

**SGI-USA COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
SGI-USA'S KILLEEN CHAPTER, TEXAS, MARCHES
IN MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY PARADE
BY KUMI AND MARTIN BONNER**

With only two days notice, the SGI-USA members of the Killeen Chapter, Texas had to move fast. They had just been given the opportunity to participate in the city's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade on January 17.

First thing they did was to set a goal of fifty participants. Then began the planning, running around for banners, flags, a truck etc. — and plenty of chanting for success.

The day of the parade, the residents of Killeen, many of whom did not know of the organization, watched curiously as this ethnically diverse group of fifty fellow citizens representing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism marched down Ave. D and College Street. The Boys and Girls Group and Youth Division held banners that announced, "Living the Dream," "Victory Over Violence" and "SGI-USA — Buddhist Organization for Peace, Culture and Education." The rest of the chapter marched with USA and SGI flags held high in the air. Everyone had beautiful bright smiles as they cheered: "SGI-USA — We are here for MLK!"

Along the parade route, people took pictures and later approached the participants asking, "What is SGI-USA?" This initiated many animated conversations and the handing out of many brochures. The Buddhist group was even on the local CBS news on station KWTX.

Their overall feeling was "Killeen Chapter is very happy to bring SGI President Ikeda's dream to the forefront of our community!" In his New Year's Day Poem President Ikeda wrote:

*Even the macroscopic ideal of peace
Is actualized only when it connects with the life of each individual.
Peace is not found in some distant place;
It lies close at hand, in the vibrant sense of fulfillment felt
By each person taking earnest action
For the welfare of their community, society and
fellow citizens.*

(January 2000, *Living Buddhism*, p. 4)