, but also a long time of dedication and involvement. The basic meaning of charity is benevolence, respect to others, right treatment of others, and caring for those in need.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the chairman of the China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, Mr. Lin Jun, who inspired the name for this book; to all the kind-hearted people who offered care to people from Beichuan Middle School; and to all of those who buy this book, as the all profits will be donated to rebuild the Beichuan Middle School.



Linda Wong

Honorable Principal of Beichuan Middle School

March, 2009

Yihai Garden, Beijing

## **The Students Chant for Love around Beichuan**

The story of teachers and students in Beichuan School who experienced the Wenchuan earthquake

Compiled by Beichuan Middle School

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