

**SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS
SPIRIT OF THE ROCKIES RISES A MILE HIGH
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On Sept. 30, the SGI-USA's Rocky Mountain Region held a Peace Festival at glorious City Park in Denver. With nearly 4,000 people attending, this family youth festival was a tremendous success.

Guests and SGI-USA members alike quickly relaxed into the exciting atmosphere. The performances began at 1:00 p.m at the City Park pavilion that resides in front of a beautiful lake—a location photographed in the past by SGI President Ikeda.

“Let the word *peace* be heard...” were the words from a poem by Dr. Ramon Del Castillo, who also led a prayer: “Through peace and love we can destroy hate and violence.” Dr. Del Castillo is a longtime activist who assisted Caesar Chavez in his United Farm Workers Campaign and is an award winning poet committed to peace.

Also setting the tone was the poem “The Road to World Peace, a Garden for All Humanity” by President Ikeda. The poem and other quotes read by many different youth members were woven between 16 performance acts. These performances by SGI-USA members and friends encompassed all types of dance and music. De to Je, an African dance group, as well as the Peli Aloha Dancers could not believe that the festival attracted so many diverse people. Also included among the dance pieces were Skidoo and Wango Tango, Murphy Repertory and an amazing performance from Sariah Shulthess of the Colorado Ballet.

Third Wind Ensemble, the first music group to play, let the audience know that they were in for some serious tunes. Rammboie Ltd. sang “Changes” by David Bowie. And Chronophonics, a synergistic funk band, sent a message through their lyrics. Miranda Calhoun summed up the vibe outside when she said: “Everyone seems so happy and the performances are amazing. It’s a great day!”

Master of Ceremonies Christian Martinez broke out by reciting a powerful original poem before heading inside to the concessions building, where not far away the children were having a blast making noodle people and necklaces at the Boys and Girls Group arts and crafts table. On the opposite side, many tables were set with information from both SGI and community groups. Represented there were Soka University of America, Victory Over Violence, the Earth Charter, the Natural Museum of History, various community youth groups and so many more.

Before leaving, most everyone received red, white and blue ribbon pins with the Victory Over Violence globe attached. 5,000 of these ribbons were made by hand. Many participants noticed this warmth and generosity of the SGI-USA members in Denver. They were amazed that so many different people came together to share a beautiful day of sunshine, joyfully creating a culture of peace.