

ROCK AGAINST RACISM IN PITTSBURGH
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On a beautiful sunny August afternoon, the high- spirited SGI-USA members of Pittsburgh Area cosponsored and participated in “Rock Against Racism: A Festival for Racial Reconciliation.”

The program, presented by Neighborhood Collaboratives Against Racism, was held at Schenley Park in the Oakland area of the city. The purpose of the event was to bring together organizations and individuals from throughout the Pittsburgh area to educate each other, exchange ideas and discuss issues of racial reconciliation and diversity. The community’s concern and efforts brought together diverse groups for a day of cultural exchange through dance, poetry and music.

Approximately 50 members of Pittsburgh Area attended the festival throughout the day, including youth members from the outlying areas of West Virginia, State College, Pa., and Dayton, Ohio. SGI-USA participants set up and staffed a table, where they discussed Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism, distributed literature and introduced the SGI-USA to the Pittsburgh community. A second table was set up by the young women, who provided face painting.

SGI-USA members thoroughly enjoyed the event and the opportunity to create new friendships in the Pittsburgh community. “The young men had highly spirited discussions about religion and racism,” commented Remi Muñoz, “and we deepened our friendships as young men of varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds by having a common purpose of improving ourselves and our community. We learned about other groups dedicated to working for justice and peace and fighting discrimination, and shared with them the philosophy of Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism and described our Victory Over Violence project.”

Richard Williams, a men’s division member, remarked that “it was a beautiful day — warm — just as the spirits of the people around us, whose purpose and main objective of being there was to fight racism. At the SGI-USA table, we answered questions in an honest and true-hearted manner. I enjoyed sharing my feelings about the practice and talking with people in an open and casual atmosphere.”

Thirty-seven organizations, including community groups, churches, professional associations and the SGI-USA in Pittsburgh cosponsored the event. Everyone who attended enjoyed an energizing day filled with music, discussion and the exchange of ideas to take action against social injustice.