

VOV HEATING UP IN ALASKA
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In comemoration of May 3, Soka Gakkai Day, SGI-USA members in Alaska resolved to create a new wave of activities centered on the Victory Over Violence project, a community outreach program designed to help each person see the roots of violence in their own life and community.

Each district in SGI-USA's Alaska Area, led by the district or chapter youth leaders, determined to take the VOV message to two schools in their neighborhoods. As a result of their efforts, more than 1,000 signatures for the VOV Peace Pledge have been collected, with still more school presentations to come. At one school, the principal enthusiastically read the pledge over the school intercom and encouraged each student to sign it.

The youth produced a video about VOV and distributed it to the major television stations in Anchorage, which aired throughout the month of May as a public service announcement. Alaska Governor Tony Knowles issued an Executive Proclamation naming May 2001 Victory Over Violence Month in Alaska. Area youth leaders Grace Christianson and Todd McGovern also met with Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch on May 25, who commended the youth for their efforts to end violence in the city.

In addition, members have also visited two youth detention centers, receiving such a positive response that they have been asked to visit several more.

"In Alaska, we are so geographically removed from the rest of SGI-USA," said Grace Christianson, area young women's leader. "We really wanted to create a way for our members to connect with the rest of the SGI and with SGI President Ikeda's vision for peace. We challenged each district to go into their community and really establish relationships.

"We are determined to continue displaying our pride as SGI members in Alaska, creating many friendships and expanding our network of humanity based on President Ikeda's example."