

**SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS
TUCSON MEMBERS BREAK NEW GROUND IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH
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Oct. 5 and 6 was a renaissance of vibrant activity and passion exerted by the SGI-USA members of Tucson. Just months after having successfully held a youth summit at the University of Arizona, Tucson members propelled themselves to even higher levels of challenge and excellence. Months of dynamic planning were spent to formulate and plan for a two-day festival of dialogue, cultural performances, presentations, discussions and activities. The festival became a joint effort with the city of Tucson's annual Harambe Festival (meaning "coming together"), and served as the kick-off event of Tucson's "A Week Against Violence" community activities. This was a ground-breaking event, as SGI-USA members in Tucson had never conducted a community outreach festival on a large scale before.

The Oct. 5 Victory Over Violence seminar was an exhilarating evening of dialogue and learning. It began with a community potluck, where the ambiance was relaxed yet joyous and energetic. The events of the evening began with a Victory Over Violence video. Next, all people in attendance were split into facilitated discussion groups. As strangers and friends of all ages, nationalities, races and sexual orientations shared their lives openly and dynamically, the actualization of the vision of building a peaceful society based on education and culture was evident.

Two wonderful exhibitions were displayed throughout the evening. One was the Gandhi, King, Ikeda exhibition. The other was a touching and beautiful display of student artwork depicting young people's perceptions of violence and peace in the world.

Oct. 6 was a day that began in obstacles and ended in triumph. Less than an hour before the outdoor festival of cultural performances and activities was to begin, the members were told to pack up everything and go inside due to a storm watch. Instead of getting downhearted, members energetically packed up the booths and set up many activities indoors. Once again, great passion was shown as performances began, by groups from both the community and the SGI-USA. In addition to folk singing and folklorico dancing by the community groups, a chorus of SGI-USA members sang. A women's division member performed a traditional Japanese fan dance, women's division members then rocked to Ricky Martin, the visiting Phoenix jazz band played and the youth dance division rocked the house. Later on the festival was moved once again outside and kicked off the Harambe Festival.

The weekend of events was a magnificent step for the SGI-USA members of Tucson to build integral relations with their community and to expand their lives in heartfelt efforts for kosen-rufu.