

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BSG MEETS
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More than 250 Southern California Zone youth gathered for a Behind-the-Scenes Group (BSG) Kickoff at the Santa Monica Community Center, Jan. 21. BSG includes the Byakuren, Soka Group and Gajokai—youth activity groups that support SGI-USA activities.

In his message for the meeting, SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima wrote: “I feel that today is a great celebration of joy, celebrating all of you, the young men and young women, who through your behind-the-scenes efforts, have ensured the safety of our precious members and the success of every activity. Thank you so much!”

Following SGI-USA Youth Leader James Herrmann’s inspiring lecture on the mentor-and-disciple relationship, the audience enjoyed the latest video speech from SGI President Ikeda at the 51st Headquarters Leaders Meeting and remarkable experiences from two members about revolutionizing their lives through their BSG activities.

Each of the BSG groups presented a humorous skit about their activity group: “Charlie’s Byakuren Angels” defeated their own fundamental darkness with faith, practice and study; the Soka Group presented a picture of the “Soka Gakkai Galactic” on May 3, 3001; and the Gajokai offered a parody of *Star Wars*, with “Gajosky Walker” out-dueling the influence of “Darth Temple.”

One focus of the meeting was propagation, which has been emphasized by the national youth leaders this year. “We often ask how we can contribute to the Soka Spirit movement,” said SGI-USA Gajokai Leader Eric Freedman. “One of the best ways is to share Buddhism with our friends. When we open our hearts to others in this way, we increase the Buddha’s forces to combat evil. This is a natural extension of our BSG activities, which exist to protect the members.”

After the meeting, there were refreshments, lively discussions and entertainment from a Gajokai rock band.