

**Black History Month Celebrated in San Francisco**  
**By FRED FRIEDLAND, Correspondent**  
**San Francisco, Feb. 28**

Rhythms of African drums like primal heartbeats. Brightly colored garb. Sweet-potato pie and hibiscus tea. Exhibit panels, books, art....

San Francisco members made history with their first meeting commemorating black history month — A Celebration of Culture and Heritage — held in the San Francisco Ikeda Auditorium. Some 200 members and guests were treated to a fascinating program of education, art, literature, music, dance and food, based on the rich humanity of African and African-American traditions.

Event organizer Akiko Lewis shared SGI President Ikeda's vision of Africa in the coming 21st century, the Century of Life, "where all living beings on this planet can live together in peace and harmony. The time has come when the entire world will learn from the energy, strength and wisdom of Africa, which never lost the happy pulse of life in spite of all that was taken from it by others."

In her keynote address, Kola Akintola, executive director of the Center for African and African-American Art and Culture, said that "if children and youth are to survive the future, then education of the mind becomes of prime importance. Children must embrace the human library and wisdom of elders in society, and understand the tools of technological infrastructure as provided by computers and information systems to survive the future.

"I believe this is the key to understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and the removal of mutual negative cultural or economic arrogance."

Dapo Agoro, a stage director in Berkeley, said that he feels "proud to be involved because people of African-American heritage have been able to come together with the full support of the members, and everyone equally was impacted by feelings of hope, pride and determination."

As 12-year-old Thierry Eyoum-Deido of San Francisco expressed in his essay on "What It Means To Be an African American": "I hope someday we can bring all the races together in America as friends."

With determination like that, we cannot miss.

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