

## **'YOU CAN MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE' CHICAGO YOUTH VOICE THEIR VIEWS**

**Marcus Dunleavy, Guitar Player:** Marcus, a music student, has practiced Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism for about two years. This is his first culture festival. Prior to the show, he said: "Participating in this culture festival is the perfect opportunity for me to introduce my friends and family to this practice, which makes me chant more for the success of the performance so that it really touches them. I want them to leave with such a positive feeling about this organization that it makes them not only supportive but also seeking.

"Performing with the SGI in this culture festival is a lot less self-centered than performing strictly as a professional. Being a musician, supposedly you play for people, but many times you're so isolated and not connected with people because you're working on the performance. When you contribute to kosen-rufu, you're not just in it for yourself. It's about everybody's happiness and everybody's growth.

"With a performance like this, there's a lot more drama, and it's the drama that polishes your life because you have to find a way to get through it without being negative. It brings everybody's karma to the surface as they struggle for unity.

"That's where the humanistic part of the performance comes out. This culture festival is a vehicle to polish myself, challenge myself in other areas of my life far outside the realm of the performance and manifest my dreams."

**WT**

**Dawn Jones, African Drummer:** Dawn is taking the opportunity to connect with other people through participating in the culture festival.

"I was very determined when I found out about this culture festival to be a part of it," she commented. "I wanted to connect with the youth and start to get connected with the organization as a whole.

"I want to gain courage. I have been asked to take on more responsibility within my district. I want to have the sincerity and determination to be successful.

"I also want unity; through our drumming, we can reach out harmoniously to the members and introduce others to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. I want to share what I feel and my passion for this Buddhism through my drumming.

"I have an obstacle in my life I'm trying to overcome, and my participation in this culture festival takes me to the Gohonzon. I'm having a ball, and I'm connecting a lot more with other members, too."

**WT**