

深谷市立豊里中学校 2年 大谷 (女)

Otani (F) 2nd grade

Toyosato Junior High School

### **Give Up! Never.**

“Get up.” I kept telling myself over and over again. “Don't give up” My heart was pounding like a drum and my leg muscles were totally failing me. I thought of walking straight up to my volleyball coach and telling him that I quit. That I could not keep up with the strict practice. I felt it was impossible. I felt defeated and weak. I considered giving up as my number one option.

I had just joined junior high school. I was excited and on top of the world. I had pictured it in my head just how much fun I would have being a member of the strong and famous Toyosato volleyball team. I knew it would be a little hard and that I needed to practice. I just didn't think that the practice would be extremely hard.

For the first few months after joining the team, I went home with a long face. I was so tired after practice that I thought I would not make it home in one piece. My family was the first to try and come to my rescue with words of encouragement. “It gets better.” My mom said. “Don't give up, you are stronger than you know” said my dad. They made me feel so much better. I woke up the next morning in high spirits. I was determined to do much better.

The senior team members were so cool and friendly. I remember watching them run the miles with such ease. They could even afford to smile as they passed by me shouting, “Mizuho gambatte.” I could not understand how on earth someone could run a mega marathon with a smile on her face. “This is not for everyone. Maybe they were born with special genes; this is not for someone like me.” I thought. I felt weak and beaten. The seniors would walk up to me and try to rekindle my spirits. “We have all been in your shoes.” “We all started as amateurs.” “It does get better with time.” “Keep practicing and tomorrow will be a better day.” Again with these words of encouragement I felt better and more energetic to start off the next day.

As usual Mr. Honjo was waiting at the main entrance for us to return after practice. I remember he would say something positive and encouraging. He kept reminding me that I was getting better. “Today you were a bit faster than yesterday.” “Your receiving techniques have improved.” “Good teamwork Mizuho.” I was beginning to feel the progress. I was no longer getting as tired as before. Finally I was mastering the game. It was still a challenge. But I could notice a difference. I was getting somewhere.

I learned a lot from my first tough year in the team. I learned the importance of hard work, practice, patience, friendship, motivation, challenge and so on. At first I was only enrolling for fun. But now I'm getting much more from my school's club activities. This year I am a second grader and have to lead the volleyball club. I will keep on keeping on. I will do my best to master the game. I will encourage the first graders just like my seniors encouraged me. I have gained a lot of experiences. I am ready to partake and conquer any challenges that might come my way. Thanks to my family, friends, teachers and seniors. Future “BRING IT ON.” I am ready and armored for you.

Thank you.