

MONTEREY PARK COMMENDS YOUTH EFFORTS FOR VOV
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On April 18, the city of Monterey Park, Calif., presented a commendation to the youth of SGI-USA for their local efforts to promote the Victory Over Violence program and support the city's annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

City Council Member Judy Chu, impressed with the contribution of the youth of SGI-USA's Los Angeles No. 4 Region to the festival each year, recommended the commendation to the city council. "We applaud you for encouraging youth participation in identifying and counteracting the root cause of violence in their lives," the commendation reads.

In a message to the mayor and city council, SGI President Ikeda wrote: "Thank you very much for this generous gift. It is such a great honor for us. The most important people are today's youth, who will shoulder the future of humanity. Therefore, we are receiving this recognition as encouragement to continue our efforts to inspire and cultivate successive generations of capable youth dedicated to peace and nonviolence. In this way, all the SGI-USA members will dedicate ourselves to living up to the lofty ideals your recognition today represents. From the bottom of my heart, thank you very much!"

A group of SGI-USA youth received the commendation and donated 50 copies of President Ikeda's book *The Way of Youth* to the city. "In this book, Dr. Ikeda aims to help young people to have hope and confidence in their future," said Nobuko Kobayashi, SGI-USA's high school division leader and a youth leader for the area that includes Monterey Park. "The book donation is a symbol of our commitment to and extension of our friendship with the youth of the city of Monterey Park."