

**REDWOOD COAST MEMBERS SPREAD FRIENDSHIP
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On Oct. 8, members of SGI-USA's Redwood Coast Region celebrated SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's first visit to the United States when he embarked on his mission to spread Nichiren Daishonin's 40 years ago. Three hundred members, friends and families gathered for a picnic and entertainment provided by local talent under the autumn sky, brilliant sun and countless prayers for a successful activity. Also in attendance was SGI-USA Women's Leader Matilda Buck.

The weather was pleasant and the eggs from the egg toss did not break when the children missed. The theme for the celebration helped everyone grasp the significance of the meeting: "Spreading the spirit of true friendship in society." A true friend wants the best for you and to see you happy.

Melissa Sylver, a recent graduate from the University of California at Santa Barbara shared her experience in forming a core of practicing students at school. Her first approach was devoted only to her vision of the group. As such, despite a handful of members who remained "faithful," her meetings were sparsely attended. Melissa realized her focus needed to be for each member's happiness. When she began chanting for her members, she connected deeply with their lives.

The attendance grew beyond Melissa's imagination. The group continues to meet in her absence, and Melissa stays in contact with her friends.