

**LEARNING TO NEVER GIVE UP!**  
**JESSE MAKOWSKI**  
**DAYTON, OHIO**

**‘I’m glad that I didn’t run away from those challenges.’**

**My name is Jesse Makowski. I’m 12 years old and in the sixth grade.**

The year 2001 began with me introducing the Victory Over Violence video, *Quest for Peace* to my social studies teacher and school principal. All the students in the sixth grade at my school watched the video and had discussions afterward.

In March and April, I had major challenges in my life. Since I’m in middle school now, I participate in SGI-USA youth activities like music corps. As part of my school activities, I belong to the choir and student council and I practice Kendo (Japanese fencing) at a local dojo. I was asked to be the emcee for our March 16 commemorative district meeting. It was my first time being emcee, but I thought I did well. A few days before my school camping trip in April, I had a high fever and ear infection. On the night I came back from the camp, I stayed overnight at my friend’s home so that we could leave at 4:30 the next morning for Cleveland for a Kendo tournament. The result of the tournament was a disaster. Toward the end, I was feeling better because I realized that I challenged myself to fight with much bigger teenagers and I did not run away.

By the time we came home from Cleveland, it was already past two in the morning. That same day, I took the SGI-USA entrance exam. I tried to study between homework and Kendo matches. It was not easy to concentrate and go through all the questions for the exam, but I took it anyway. My mother told me that passing the test is great, but accepting the challenge is the most important thing. I’m glad that I didn’t run away from those challenges. A few days later, I was told that I passed the exam.

I met SGI President Ikeda in Germany when I was a baby. I like his books and I like to study his guidance so that I will understand his heart. I’m chanting to welcome him to the United States soon, hopefully to Ohio.