



Do You Know  
What My Name Is ?

Bring back the light





## Bring back the light



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What My Name Is ?





# INTRODUCTION



"The most heartwarming true story – and one that affects  
millions of people around the world.  
This is a film that brings out tears of hope and joy,  
a film to be shared with all your loved ones"

# STAFF PROFILE



Producer / Director

## Shigeru OTA

Ota joined Sendai Television in 1998. After working in the news department, he has directed several documentaries. Recently he has been specializing on brain science, and is currently producing a brain fitness program titled, “The Brain Trainer Exercise,” that discusses methods to increase cognitive activity. To cultivating about brain science is his life work. At present, he is focusing on exposing others to the benefits of brain and mental fitness.



Director / Line producer

## Naomi KAZAMA

Kazama has spent a good deal of her career directing documentary for television. Her most accomplished programs, specializing in sports, art, and music have aired in over 150 countries. She won acclaim for her work as director of the documentary, “Figure Skater Mao Asada ~ 20 Years Old,” about the 2010 Winter Olympics silver medalist, Mao Asada. In 2011, the documentary was released on DVD in Japan and quickly became #1 on the bestsellers list in the sports category. And in 2014, she directed a documentary DVD about Yuzuru Hanyu, a 2014 Winter Olympics gold medalist and established a new sales record ever since 1999 in Japan. This is her first foray into feature-length documentaries.



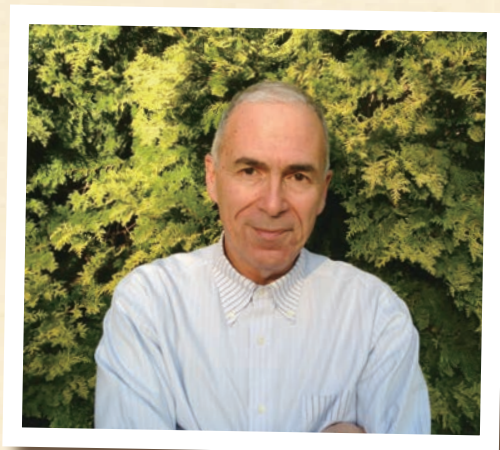




Scriptwriter

## Hiroshi Takeda

Takeda began work as a director of music and quiz programs in 1987. In 1995, he turned to broadcast writing after starting up his own company. He is best known for work on shows such as the documentary program “Jinsei no Rakuen (Life’s Paradise),” about people starting a new endeavor after reaching middle age.



Scriptwriter

## Roger Pulvers

Pulvers has published over 40 books in English and Japanese. Many of his plays have been produced in Japan, Australia and the U.S. and he has published translations from Japanese, Russian and Polish. Roger acted as assistant to director Nagisa Oshima on the film “Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence,” and in 2009 won Best Script Award at the Teheran International Film Festival for “Best Wishes for Tomorrow.”



Video Photography

## Katsumi Matsumoto

Matsumoto is a president of COSMO SPACE of AMERICA. As a cameraman, he has experienced to shoot not only in the U.S., but also Brazil and Argentina for many TV documentaries, entertainments and news, on topics ranging from sports, nature, and science. He also made the original script for movie “Little Tear.”



Assistant Director

## Jun Mizuno

Mizuno is a freelance director. He has worked at a variety of TV stations on programs ranging from news to variety, documentary and educational programs. He was also involved in the production of English learning software for elementary school students in 2012.



# PRODUCTION NOTE



**Shigeru Ota**      **Producer / Director**

## **Bringing light to dementia patients and their families around the world.**

This film explores how elderly people with dementia who had lost their ability to enjoy life were able to turn their lives around and regain their former selves thanks to a non-invasive communication method. The communication method used is the result of brain science and does not use medicine or devices. This method is the basis of this moving, true story about how elderly people suffering from dementia recovered from the so-called 'blur'. Even though over a century has passed since dementia first appeared in human society, there is still no common treatment. For the people around the world suffering from this illness, I wanted to share this story of hope born from Japanese brain science. This desire was the driving force behind our production of this film.

