

**SGI-USA FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVALS
SAN DIEGO FESTIVAL PROMOTES UNITY
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Members of the SGI-USA in San Diego united with organizations throughout their community to hold their first Victory Over Violence Family Youth Festival. Organizers hoped the festival would be a resource for the community in regards to nonviolence, highlighting like-minded organizations and speakers who share the SGI's goal of ending violence in all its forms.

The festival attracted more than 4,300 people, including California State Assemblyman Howard Wayne, San Diego City Councilwoman Donna Frye and U.S. Congressman Bob Filner. Each praised the SGI-USA for its efforts toward ending violence in the community.

In addition, Assemblyman Wayne's office presented certificates to the 25 other organizations that set up information booths at the festival. These included the Human Relations Commission of San Diego, the United Nations Association, the Tariq Khamisa Foundation and Soka University of America.

The event, held at San Diego High School on July 29, featured guest speakers addressing the root causes of violence, performances by SGI-USA youth groups and community cultural performing groups who performed everything from tango to Polynesian dance.

A powerful message was delivered by the founder of the Tariq Khamisa Foundation, Azim Khamisa, whose young son was killed by a 14-year-old gang member in an initiation rite. Instead of revenge, Mr. Khamisa chose to break the cycle of hate by embracing the family of his son's killer. Together, they hope to show how people can end destructive cycles of violence.

Peace and unity were at the forefront as well as behind-the-scenes of the festival. Wishing to create an unforgettable event, hundreds of dedicated SGI-USA members worked tirelessly, making decorations, artwork and exhibitions and inviting guests and various groups.

The SGI-USA youth in San Diego banded together, dedicating every weekend to perfecting dance and drill routines, practicing music and memorizing lines.

More than 100 youth participated on-stage in the festival's grand finale, ending with an original song written for the event, "Century of Life," which incorporated Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." The festival came to a close with the audience singing along.