

**SANTA BARBARA SUPPORTS NUCLEAR ABOLITION
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SGI-USA's Santa Barbara Chapter recently joined 32 other community organizations in supporting a month-long public awareness campaign for the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and its goal of abolishing nuclear weapons in this century.

The focus of the chapter's support was a two-hour-long meeting and reception at the local SGI-USA community center that featured a brief speech by the Peace Foundation's president, Dr. David Krieger, and a testimonial by Ms. Miyoko Matsubara, survivor of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima.

Dr. Krieger, who has met with SGI President Ikeda and is expected to co-author a dialogue with him in the near future, thanked the organization for the 13 million signatures the Soka Gakkai gathered in Japan in support of the anti-nuclear weapons cause. These signatures were subsequently presented to the United Nations.

"I have a dream that in this country we match or exceed the 13 million signatures from Japan," Krieger said. "But I can't do it alone. SGI-USA could play a major role in turning this country around. Our population is double that of Japan, so we ought to be able to gather 26 million signatures. The only way your voice for peace will be heard is through your actions."

Ms. Matsubara, 67, put a face on nuclear weapons. She was 12 years old and was standing less than one mile from the epicenter of the blast when it occurred at approximately 8:00 a.m., Monday, Aug. 6, 1945. Details of her story were previously published in the Nov. 28, 1997, *World Tribune*, but she reminded her audience that effects of her exposure were not momentary but long-lasting.

"No one wanted to sit next to me because they were afraid of radiation sickness," she said. And no one would marry her for fear her children would be deformed, she added. So she decided to dedicate herself to telling her nuclear story in hopes that it would never be repeated by someone else, in another time and place.

It took many years for her to overcome her animosity toward America for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, she said, but eventually she came to understand Japan's role in the war and its awful effects. She subsequently toured the United States offering her testimonial in an effort to reduce the threat of nuclear holocaust.

"And I was greatly impressed by the words of Daisaku Ikeda," Ms. Matsubara, a devout Christian, said. "That the world can be changed by the change in the destiny of just a single man."

The SGI-USA event was one of 15 held in Santa Barbara throughout the month of September, centered on an elaborate exhibition at Westmont College titled "A Message of Peace—Hiroshima/Nagasaki International Exhibition." It featured photos and artifacts from the atomic bombings "to preserve the memory of the tragic consequences of the atomic bombings of these cities in the hope of strengthening the resolve to abolish these weapons."

Dr. Krieger cited the SGI's long history of opposition to nuclear weapons as his reason for urging SGI's support. "I believe anybody who stands up against the war machine deserves our absolute respect," he said in reference to Tsune-saburo Makiguchi, first president of the Soka Gakkai who was imprisoned by Japanese military authorities during World War II for his opposition to the imposition of Shinto as a state religion.

“And Toda called nuclear weapons ‘an absolute evil,’” Krieger said, referring to Josei Toda, who resuscitated the Soka Gakkai following the war and was principally responsible for its early growth.

SGI’s Victory Over Violence video and group discussions of the origin and meaning of violence among people rounded out the session.