

**SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS  
LAS VEGAS YOUTH CELEBRATE VOV  
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Under the warm, sunny skies of Las Vegas, SGI-USA youth hosted Victory Over Violence—A Celebration of Peace, a daylong community event on May 5 at the Rainbow Library and Amphitheater. More than 1,200 people attended the event, the first of many SGI-USA Family Youth Festivals to be held throughout the country this year. The governor of Nevada, Kenny Guinn, sent a congratulatory proclamation and Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman proclaimed May 5 as Victory Over Violence Day.

This celebration was a gift from SGI-USA members to the Las Vegas community. It was based on the belief that it is youth who will foster a new hope for an end to violence.

There were months of preparation, discussion and planning every Sunday after youth activities. Several key committees were formed, each having a young woman and young man in charge and supported by women's and men's division partners. Subcommittees from all divisions gathered and the final preparations began to take form.

The celebration had several events for members and guests to enjoy. There were a dozen exhibits, a youth forum, a community panel seminar, exciting musical performances and a special area of continuous games and stories for the Boys & Girls Group and their guests. The games and stories all had significant lessons, teaching the children that violence was not the way to solve disputes.

The exhibits were individually based on defined areas of violence, passive as well as aggressive. Some of the booths were created by SGI-USA members and others from the community.

The SGI-USA's Victory Over Violence exhibit was displayed and attendees were asked to sign the VOV pledge. Another booth displayed the perspective of violence against women from all corners of the world, and the passive violence of prejudice was dramatically displayed through current newspaper articles, films and books.

The Golden Stage Group determined never to have war again and shared their war experiences through an exhibit. Children and adults enjoyed the environmental exhibit that made a plea to all to save the Earth, and that to cause its destruction was one of the greatest acts of violence.

Several community agencies participated. They included: Neighborhood Justice, an agency dedicated to counseling at-risk youth; the Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish anti-hate educational group; Safe Nest, a service that provides a variety of domestic violence solutions for victims and their families; and Teens, Crime and the Community, a county-wide school program dedicated to public awareness. Although the subject matter was serious, all the booths were bright and cheerful. Each one offered hope through information, education and assistance for anyone needing help.

The high point of the day was the afternoon seminars. The Youth Forum was attended by approximately 100 young people. Divided into 12 groups, each table had a youth facilitator. They discussed causes and possible solutions to domestic, neighborhood, economic and cultural violence, as well as political perspectives and the role of the media. The result of these discussions will be collected and then published.

Immediately following the Youth Forum, a community panel of speakers was conducted. It consisted of John Overhall, local newscaster; Ramon Savoy, editor of the Sentinel Voice,

a minority-directed weekly publication; Cynthia Luria, director of the Anti-Defamation League; and Suzette Norland, of the Community Counseling Center. The room was filled to capacity with many people standing. Each panelist spoke on their area of knowledge and influence. A spirited Q-and-A session followed.

At the end of the seminars, the drums rolled, the trumpets blared and the Celebration of Peace performance began, starting with a musical number from the Las Vegas Boys & Girls Group. The performance showcased SGI-USA groups and several groups from the community. Acts included dancers, singing groups, dramatic readings and precision drill dancers.

While the event itself came to an end, the cause made that day will reverberate in Las Vegas for a very long time to come.