

**OUR DISTRICT  
EAST DISTRICT—KANSAS CITY, MO.  
DAIMOKU AND DETERMINATION ARE KEYS TO VICTORY  
BY CHERYL UTLEY, KANSAS CITY BUREAU CHIEF**

East District in the Kansas City Area was formed just after SGI President Ikeda's visit to the United States in 1990. It is a unique district, with members whose ethnic backgrounds include five different nationalities: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, American and Panamanian. Because communication is from the heart, language is not a barrier to understanding one another. Korean and Chinese members are encouraged to subscribe to the *World Tribune* in their own respective language, and women's division mini-study meetings are held in both Japanese and English.

East District members travel from short and long distances in Missouri—such as Belton, Independence, Kansas City, Raytown and Sedalia—to attend district meetings and daimoku sessions. A family-friendly atmosphere describes East District meetings. Yoko Starr, vice women's leader, said: "All members take responsibility in the district as a leader. Members want to call each other and help each other out. I believe that East District has a very bright future."

Over the past eight years, the district has grown tremendously. The basis of their success is the determination, "Daimoku first." Kimiko Smith, vice women's chapter leader, stated that "without daimoku, there is no unity or goals accomplished. East District leaders and members attend daimoku sessions that are held three times a week and plan meetings, make announcements and bring new members and guests. Since April 1999, we have chanted 81 million daimoku together."

When district goals are made, the members practice diligently together. They aim to be number one in propagation activities, contributions and publication subscriptions. For example, leaders and members have followed SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima's goal to bring two new members to the district. This year, East District has already accomplished its own goal of four new members. Increasing subscriptions to the *World Tribune* by one person each month is another goal set by the leaders. This year, the district has increased its own subscriptions by 11.

East District is not a perfect district—it has its obstacles and challenges. Because it is a large district, raising capable leaders is a constant challenge. And even though the district has an active Boys and Girls Group, the toughest age to reach seems to be youth from ages 15–20.

Despite these challenges, the members know they will be victorious because of daimoku and the determination to grow, to raise capable leaders and youth, and to move forward.