

Festival Brings Friends Together
By JOANNE BUNCH
Philadelphia, Aug. 24

More than 800 members and guests of Philadelphia Joint Territory came together today for the Family and Friendship Festival at Mermaid Lake, Pa., celebrating the 50th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's joining the SGI. Just as the event's name suggested, members, friends and families used the occasion to create and deepen bonds of friendship and have a wonderful time together.

Between the entertainment, sports activities and food, there was more than enough to keep people plenty busy and plenty full. Almost everyone appeared to find some time to relax and enjoy some casual conversation as well.

Those attending shared the diversity of their cultures and customs through song and dance. Observing this, one guest commented that she "truly enjoyed seeing this many people come together — everyone from different ethnic groups and of different ages — and have a good time just as people." She added, "You can include me every year."

Activities included aikido demonstrations, team sports, dancing, karaoke and miniature golf. One member, a professional masseuse, even gave massages to anyone who wanted one.

Summing up the feeling he gained, Brian Mount, who helped direct people to activities, said he was reminded of his experience at the Florida Nature and Culture Center. Likewise, the Mermaid Lake workers who served the food and helped to coordinate activities said that they had never seen a group of people so spirited and enjoying themselves so thoroughly.

Indeed, almost everyone seemed to find the festival meaningful, encouraging and enjoyable — which was only appropriate on an occasion commemorating President Ikeda's 50th anniversary of practicing.

WT