

No One Stands Alone

Akane Terada

When I first started living in Cambridge, I felt so lonely. The pandemic forced me to stay at home. Since I came here for my husband's job, I didn't have any friends. When I lived in Japan, I thought I was an "indoor" person, but it was tough for me to stay at home as a housewife all day.

Despite being in a foreign country, I began to feel the kindness of the people around me. For example, I found out that the library offers English classes. I hesitated. I was not sure if I had the courage. At that time, they held the classes only online. I applied to one of the beginner classes.

After that, I met a lot of people in the same situation as me. It helped me to make friends and expand my relationships. It was such a good opportunity for me not only to learn English but also to share information with other people. Later, I learned that the City of Cambridge offers classes and tutors to English learners. Now I take classes at the Community Learning Center. My teachers and tutors inspire me and motivate me.

After a while, one of my Japanese friends invited me to a Zoom meeting for Japanese wives. The name was "Chatty Cardinal." We chose this name because it encourages us to feel free to talk—just like the birds sing! Also, the cardinal is a typical American bird, and its red color reminds us of the Boston Red Sox. In these meetings, we share news and updates. I am glad we can catch up with each other every month.



Now, Cambridge is one of my favorite cities. I like to experience different cultures and interact with many people from other countries. I enjoy spending my time learning English and meeting my new friends



after the class. I feel comfortable enough that I am willing to help if someone needs assistance. It is obviously very hard time to spend time alone in a foreign country. Right now, I feel the importance of people around me. No one stands alone, we need one another to live a happy life.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What groups and institutions help Akane feel less alone?
2. Discuss the difference between private groups (like Chatty Cardinal) and public organizations (like Akane's school).

Akane Terada is a student at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She lives in Cambridge with her husband. She takes English class three times a week and enjoys meeting classmates from different cultures. She loves cafe-hopping and baking in her free time.