

DENVER CULTURE DEPARTMENT HOLDS 'NONVIOLENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY' SEMINAR

“Nonviolence in the 21st Century — Challenges and Choices,” sponsored by the Denver Culture Department, was inspired by an article of the same title by Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. The event was initiated as both a commemoration of SGI President Daisaku Ikeda’s visit to Denver in June 1996 and as a response to the violence perpetrated at Columbine High School on April 20.

Much of the evening’s discussion focused on the principles set forth in Arun Gandhi’s insightful article. The article explains that passive violence generates physical violence, and that unless we change individually, no one is going to change collectively. Dr. Gandhi encourages each of us to meet the challenge of non-violence, “being the change we want to see,” by moving away from the negative attributes that govern our lives and standing up for truth and justice, no matter what the cost.

Kush Mirchandani, a recent high-school graduate, related an experience about how he had convinced his school to use Arun Gandhi’s article as the basis of a forum for student discussion on violence in the coming year. A brief discussion of the tenets of the Earth Charter (currently being circulated worldwide for public discussion and input) and a discussion of the importance of teaching non-violence in schools were also included.

Dr. Sudarshan Kapur, head of the Gandhi-Hamer-King Center in Denver, attended the meeting, conveying his pleasure and satisfaction with the attitudes and opinions he heard expressed. He emphasized the importance of using the world’s resources wisely, making the point that the misuse of our environment is also a form of violence.

— *PAM NELSON*