

SOUTH CAROLINA MEMBERS CELEBRATE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF COMMUNITY CENTER

On April 11, with the theme “Revitalizing the Community Through Peace, Culture and Education,” South Carolina Area members celebrated the 10th anniversary of their community center in joy and appreciation.

The community center was gorgeously decorated; people volunteered to make food; the history of kosen-rufu in the area since the 1960s was compiled in a video album; each of the five chapters created unique displays of their chapters; and many areas and groups prepared a variety of performances. Many of the youth division diligently made final preparations over their spring breaks, allowing them to develop a warm camaraderie as well as take initiative in planning.

Preparations came together on the 11th in the form of a commemorative meeting followed by a mini-culture festival. Guest speaker Dr. Carl Evans, director of religious studies at the University of South Carolina, spoke about how he was impressed by the diversity of SGI members. He expressed his hopes that the warmth and embrace he felt from the members would spread into the community. The meeting closed with words by SGI-USA Vice General Director Richard Yoshimachi, instrumental in 1989 as South Carolina Territory leader in establishing the community center. Afterward, in the transformed parking lot of the community center, everyone enjoyed food and entertainment, including belly dancers, hula dancing, Brazilian martial arts (*capoeira*), original music and songs, Japanese dance and an African musical instrument performance.

— *RIKA HASHIMOTO*