## **2 decades of dementia interviews**

Sendai Television began interviewing dementia patients around 20 years ago. Since 1993, 'Dementia Series' has been broadcast as a special segment on the news, and up until today, there have been over 80 episodes. In Miyagi Prefecture, 'Sendai Symposium on Dementia' has been held consecutively for the last nine years - there have been activities like this to increase awareness since Dementia was officially recognized as a social problem. These years of research have brought to light many stories - from people who have gone wandering in the middle of the night to patients fixed to their beds, communication failure, the mental, physical and financial burden of caring for patients for their families etc. As people continue to live longer, dementia is becoming an increasingly important social problem. Dr. Ryuta Kawashima of Tohoku



University shared this thought. Sendai Television began airing a current affairs program called 'Catch' based on Dr. Kawashima's research in 2003 in order to introduce current research into brain function and dementia recovery strategies. That same year, a documentary called 'Reading, writing and arithmetic - Dad's first steps to recovery', was produced. This was the first documentary to explore Dr. Kawashima's 'Learning Therapy' method of dementia recovery. It was nominated for the 12th FNS Documentary Award.

## **Bringing the results of cutting edge brain science to people's living rooms**

Shortly after, Sendai Television introduced 'Dr. Ryuta Kawashima's Brain Gymnastics', a world first television program based on 'Reading, writing and arithmetic to activate the brain', Dr. Kawashima's research, which was designed to bring simple brain training to people's living rooms. The program is still being broadcast today and has been shown over 2500 times. It has also started being aired overseas. Since 2007, I have been in charge of the production of this program, along with DVD production, Mobile games, Internet Videos and International Events and have introduced Dr. Kawashima's research at these places. The 'Learning Therapy' method outlined in this film is a world first experimental method that provided the opportunity for this film.





## Do you know what my name is?

After years of preparation, a nursing home in Cleveland, Ohio, USA was decided upon as the place to conduct the experimental research. Difficulties were faced, such as restrictions on interviews. We have experience facing constraints when filming documentaries in Japan, but never before had we faced an inability to hear what the heroes of the story have to say. It was at this time that we decided to work with John Rodemann, who was the registrar of the nursing home facilities and was able to accompany us during the interviews. He introduced himself in front of the dementia patients everyday and then checked five minutes later to see if they remembered his name.

John "Evelyn, Do you know what my name is?"

Evelyn "No, I don't know!"

From this point, the magic started to appear. Around half way through the film, Evelyn, the main character, speaks directly to the camera in a moving scene. This scene is not an interview, but was filmed when Evelyn herself started talking to the camera. The fact that this moment was caught on film shows how director Kazuma established a close connection with Evelyn.



## Challenges to the filmmaking.

Despite the fact that Dementia is a serious problem common to people around the world, as a local broadcaster, the programs that we produce at Sendai Television are rarely shown outside of our local area. We were very passionate about having this story be seen across Japan and around the world, and therefore decided to make a film. With the help of broadcaster Hiroshi Takeda and writer/playwright Roger Pulvers, we aimed to make a film that people around the world could emphasize with and began a process of trial and error to achieve this. We asked John Rodman to be the narrator in the film and he became the eyes through which the audience witnesses the changes of the patients. And it was with that that Sendai Television's first feature film, and first English documentary came to be.

## Awards at International Film Festivals

This film was awarded the American Documentary Film Festival's highest honor, the 'Award for Audience Favorite (International Film)' in April 2012. Furthermore, the film has also received positive feedback after being shown at film festivals in Berlin, Los Angeles and Cleveland etc. At one showing, there was a queue of people 100 meters long, at another, people rushed into the theatre and there was even a showing where the applause after the film continued for close to 10 minutes. These comments from a representative of The American National Alzheimer's Association were particularly moving.

"This movie has painted a true picture of Dementia. And it was a story of hope. I want this film to be seen by all families of people with Dementia, and by the young people who will create a world of care in the future."

## Dementia is a problem faced all over the world

This film features a large variety of people who are facing dementia. From people who are afraid to accept that they have dementia, to people who struggle to remember the names of their children and grandchildren. It also features the change of heart that the family members and carers experience. Our cameraman, Matsumoto captured these moments with care. This film captures the truth that dementia is a problem that is shared by everyone around the world. The sights that we witnessed in Japan are now happening in the U.S. And, there is no doubt that they will occur at other places around the world in the future. That's why I want to believe that the stories of the people in this film will resonate with people all over the world, break down cultural borders and provide hope for people living with dementia.

