



Soka Gakkai International

## Sustainable Development 2006

April 30, 2006

### SGI-USA Denver Members Celebrate 18th Annual Cherry Tree Planting

On April 23, SGI-USA members in Denver celebrated their 18th annual cherry tree planting. Some 250 members planted 65 new trees in Washington Park and a local city park. SGI-USA Denver members inaugurated the tradition in March 1989, to commemorate the opening of their Denver Culture Center, by planting trees along Cherry Creek. The idea was the brainchild of SGI-USA Vice General Director Brian Matsuo, then the SGI-USA leader of the Denver area, who called on the members to contribute to the beautification of the locale. Denver's arid climate and severe winters, however, were obstacles.

Cultivating cherry trees would be a difficult task. Local members conducted intense studies and experiments, and through their loving care the trees have thrived magnificently. In June 1996, when the trees numbered 400, the members were able to welcome SGI President Daisaku Ikeda to their center, who was in Denver to receive an honorary doctorate from Denver University. Mr. Ikeda participated in a commemorative cherry tree planting at the SGI-USA Denver center together with the members.



A view of the "Ikeda Cherries" that line a street in front of the SGI-USA Denver center



SGI-USA members young and old participate in annual cherry tree planting in Denver, Colorado

Ten years have passed since then and today, over 1,000 "Ikeda Cherries" bloom prodigiously every year. In keeping with Mr. Ikeda's words, "To plant trees is to plant life," the trees infuse the lives of those who view them with flowers of happiness and joy.

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