

**NEW ENGLAND YOUTH EMPHASIZE NONVIOLENCE
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Just before the youth of New England Region began their Victory Over Violence dramatic and musical performance at the New England Culture Center in Waltham, Mass., the Honorable David Gately, mayor of Waltham, came on stage. To the surprise and delight of the capacity audience, Mayor Gately read a proclamation on behalf of the City Council naming the day, Nov. 4, "Victory Over Violence Day."

The stage of the culture center has an illustrious history. Professional players have presented many outstanding dramas and comedies there. It is unlikely, however, that any previous performance has so touched an audience and received such a tumultuous reception.

The settings included a classroom, a street scene, a diner and a battlefield. The youth took an unflinching look at the violence spawned in the 20th century. In graphic skits they pointed out the demeaning of humankind when war, gang violence and racial discrimination run rampant.

Through three months of chanting sessions and rehearsals, the players came to "own" their roles and played them superbly. The audience was able to identify with a soldier's initial desire to fight and subdue communists and how what he saw and endured on the battlefield sickened him. Later, the audience saw how veterans returned to Vietnam and Cambodia to build respectful relationships.

In a neighborhood terrified by gang violence, a small group of women initiated a dialogue with gang members and eventually worked together with them to build up the neighborhood.

In a diner, the oppressive atmosphere of racial discrimination gave way eventually to harmony, although it was clear that a lot of work remained before attitudes could turn around completely.

The dramatic presentation was followed by a musical presentation, not any less intense, and just as optimistic and hopeful. The day's performances were also in celebration of the 40th anniversary of SGI President Ikeda's first trip to the United States.