Lastly, this film could not have been created without the hard work and cooperation of many organizations and individuals. This film is based on the research and theory of Dr. Ryuta Kawashima from Tohoku University's Institute of Cancer and Ageing, and the work of the Kumon Learning Therapy Center that helped to put this research into practice. It could also not have been created without the passion of all the staff that worked on this project. I feel profound thanks and respect toward all those who have helped create this work and I am extremely proud of what we have achieved.



# How can reading, writing and arithmetic be used as a dementia treatment?



**Ryuta Kawashima** Tohoku University Institute of Ageing  
Smart Ageing International Research Center (Manager)

This documentary follows the United States trials of the 'Learning Therapy' method of dementia treatment. In 2002, both the Japan Science and Technology Agency and Socio-technical Research Center adopted our 'Learning Therapy' research proposal as a public research project.

At Tohoku University, we conduct research into the workings of the human brain. By using a variety of scientific measurement devices, we image the movements in the brain caused by feelings and aim to determine where in the brain, and in what way, they occur. The part of the brain that performs the most advanced functions such as memory, learning, reasoning, prediction and judgment is called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. The functionality of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex has a direct correlation to a person's quality of life and the functionality of this part of the brain begins to decrease as we reach adulthood - continuing to do so as we age. The significant decrease in functionality of this part of the brain in patients with dementia is one of the leading causes of their inability to lead healthy daily lives.

A core function of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex is a type of memory called "working memory". This working memory is used when performing cognitive tasks such as reasoning, learning and comprehension. It temporarily

holds information for you to manipulate. However, the working memory can only store a very small amount of information and the information disappears when used. It is a well-known fact that your ability to use your working memory as an adult can be increased through training.

From the results of psychology and cognitive science, it is known that working memory training leads to significant improvements in working memory capacity. Those who have participated in training can remember more information at once, have a greater ability to judge situations, can learn many new things and even have a higher ability to predict the consequences of future events. Furthermore, doing intensive working memory training everyday has been proven to give a plethora of indirect effects ranging from the ability to suppress your emotions, improve creative and logical thinking ability and improve your ability adapt to new situations. In a number of trials that we conducted with university students, it became clear that the volume of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex of the left and right cerebral hemisphere actually increases as a result of working memory training.

It was at this point that we began to explore how to apply this working memory training in daily life. We researched easy everyday activities that anyone can do and thought





about which activities would give the best results if used in training, by looking at the load that the actions place on the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. The degree of load being placed on the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex by a certain activity could be quickly determined by using our original research technique, which involves imaging the how feeling causes movement in the brain.

The problem we faced was whether or not a simple everyday task that places a load on the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex actually exists. It is well known in brain science that the more difficult a task, the heavier the load and the more movement is required in the brain to achieve it. According to this rule, there is not a simple, easy task that places a large load on the brain. People who believe in this rule may, even after seeing Evelyn's dramatic recovery due to her use of the learning therapy method, not be able to accept it. From the time when we suggested learning therapy, to today when over 15,000 dementia patients in Japan have experienced significant improvement thanks to the therapy, there have been many experts skeptic of the system.

We, at first glance, realized the presence of a solution to an impossible problem in existing research. From the results of various studies measuring human brain activity, we found that when working with symbols such as letters and numbers, regardless of the level of difficulty, many areas of the cerebral left hemisphere, including the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex work actively. In other words, without working memory, we cannot perform calculations or read or write logically. As to why the previous misconception remained in existence, this is probably because most brain science research up until now has been conducted on animals such as rats, cats and monkeys. In these tests, it is impossible to see how the brain functions when dealing with symbols or numbers.

The results of working memory training using symbols and numbers (Learning Therapy) far exceeded our expectations. Watching Evelyn's dramatic improvement in the film, there were many 'miracles' that not even I, who proposed the learning therapy method could have predicted. For example, I remember how I felt goose bumps when I saw a dementia patient who had been bedridden for three years get into a wheelchair and return to a normal life. Even Dr. Tomo from a certain national university, someone who is less emotional than me, was brought to tears when he witnessed that event. Those of

you who are interested in learning more about the stories that have resulted from learning therapy should take a look at the publications that we have produced.

As time progressed, we became convinced that these miracles were universal facts. We felt a strong sense of responsibility to make learning therapy available to those suffering from dementia around the world, however we faced a number of barriers in trying to achieve this. Learning therapy can be conducted with just paper learning materials, a pencil and the enthusiasm of carers. However, in reality, not everyone is happy to pay a few dollars a month for learning materials for dementia patients. There was an impression that the costs could not be covered by nursing insurance – even though there was proof that it could result in significant health benefits. We contacted a variety of people from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, but were only met with red tape. And so, we began this plot of trials in the United States.

