

**QUEST FOR PEACE
WHAT'S IN THE KIT?
BY YVETTE EDMOND AND DARIN NELLIS, SGI-USA YPC LEADERS**

Violence! It's everywhere we look — in our schools, homes, neighborhoods, places of work, throughout our country and abroad. Not only is there the physical violence that we see every day, but there is also passive violence, such as disrespect of another person's life. It has become impossible to escape.

To address this alarming escalation of violence and decreasing respect for life, the SGI-USA Youth Peace Committee has created a video and information kit, titled "Quest For Peace: Working Together Toward A Nonviolent World."

Initially conceived of in New York by YPC volunteers, the final information kit and video are a result of the efforts of more than 35 youth in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles who spent hundreds of hours researching and compiling the kit and writing multiple storyboard drafts, interviewing youth, locating footage, filming, creating music and editing the video. Many adult division members also helped in compiling the kit and finding footage for the video.

How To Use This Video and Information Kit

The purpose of this information kit is to create greater awareness and spark dialogue on the topic of violence. The video contains provocative images and topical monologues that illustrate violence in our world today.

The information kit contains statistics, experiences, activities, resources and articles. We suggest that the video be shown and then a discussion on violence be facilitated using the information in the kit.

For example, a person wanting to facilitate a discussion on youth violence could first, prior to the discussion, go through the kit and pick out statistics, experiences, resources and articles on youth violence. He or she could then host a meeting on the topic of youth violence by showing the video, sharing the statistics and experiences, and facilitating the group through an activity.

The video and the information kit are designed to provide each individual with enough material to host small or large group discussion meetings on the topic of violence. We hope that SGI-USA members will use this as an opportunity to create community meetings and participate in neighborhood and school anti-violence assemblies.

The information kit, however, is still a work in progress. We hope those using it will feel free to add to each section new articles, experiences, statistics and activities as they are found. We have also included a section called local resources and ask that members add the names, addresses and phone numbers of local organizations that aid survivors of violence or act positively in the struggle for peace.

In keeping with our 1999 SGI-USA theme of Victory in the Community and the upcoming International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2001–2010), as declared by the UN General Assembly, please use this video and information kit to act locally while contributing to the cause for peace on a global scale.

The "Quest for Peace" video was created as a vehicle for stimulating dialogue on the topic of violence and how we can create a peaceful world through the power of one person's conviction and determination to change the world.

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The following information has been provided to give you a glimpse of what you will see in the video:

Violence:

- In America each day, 33 women are raped by someone holding a gun,
- 570 robberies are committed by criminals using a handgun,
- 1,000 assaults result from the use of a handgun.
- And every year in America, guns kill 40,000 people and maim another 100,000.

But are we becoming desensitized to it? Is all the physical violence really such a big deal to any of us anymore? During the introduction of the “Quest for Peace” video, various youth recite the following portion of SGI President Ikeda’s “Sun of *Jiyu* Over a New Land” poem:

Holding high the standard of humanity, we advance —
from divisiveness to union,
from conflict to coexistence,
from hatred to fraternity.

But how do we bridge these gaps? How can we heal? As President Ikeda also expressed in another excerpt from the same poem:

As each group seeks its separate roots and origins...
Continue your uncompromising quest for your truer roots...
Beyond all borders, beyond all differences of gender and race...
If one reaches back to these fundamental roots, all become friends and comrades.

Our hope is that this quote, which is shown at the end of the video, can become a touchstone for meaningful dialogue about how to move beyond the violence of the 20th century toward the 21st century – “the century of life.”

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Nonviolence, taught that passive violence fuels the fire of physical violence. Passive violence includes those simple and inconspicuous things that we do to one another to disrespect each others’ lives — like criticism. “Quest for Peace” asks the viewer, “In what ways are each one of us violent?” And, “If I am violent, then what can I do to make a difference?”

But even if I can change my behavior, what power does that have in changing others? Many youth have stood up in the past with indomitable conviction and commitment, and successfully changed the world. An example is Iqbal Masih, the 12-year-old from Pakistan who was sold at the age of four for \$12 into bonded labor and chained to a loom in a filthy carpet factory for six years. Iqbal stood up for justice and, after freeing himself, fought for the freedom of 3,000 other children in bonded labor, awaking the world to the plight child slavery.

As President Ikeda has said, “A great revolution in just a single individual can positively change society and even change the world.” Iqbal is a great example of how a single person without any special authority or prestige can transform his or her existence and be the catalyst for the whole world to change.

This is the story of “Quest for Peace.”

The YPC hopes that SGI-USA members will utilize this video, the information kit and the pledge to build bonds of friendship and trust with their friends in society and to touch people's lives with the power of the SGI's spirit to reach out to those that are suffering the most.

Let's have a resounding Victory Over Violence!

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In Each Information Kit:

- Four lessons in passive violence that Arun Gandhi learned from his grandfather
- How a man assigned to blow up tanks in the Gulf War didn't take even one life
- How many countries the United States has bombed since World War II
- How many violent crimes occur in an hour
- How to facilitate a tolerance exercise
- What SGI President Ikeda thinks about school violence

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