

**SUA STUDENTS TAKE ACTION AGAINST VIOLENCE
BY MARGARET KASAHARA
SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA**

In response to the tragic events that shocked our nation on Sept. 11, the students of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, organized a candlelight vigil just hours after the attacks occurred. The students created flyers and posted them in various gathering places in the surrounding city of Aliso Viejo, Calif.

Along with the SUA students, staff and faculty, many members of the community attended the event, which took place by the peace fountain on the university campus. About 300 people shared their sorrow, anger, confusion, grief and hope with one another. Some expressed their emotions through vocal and instrumental performances, some read poems they had written during the course of the day, others just conveyed their sympathy for the many lives lost. Still others shared their determination to take this tragedy and turn it into something positive, working even harder for a peaceful world where such occurrences will never be repeated.

The students also sent a message of peace and nonviolence to U.S. President George W. Bush, with all 120 of their signatures included. During the course of the week, various local newspapers carried this message in their respective publications. The SUA students, who hail from 18 countries that cover five continents, exemplify a microcosm of the world. I feel the reason that all of our students, including our international population, were affected enough to respond in this way is because this attack was not against the United States alone.

In a message from Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, who is also the first recipient of the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Community Builder's Prize, he stated the "attacks were aimed at one world composed of many nations and not at one nation alone."

Through their quick, humanistic and determined response to the recent events, the SUA students have made it quite clear that as citizens of many nations, they will take on the challenge of creating a peaceful global society.