The official reason we decided to conduct the study in the United States was that we felt that it was possible that the Japanese people have a unique familiarity with reading and writing thanks to their continued use of the abacus. Therefore, we wanted to see if the learning therapy method could have similarly positive results in a country with a culture that is completely different to Japan. In other words, see whether working memory training based on reading, writing and arithmetic could give results regardless of cultural background. We also wanted to conduct trials in the United States based on the fact that Japanese officials and government agencies listen closely to information from abroad, and if the learning therapy method gained approval for widespread use in the United States, we believed that the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare would give similar permission for its use in Japan.

I'd like people to witness the outcome of the United States trials for themselves in the film. I'd also like to add that in 2014, we aim to have the learning therapy in use at large number of nursing facilities across the U.S. under the U.S. brand name SAIDO Learning. I have been very impressed by the United States' willingness and openness to our ideas, and the speed at which they were adopted. I sincerely hope that in the near future, all patients suffering from dementia have the opportunity to use the learning therapy method freely.



## **Dr. Ryuta Kawashima**

**Tohoku University Institute of Ageing  
Smart Ageing International Research Center (Manager)**

A doctor of medicine, Dr. Kawashima was born in 1959 in Chiba prefecture. He was the first to develop 'Brain Imaging Research' to determine the roles of different parts of the brain. He also started and supervised the creation of game software that started the brain-training boom, and is committed to finding new ways to apply brain science into everyday life. In addition to his television program 'Dr. Kawashima's TV Brain Gymnastics' (Sendai Television), he is also the author of several books such as 'Have fun as you age - The Smart Ageing way of life' (Fusosha Publishing Inc. - co-authored by Hiroyuki Murata).



# This film is 'the light that memory gave us.'



**Shinji Ito** Kumon Learning Therapy Center (International Project)

The 'Learning Therapy' method of dementia treatment was born as a 'non-drug based therapy for dementia recovery' from a joint research project between the Japanese Government's Ministry of Education Culture Sports and Science 12 years ago. It was made possible by the cooperation of Dr. Ryuta Kawashima of Tohoku University, Kumon, and a nursing care facility in Fukuoka. Dr. Kawashima published the results of this joint research project into dementia recovery treatments and the prefrontal cortex in the American journal 'Gerontorogy' in 2005. The results caused a sensation.

In response to the positive results, Kumon established the Kumon Learning Therapy Centre and began working to introduce the 'Kumon Learning Therapy System' into nursing care facilities across Japan. Currently, over 1,600 Japanese nursing care facilities have adopted the system and are experiencing improvements in the happiness and quality of life of their patients as a result.

For us at the Kumon Learning Therapy Center, the development of the Learning Therapy over the last 10 years has been a journey filled with emotion. We have witnessed so many positive and moving changes. A

bedridden patient was able to get out of bed with a smile after the therapy, daughters were brought to tears as their mothers remembered their names, patients who showed violent behavior became kind and considerate. Even more unbelievable stories included patients who had difficulty eating due to a gastrostomy becoming able to eat through their mouths, and patients who experienced a reduction in urinary retention. We have been able to experience so many of these unbelievable stories.

We have taken these wonderful results as energy and motivation and aimed to continue innovating to make improvements to people's lives.

The development and success of Learning Therapy and the Brain Health Centers is a result of the cooperation, openness, help and understanding of all those who we have worked with. It was thanks to this that a company like Kumon that did not have any previous experience in the world of nursing care was able to develop a program like this.

It was in the midst of this, around three and a half years ago that we received a proposal from Dr. Ryuta





Kawashima to participate in trials of the Learning Therapy method in the United States. At the time, we wondered whether or not there would be a nursing facility in the U.S. that would be willing to participate in such a trial. It was at this time that we received an application from the 'EJ' (Eliza Jennings) nursing care facility in Cleveland, Ohio, which impressed us with its respect and care for the elderly. It was at this point that we decided to continue with the project. From this time onwards, the project team visited Cleveland over 30 times and worked with the staff at EJ to develop the plan for the project. Then, for the three years over which the project was conducted, we witnessed with our own eyes the miraculous development and changes of the patients, their families and carers.

