

BLUE SKIES AT DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE DAY

San Diego's Blue Sky Women's Chorus continued a year of reaching out to the community with a performance at the Disability Independence Day celebration held on July 24, in Balboa Park. Disability Independence Day is a festival organized by community members to celebrate the 9th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). "The ADA was enacted to ensure that people with disabilities would have an equal opportunity to pursue the American Dream," said Royce Hamick, one of the event's planning committee members. The celebration was a day of workshops, entertainment, food and cultural exchange. The Blue Sky Chorus participated in the festivities with a lively performance before an audience of about 300 people. Afterward, chorus members had a chance to meet and interact with people from the audience. The response was incredible," said chorus director Glenda Turner. "People were very interested in knowing more about us."

By performing at a variety of events for many different sectors of the community, the Blue Sky Chorus is bringing awareness of the SGI to all members of the community. Since January, this determination has taken the chorus to a variety of places, including the Seven Oaks Retirement Community, the U.S. Navy's Cultural Diversity Celebration, a Philippine Culture Celebration and the Children's Rights and Responsibilities exhibit. After every performance, chorus members take the time to meet with audience members and explain what the SGI is about. As the Blue Sky Chorus mission statement explains, chorus members seek "to be women of unquenchable seeking spirit who strive to preserve the integrity of life by propagating the Lotus Sutra with our voices through music which encourages and comforts the hearts of people."

— *LEON FERNANDO*