



Pacific Area Update
April 20, 2020

A Tribute to Melanie

Dear Members,

As many of you already know, Melanie Horton, our longtime friend and FEA Pacific leader passed away early Monday, April 13, 2020 succumbing to her battle with cancer. This is truly a great loss to us all.

I knew Melanie for several years during my time as a FRS in Iwakuni, Japan having met her at a North East Area Teachers Association Meeting in Tokyo. However, I didn't really get to know her until I transferred to Okinawa in 2015. Serving as a FR for Kadena Elementary School in early 2016, I attended an American Educators Association of Okinawa Representative Council Meeting. After the meeting, she approached me to consider a run for AEAO President since she would be running for FEA Pacific Area Director. I was reluctant, but she persisted (I soon discovered that her persistence was not unusual!) and after several months, I agreed.

For the next two years Melanie was my constant mentor, role model, but most of all, she was my friend. Whenever I had a question or needed guidance (which was pretty often with me being so new and inexperienced), there was never a time that was inconvenient to her for me to call. We frequently would have working lunches to go over union issues and concerns. She was always available, patient, good humored, and understanding. I can sincerely attest that I would not be able to do this job without having had her example and leadership. She set the bar high, and when I am faced with a difficult decision, I always ask myself, "What would Melanie do?"

All of us have different and unique experiences with people we encounter and love in life. If you knew Melanie, as I am sure many of you did, perhaps you can see a little of your own experience with her in what I have related to you of mine. No matter where you are personally with those memories, I'm sure you will agree with me that she made an indelible mark on all of our lives.

Having worked as an educator in the Pacific for twenty plus years, Melanie served as a representative for FEA a large part of that time in the roles of FR, FRS, AEAO President, and FEA Pacific Area Director. Through out this time she helped to cultivate many new FEA leaders and forged strong working relationships with DoDEA administrators at all levels. In her efforts, she touched all of our lives and was always a caring friend, helpful mentor, and determined advocate. With no doubt, all of this is true about her and more.

Melanie's family is still working to determine how they will celebrate her life. A memorial will be scheduled in the near future as soon as the current social climate permits. I will forward any additional information as it becomes available. If you would like to express your well wishes for the family, cards, flowers, and other gifts can be sent to Bill Cannady (Melanie's father) and Jeffrey Horton (Melanie's son) at: 1153 Hi Point Street, Los Angeles, CA 90035. The family has not indicated any needs or request at this time, but we are aware that there are outstanding medical bills and that Melanie was concerned about Jeffrey's educational expenses.

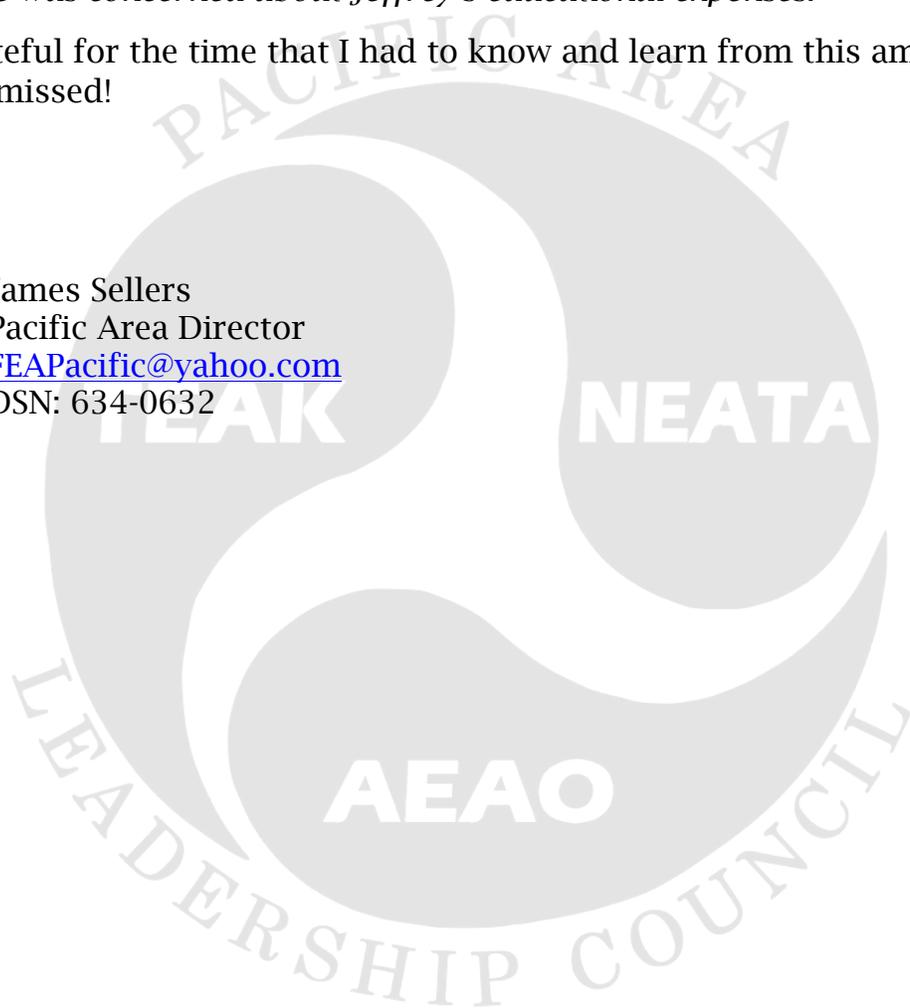
I am so grateful for the time that I had to know and learn from this amazing person. She will be missed!

Take care,

Jamie



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“Strength Through Unity”