

**WEST HOLLYWOOD GATHERING CELEBRATES
THE POWER OF WOMEN
BY JOANNA DELSON
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So many friendships were formed through the endeavors that made West Hollywood Chapter's annual women's meeting the joyous occasion that it was — from communicating to making bookmarks, taking photos to bringing food and buying a cake for Alice.

In fact, it was Alice's 75th birthday, and Alice Ross' dance was the highlight of the Feb. 26 gathering to celebrate the 10th anniversary of SGI-USA Women's Day (Feb. 27) at the Los Angeles Friendship Center. The theme: to celebrate the power of one woman to make a difference. Alice, who had wanted to dance in the movies since she was a child, fulfilled her dream at the age of 68 by dancing in the film, *The Mambo Kings*. Her performance at the Meeting brought members of the audience to their feet with clapping, singing and tears in some people's eyes. After the meeting, the chapter presented Alice with a birthday cake.

"I want to have the kind of strength that Alice showed in her dance — womanly strength, unadorned strength with no sense of affectation or self-consciousness," said SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck, to the beaming crowd. Mrs. Buck told stories of the women she has met in her travels with her new leadership responsibility and how, through their faith in the Gohonzon, they transformed their lives. She quoted SGI President Ikeda, who said in his message to the commemorative gathering being held nationwide throughout February and into March, "Nichiren Daishonin states in 'The One Essential Phrase' that one lantern can light up a place that has been dark for a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years." Prayer, explained Mrs. Buck, illuminates our lives.

Approximately 120 women including 27 guests enjoyed Michel Colón's talk about Sacajawea, the Native American woman who faced many obstacles, but was able to change Lewis' and Clark's opinion of her and receive honors from them that no white woman ever had received. Barbara Bragg gave a spirited presentation about Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a woman suffrage pioneer who worked her entire life to help women attain rights. These powerful women made everyday efforts, both small and large, that transformed their lives and history.

West Hollywood Chapter's own women showed their power to make a difference and the power of their faith in the Gohonzon by sharing experiences: Sylvia Danziger changed her relationship with her son, and Carolynne Mote learned to understand her own worth.

After the meeting, everyone enjoyed refreshments and received bookmarks inscribed with quotations from President Ikeda's "clear mirror" guidance.