Now, these incredible experiences have been captured in this documentary, 'Do you know what my name is?' and I feel a profound sense of joy that we can share these amazing events with people all over the world.

This documentary was recorded when our team, consisting of Japanese researchers and Kumon research members, entered an American nursing home and began working with American staff to perform research. It is a completely true story and has not been changed for film in any way. Perhaps the best proof of this is the fact that we at Kumon were unaware that this was being made into a film. During the filming, we thought that the cameras were for recording the research and that the most that would come of them would be a small segment on the TV news. When we heard that the videos would be made into a film, we were, of course, overjoyed and were very pleased that the raw emotion and joy that was captured in the recordings would make its way into a film.

We had several concerns when embarking on this attempt to introduce Learning Therapy in the U.S. – will American patients respond as positively? Will we be able to make English learning materials that are appropriate for Americans? We were full concerns at this point and we could not have dreamed that a film would be made of the adventure.

Even in May 2011, on the first day of the American trials, when we were asked if it would be okay to film our progress, we refused and got into trouble with the recording staff. We wanted the patients to be able to learn in the best possible environment and feared that the presence of a camera would interrupt this. We felt this early on in the trials, when the hero of the film, Evelyn was unable to place any tiles on the number board. In fact, our Kumon staff stood behind the camera and gestured

for the American staff, assuring them that Evelyn could stop the session at anytime if it was too difficult for her.

Less than a month after starting the treatment, Evelyn was able to place up to 30 tiles on the board and was having witty conversations with the staff and carers. This was such a big change that it almost seemed like we were talking to a different person. Evelyn was able to regain her life and her expressions were perfect indications of how light had returned to her life. I will never forget the moment when the cameraman ran to us saying 'something amazing is happening!' The families felt the emotion most – Evelyn's son was in tears when he said 'My mom's back!' The families of the elderly expressed that they felt as though something that they thought was impossible had actually happened. We were able to experience this joy and emotion alongside the elderly and their families.

The narrator of the film, John, is a kind and gentle young man who we all loved to be around. Before the Learning Therapy experiments took place, John was working to manage the equipment at the nursing home. The man who was changing light bulbs and fixing broken electronics became one of the main roles in the production just before the trials started. However, again, this was not for the production of a film, but simply to create a video log of the trials to monitor and prove the results. If I think about it now, it was John, who was the most familiar with and spent the most time with the elderly. Therefore, the narration in the film is his own words and is a reflection of his personal feelings. After the trial, John volunteered to work full time at the facility and has become the leader of conducting Learning Therapy at the facility. John says; 'the experience changed the way I think about life. I realized that this job could allow me to shine.'

One day, one of the female staff grabbed an interpreter and approached us. She then began to cry and, while looking directly at us, said the following: 'Thank you so much for bringing this wonderful opportunity and these amazing feelings all the way from Japan. We still can't believe how happy this has made everyone.' The interpreter was overcome with emotion she heard this and had difficulty translating it.

What really surprised us was the staff at EJ - their sincerity, warmth, positive attitude and teamwork was really amazing. I think that all those who see the film will see how all the EJ staff members who appear in the film show their positive, bright attitude through their words and expressions. I can assure you that this is not just for the camera. Their attitude is to always find the



positives, praise progress and work together to bring out the potential in each individual. I think that a lot of the miraculous changes in the elderly during the trials were only possible thanks to this. One of the key points of the learning therapy is the importance of people, and that results are dependent on who performs the treatment in what manner. I really believe that the staff at EJ - their teamwork and 'find the positives' attitude was a key factor in increasing the level of results from the learning therapy.

Even after this film was made, the Cleveland Nursing Home that was the location for the film is continuing its use of the Learning Therapy and the emotional scenes that appear in the movie are still occurring today. We always hear from John and the staff at the facility new stories of emotion and joy. This film captures the real stories of what happened when we were filming, but it will remain relevant as what it captured is still occurring today.

When thinking of a Japanese title for the film, we proposed the title 'the light that memory gave me'. This title was not adopted in the end, but we still think of this film as the light that memory gave us. This is definitely not a movie about Learning Therapy, nor is it a movie about Kumon. We believe that this is a movie about how the Learning Therapy was the tool that, when paired with the enthusiasm and respect of the nursing staff was able to change the lives of and give the opportunity for the elderly to recover their memories.

