

**NEW ORLEANS CELEBRATES 'VOICES OF THE AGES'**  
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The New Orleans Area hosted its first Culture Festival on July 30 at the Louisiana State University Union Theater in Baton Rouge, La. With short notice, members put together a spectacular event. The youth devoted every weekend for two months to rehearsals.

Brian Nakamura, area junior/ high school coordinator, said: "I thought it brought everyone closer and raised their spirits. I think we have a bright future with all these active youth here."

The show opened with a touching slide presentation, "Voices of the Ages," honoring the pioneer members who had dedicated their lives to SGI-USA in the South. A powerful taiko drum performance followed.

Three young ladies danced a graceful classical Japanese dance, celebrating the blossoming of the cherry tree in the aftermath of war, followed by an energized hip-hop dance number.

An emotionally stirring moment came when the youth performed a Victory Over Violence skit that they had written themselves based on an average day at school. It was both disturbing and moving, displaying the reality our youth face on a daily basis. They also reminded us that one person can make a difference.

The audience cheered enthusiastically as the North Louisiana District members joyfully performed a Caribbean-style song "Voices Through the Ages: Power of One."

The World Peace Movement Band, comprising professional singers and musicians of New Orleans, gave a truly incredible performance. Other performances included poetry readings, chorus, gymnastics, Brazilian dancers, a flamenco dancer and clowns. All performers joined in the finale, singing a traditional Louisiana song "Iko Iko."

Donna Fabian, Atlanta Region youth leader, said: "Wow! I'm speechless. That doesn't happen often!"