

NEW SGI-USA CENTERS OPEN

SGI Family Celebrates in Kauai

On Nov. 22, 2000, along with SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima, members on the island of Kauai opened the first-ever SGI-USA activity center.

The atmosphere of the opening was full of joy and appreciation. Three generations of SGI-USA members celebrated the culmination of decades of efforts to establish the organization on this paradise island.

“Even though currently there is only one small chapter on this island,” said Mr. Nagashima, “you are creating an organization based on the origin of the Soka Gakkai. Everyone here cares and works together.”

During the celebration, there was an instrumental performance by a woman and two young men who played music from different movies such as *Titanic*. Several pioneer members also performed a traditional Japanese dance.

The event was filled with the *Ohana nui* (big family) spirit.

30 Years of Effort Realized in Austin

On Dec. 6, 2000, the SGI-USA Austin Activity Center was officially opened. The opening featured two ceremonies, both with packed houses.

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima explained that the new activity centers now opening are intended for the use of local organizations that are not yet able to support a full community center but whose members are still sincerely working to advance the SGI’s movement. In early 2000, the SGI-USA board of directors approved the opening of many such centers across the country.

The Austin members had been waiting to have a center to call their own for more than 30 years. The meetings were full of appreciation for the pioneers of the Austin organization and members’ determinations to continue their efforts for kosen-rufu.

Houston Opens Relocated Center

On Dec. 8 and 9, 2000, two meetings were held to commemorate the long awaited opening of the relocated SGI-USA Houston Community Center.

At the Dec. 8 meeting, the Houston Mayor’s Office bestowed honorary citizenships on SGI President and Mrs. Ikeda, and proclaimed Dec. 8 to be Soka Gakkai International-USA Day.

The commemorative meetings included performances by a pioneer chorus, a four-divisional chorus, the Boys and Girls Group and a group of women sharing a traditional Indian dance.

“Wow!” said SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima. “You are all so enthusiastic! I can really feel everyone’s determination to unite with one another even more to create a great, harmonious SGI family here in Houston.”

Orlando Marks Milestone With New Center

On Dec. 9, 2000, SGI-USA members throughout central and northern Florida gathered from as far away as Jacksonville, Tampa, Palm Coast, Daytona Beach, Cocoa Beach, south Florida and Sarasota to commemorate the official opening of the Orlando Community Center.

It was a joyous celebration after four years of struggle, patience and resolve that saw the members getting the best possible facility for their continued activities.

Interior designer Theresa Palmer described the ongoing effort to turn the former structure into the classic shape of a community center: “This year-long project has been a series of inner changes. I know I have to keep moving forward as all my efforts in SGI are reflected in my daily life.”

One of the first Orlando-area members, Masae Worcester, gushed about the new center: “It’s beautiful. I can’t believe it. I am so happy!”

Beverly Remland, area women’s leader, commented: “I feel this is truly a new beginning for Orlando, that there is a new sense of confidence about sharing Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism. Our local organization feels more established.”