Memory is what connects people with their family and friends. When someone's memory returns, they can regain their previous life. The light that returns penetrates the lives of not just the patient, but also their family and the care staff. This light creates joy, tears and hopes for the future. This light could even be thought of as the meaning of life.

Caring for the elderly, and specifically dementia care is a very difficult, and sometimes painful thing. The person affected and their families undergo great suffering. This is something that remains the same wherever you go. We sincerely hope that those people around the world have the opportunity to see this film. We believe that those who have experienced the pain and suffering of dementia will be able to gain a lot from this film. I believe that you will be able to feel the light.

Also, I would also like all of those like John and the nursing staff in the film who dedicate their lives and work hard to improving the lives of the elderly and their families to see this film. I hope that you are able to gain an even greater appreciation for the wonderful job that you do that gives light to so many people everyday.









# DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

**Naomi Kazama** Director



Interviewer: Kyoko Tsukada

Dementia is a social problem that is forecasted to increase in the near future with our rapidly ageing society. 'Do you know what my name is' is a documentary that shows how a disease like dementia, with no specific preventative measures or treatment can be improved by 15 minutes a day of reading and writing therapy. This documentary shows how this method gave hope to dementia sufferers, their families and those around them. This interview will focus on the changes that the film's director, Naomi Kazuma, witnessed over the six months that she spent at the nursing home where the learning therapy was being conducted in Cleveland, Ohio.

## Prior to the filming, what was your perception of dementia?

Before the filming I only had a general understanding of dementia – I did not know anyone with dementia around me and my perceptions were heavily influenced by how the media tends to focus on the difficulties of dementia care. When I learned that I would be working on this film, I wanted to learn more about dementia patients and their carers, so I read Dr Kawashima's academic journals and viewed many different films about dementia. I also visited an elderly care facility in Japan that was conducting the learning therapy, but I was still initially very unsure as to how to proceed with the project.

## How frequently did you visit Cleveland?

From May until November 2011, I visited Cleveland about once a month for around a week each time to cover the learning therapy progress closely. I also visited in December 2011 and April 2012 in order to see the amazing progress of the learners with my own eyes. It was the first time that the learning therapy had been put into practice overseas and we were all very nervous, so I spent quite a bit of time caring for and running errands for others. At the beginning, we had no information about the residents of the nursing home, Eliza Jennings. We got the first

basic profiles of each of the residents after the first filming had ended. While it was just a small amount of information, it finally allowed us to put names to the faces. However, getting the information later on did allow us to experience the facility and meet everyone without preconceptions, so looking back I think it was a positive. The learners, staff and families were initially a bit uneasy about how we Japanese, who spoke a different language and had a different culture, would be filming, and conducting interviews. We didn't want to disturb them, so we worked hard to put them at ease and build positive relationships. For example, when we heard 'When they are concerned about something, they will stop eating immediately', we decided to try different camera angles and designed each of the filmings around the needs and preferences of the learners. Mr. Ryuji Motoyama, our coordinator, was a great help in collecting information and helping us to build trusting relationships with everyone at Eliza Jennings.

## How did you decide whom to film?

I relied mainly on intuition when deciding which of the learners to focus on. Since we were unable to interview the learners directly, our cameraman, Mr. Katsumi Matsumoto was very helpful in gathering impressions through what he saw through the viewfinder. He was very enthusiastic and always smiling, which



I think helped to put the residents at ease and allowed us to see many smiles in return. Evelyn was initially uncomfortable with the camera, but had grown more comfortable when I visited a month later and started interacting more with the camera. She was incredibly helpful and kind, speaking with us and trying hard to understand our English, despite our Japanese accents. Being with Evelyn I felt at ease as if I was with my own grandmother, and it was thanks to her that I was able to gain more confidence about our project.

### **Visiting Cleveland at fixed intervals once a month, was it easier to get a clear impression of the changes in the learners?**

The learners did take breaks when they were not feeling well, but everyone happily participated in the learning therapy trials. Of course John and the support staff experienced the changes in the learners, but I, who visited periodically once a month experienced an even greater level of surprise at the changes in the learners. At the beginning, a lot of the learners were experiencing depression and had a tendency to spend a lot of time in their rooms. However, when I returned a month later I received high fives and was warmly welcomed - the learners had become very socially open. The female learners had started to style their hair, and Evelyn started to put on lipstick after eating - the learners had gained more confidence in themselves. It was at that time that I felt that I had met the real Evelyn. These women, who paved the way for gender equality, were regaining their individuality and independence. I felt a strong sense of the underlying strength of women. Unfortunately, there was one learner who passed away during the filming, but their family said that they were happy that they were able to shine right up until the end. While we initially heard comments from families like 'I just want her to live safely' and 'As long as they are living', I think that the families were overjoyed when the learners were able to regain themselves - something that they originally didn't even think was possible.

