

Dear members of Suffield Academy's community - present and past - it is with great honor that I stand here today remembering an incredible friend and colleague that left her loving mark in our lives and hearts. Despite the sorrow and the grief caused by her absence, it is with immense gratitude and joy that I attempt to express my feelings and memories as well as of many others who had the privilege to work with her as members of the Language Department. As the voice might falter and tremble, strong remains the impact she had on all of us.

Ania was not someone you would forget easily. It is not common to hear amongst our peers " we have a Russian Spanish teacher," let's be real - I don't think there is a big group of them out there! We were lucky, we were very lucky, because we did have our own Russian Spanish teacher who loved to teach Spanish - who taught not only the grammar, vocabulary, and culture but was someone who instilled in all of her students a love for the language that was the envy of her colleagues. She gave her passion, her commitment and her knowledge to her students, she cared deeply about their education, and because of this they loved her. She was the teacher that you will remember in the future, even after all the memories from school have faded.

From the Day of the Dead celebration we learn that only those who are forgotten will truly die...dear Ania, as this gathering testifies, you will always be alive in our memories and hearts, as you left something far too strong that defies time and even death. Her personality, although humble and quiet, was strong and caring at the same time. That rare balance of firmness and nurture that all her friends and students experienced.

The simple truth is that we miss you tremendously, but we are left with a myriad of happy moments that we shared along the past 14 years.

For many you were a “mother hen” - taking every new member under your wing - you made sure we would adjust, protecting us in every moment.

You showed us everyday what it means to be committed and passionate about your job, being a team player and always having the students' best interest at heart.

You showed us how fiercely you protected those you loved, and how you would sacrifice your needs for others.

You were always there, and we knew we could always count on you to offer your honest opinion.

We shared many laughs, hugs and tears as well...your unaltered strength was a rock in many difficult moments.

We are positive that wherever you are now, you are straightening everyone up just the way you used to do with us.

Rest assured that we will honor your legacy and friendship by always going beyond, as you did over your teaching career, and we will strive to “be there and present” for our colleagues and students.

Anita, You will be forever missed...you will be forever loved...you will be forever present in our hearts.

I would now like to read a poem, in Spanish, titled: I know you are here by an anonymous author. It speaks of the constant presence of a beloved even in their physical absence.

SE QUE ESTAS AQUI

(Anónimo)

Aunque ya no te vean mis ojos,
aunque ya no escuche tu voz,
habita tu entrega en mi ser,
tu recuerdo vive en mi corazón.

Aunque no entienda la razón
por la que te fuiste,
aunque quisiera emprender contigo el vuelo,
para juntas poder estar.

Aunque las lágrimas me visiten a menudo,
y cuente cada día,
aunque por ti cambiaría mi vida,
y retroceder el tiempo quisiera,
Sé que estás aquí...

En el soplo del viento cuando me siento sola,
o cuando de un árbol cae una hoja,
cuando veo una flor hermosa,
cuando una lágrima vuelve a brotar,
Sé que estás aquí...

Cuando siento la sensación de que alguien me guía,
cuando no puedo encontrar la salida,
cuando necesito conversar,
sé que estás aquí para poderme escuchar.