

**“For the body does not consist of one member but of many.”**

(Corinthians Chapter 12, Verse 14)

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Happy New Year to you all!

One young man invited us to “have dinner with him”, and at that moment 177 years ago, the YMCA was established. We have spread all over the world by talking, expanding our circle of friendship, and praying together. The Osaka YMCA continues to meet each individual, listen to the voice of the person next to us, and take steps to “create a society where we can live together with hope.”

In the wake of the spread of the new coronavirus, people have been forced to make changes in their lives, and even those who seem to be leading peaceful daily lives are troubled. Children's physical strength has temporarily declined as they continue to refrain from going out, and the risk of falling into frailty has increased, especially among the elderly, as their physical and cognitive functions deteriorate. The unexpected changes in the world around us have increased stress, and many people have lost confidence in their ability to survive.

With the development of technology, meetings are being held online even under the influence of COVID-19, and online classes are being introduced in schools. However, for the first-year college students who have enrolled in college, they have had to attend lectures from home or in their rooms alone without attending even their entrance ceremony. As a result they are having trouble making friends.

The YMCA has been working on building relationships through camps for many years. On the first day of camp, leaders actively say, “Good morning! To put the participants’ minds at rest. The campers are divided into groups of about 5 to 7 people and through so-called small group activities, we share our perspectives together, learn about each other’s personalities and nurture our relationships.

We would like to face this challenge with the strength that the YMCA has cultivated over the years. It takes effort to build relationships, and cultivate a perspective that aims to develop a holistic human being in which Spirit, Mind, and Body are in harmony, and Christian values of love and forgiveness. The means by which this is implemented is through a wide variety of YMCA programs, engaging with infants to the elderly.

We are being asked to know the pain of our society and with whom we can take steps toward solutions. The use of technology is enabling us to do what we could not do before, while the value of real experiences is being renewed. Let's use our creativity to think about what is needed, and make this the year when we can talk about hope and take on new challenges together with experts, volunteers, governments, corporations, and YMCAs in Japan and abroad.