

## COMMUNITY-WIDE CULTURAL FRIENDSHIP FAIRE IS HELD IN ORANGE COUNTY

For thousands of years, differences have kept people apart, but today ethnic and religious differences were celebrated at the third annual SGI-USA Cultural Friendship Faire, held at the University of California, Irvine's Aldrich Park.

"We expect more than a thousand guests today," said Frank Williamson, Orange County Region leader, at the early morning pre-festival gongyo service.

The region sponsors the event each year to allow the community to come together through music, art, education, dialogue and other cultural activities. Performers and artists from diverse ethnic communities around Orange County are invited to participate.

This year, there were 20 performance groups, ranging from Afro-Brazilian martial arts and Middle Eastern dance to Hip-Hop, jazz and ballet. Many of the performers wore bright, colorful traditional folk costumes that sparkled in the sun and dazzled the audience. The atmosphere was one of warmth, pride and celebration.

In addition to the performances, Todd Spitzer, Orange County supervisor, presented the SGI-USA with a proclamation, and local artists, including Kalim Quevedo, a Honduran sculptor, and Joyce Tanaka-Shields, a Chinese brush artist, were invited to display their work.

SGI-USA provided arts, crafts and games for the children, as well as food booths featuring international cuisine. Twenty-five hundred people were estimated to have attended the event.

— KATE LLEWELLYN