

January 30th 2012

Dear Mrs. Valeria, Teachers, Parents, Students and all on the Isle of Giglio

My husband Laurence and I are proud survivors of the tragic accident of the Costa Concordia on January 13th 2012.

I have attached a few photographs and hope to have you recognize us as you read through this note and share our gratitude to all, on this beautiful Island of Giglio.

All our life, as firstly South Africans and then becoming Canadians, we have read, learned and dreamed of visiting the Tuscan Coast. Did we ever realize that our visit would end in such trauma and tragedy?

What a truly beautiful Island you have, once filled with unspoiled beauty, now shattered with the tragedy and devastation and debris of the Costa Concordia.

As long as we will live, we will truly be grateful to your community for the unconditional rescue efforts, care and compassion that were extended to ourselves, fellow passengers and crew of the Costa Concordia on this devastating night of January 13th /14th 2012.

We will never forget the warmth and empathy that unfolded from each and every 'Islander' that came over to the school to help out in all and every way possible, during the early hours of this morning. The kindness and compassion was insurmountable, the effort and undertaking was unyielding.

Laurence and I would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to every one of you, in whatever way you participated towards our eventual trip to the mainland which ultimately got us one step further to home and our eventual reunification with our children, grandchildren, family and friends.

Please remember to thank the people who walked us over the hills, down to the cars, the bus drivers, the 'nurse' who did such an amazing job of removing the coral and debris from my feet with such a gentle and caring hand. The tea maker, the suppliers of clothes, shoes and blankets, the people with cell phones. The teachers and children who shared their school rooms with us, who allowed us the use of their computers and the Internet to make contact with our beloved families and to start our calls for help to our homeland Embassy's. Even the gentleman who appeared with a bottle of 'vino' within minutes of receiving the call for help.

I now dream of returning to your Island one day, when I know I will come one step closer to healing after I have reached out to hug and thank each and every one of you, for your unconditional involvement in making a difference in our survival.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

May you be blessed with the courage and support that it will take, to one day look back to sea, and remember the ocean and nature for the beauty and tranquility, and be able forget these moments, days and years of pain and suffering caused by this unforgivable disaster.

We wish you beauty and joy.

With love and thanks to all.

Laurence and Andrea Davis