### **There was a limit on the amount of the recording allowed, so you relied on John Rodeman to report on the changes and also do the narration in the film.**

Basically, the on location filming was limited to the times when we were allowed to be with the supporters, and we could not spend whole days at the facility. John was mainly involved in maintenance of Eliza Jennings before the project began and offered to participate in the learning therapy experiments to witness and report back on the changes in the learners. He had not spent a lot of time with the residents prior to the filming, but he enjoyed speaking with them. When he was first asked 'What do you think about dementia', he said 'dementia is a scary thing'. I felt that his response was very similar to how I felt about dementia at the time, and I knew that we would work well together. If it was someone that was very knowledgeable about dementia, they may see the changes of Evelyn and May as simply expected results of the learning therapy and not as amazing changes. Every time that we visited, John told us in great detail all the minute changes that he had witnessed and been moved by. He was looking for another job at the time, but as he experienced the learning therapy, and was moved by the changes of the learners, he realised that he wanted to be a supporter. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the learners, supporters and staff that helped with the interviews and production of the film.

### **Were there any changes in the filming or production due to the fact that the film was filmed in the U.S.?**

Dementia is a very serious topic. Because of this, I never had the intention to make a dark film. Instead, I wanted to express the human side of dementia - the everyday difficulties that those with dementia face such as 'I can't write my name' or 'I forgot that I had a granddaughter', while also expressing the warmth and enthusiasm of the carers. As the filming was conducted overseas, I wanted to make it a film that could be enjoyed by those around the world, and I also wanted to challenge myself to make a foreign style film. I consulted with Mr. Hiroshi Takeda to achieve this. What we found particularly difficult was the question of how much detail to put into explanations about dementia and the therapy. The changes of the learners are not something that you can understand at first glance, so we ended up extending the cuts for longer than usual. However, Mr. Roger Pulvers provided us a western point of view and said that extending the explanation would only restrict the imagination of the viewers. This struck a chord with us and afterwards I went into the editing room with Mr. Jun Mizuno and began a long process of trial and error to achieve the perfect cut.

### **It seems as though the film has been received very well overseas.**

The film received its first award at the American Documentary Film Festival. When the result was announced, our producer, Mr. Shigeru Ota and Mr. Motoyama initially did not notice that the film had won - it was really an unexpectedly wonderful result. After that, there was the Cleveland International Film Festival. After the showing of the film, when the audience gave the film a standing ovation, I felt that the hard work of all the people who had participated on the project was being rewarded. We received comments like 'I have a family member with dementia and your film gave me hope. Thank you.' and 'there are plenty of films that paint a dark picture of dementia, but its no use only knowing one side. This film's brightness makes it stand apart from the rest.' These comments made us feel as though our film had given hope to those that saw it. This film is not a representation of all those suffering from dementia. However, as dementia is becoming a more and more common issue to those around the world, it is important that we work together with dementia patients to help them regain themselves and increase awareness about the wonderful work of their carers.

### **In reality, everyone's condition has improved and they are getting happier and brighter everyday.**

The main point of the learning therapy is increasing communication. The program is conducted with a pair of learners and one supporter, and conversation naturally occurs - strengthening the bonds between participants and increasing sociability. What was particularly surprising was that we witnessed changes not only in the learners, but also in their families. Evelyn's daughter's smile grew as she spoke with her mother. Even if a son or daughter of a dementia patient is aware of their parent's condition, they can't prepare for or believe the increasing symptoms that are often experienced. However, thanks to the learning therapy, learners were able to regain lost time and ease the symptoms of dementia. In my eyes, the time that families were able to regain was a sort of preparation for the end. 'One more time, I want to be encouraged by my mother', 'I want to take my mother to her favourite ice cream parlour again' The ability to relive their past lives once more - I think that that is what the learning therapy is to the families.





# Do You Know What My Name Is ?

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