

MARCH 16 COMMEMORATED SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA YOUTH HOLD FESTIVAL

On March 13, at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., the Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) youth commemorated the promise made to the second Soka Gakkai president, Josei Toda, by President Ikeda and some 6,000 Soka Gakkai youth on March 16, 1958, to take responsibility for accomplishing kosen-rufu. The SEVA youth put together a festival that brought out each person's talent and passion for peace. It was the first big event they organized.

The last two months of preparation truly brought about great unity and harmony among everyone. The first planning phase and practice started out with about three to four people. "I remember seeing the questionable look in those members' eyes. At that moment I knew I had to stand up and work harder for their sake. I promised those youth that day, that no matter what, the show must go on; and even if it only consisted of one performance, it would be a great success based on our passion and determination," said Lillian Lopez, SEVA area young women's leader.

There were 18 performances consisting of more than 24 members and several guest performers. The day was filled with the dynamic energy of youth and joy radiated from each participant's heart. From today onward we, the SEVA youth, made a fresh determination to fight for kosen-rufu, keeping our mentor's words deeply engraved in our hearts.

— *LILLIAN M. LOPEZ*