Chapter 3: Youth Division

Live Each Day Filled With Value and Happiness—Encouragement From SGI President Ikeda

Youth is the time of continual worries. Your heart is swayed in all matters—your future direction, personality, relationships, society and life. You may often feel irresolute and restless. Some will be puzzled by the gap between ideals and reality, and others will succumb to self-hatred and behave in a neurotic fashion.

Youth is a season of unrest and agony. This is true of young people anywhere in the world. In a sense, it may be all for the best. You certainly are not suffering on your own, and since young people are all experiencing change and growth, such feelings cannot be helped.

Therefore, you should not be hasty. It is unreasonable to suppose that you can become both spiritually and socially stable in one fell swoop. An airplane will have an accident if it tries to take off without first building up speed. Even if a plane takes off successfully, without sufficient fuel and complete preparation, it will not keep flying, or it may even crash.

Life is like a marathon, as is faith. Though you may lose the lead in the midst of the race, victory or defeat is decided at the finish line. Your training during your youth is for the purpose of enabling you to win ultimate and true victory. Therefore, now is the time when you must study as much as you can and chant abundant daimoku so that you can greatly increase your life force.

Please steadily advance along the fundamental path of faith manifesting itself in daily life, living in the way that best suits you. Just as the sun rises every day, if you persistently advance based on the Mystic Law, the absolute law of the universe, you will definitely lead a life in which all desires are fulfilled. Please be convinced that you are now leading the most certain and valuable youth.

(My Dear Friends in America, third edition, pp. 82–83)

Overview of the SGI-USA Youth Division

Young Men's Division

Young men's division leaders communicate with the other divisional leaders—men's division, women's division and young women's division. In addition, seeking guidance and support from the young men's division and men's division leaders within the line organization is an important aspect of communication and growth.

For example, a district young men's leader would seek guidance and direction from his chapter young men's leader. If he does not have a chapter young men's leader, he would reach out to his region young men's leader. Further, the district young men's leader works together with the district four-divisional leaders to make their shared goal a reality.
This structure ensures that each leader of the young men’s division can develop into the most effective leader who has many victories in the organization he is responsible for.

**Youth Division Activity/Training Groups**

To foster capable people for the future, the youth division has several activity/training groups. The guidelines for these groups are listed below. They include:

**Gajokai and Soka Group (YMD only)**

The Gajokai is a young men’s behind-the-scenes training group dedicated to protecting the fortresses of kosen-rufu—SGI Buddhist centers and other facilities. Gajokai members support the daily operations of SGI Buddhist centers, including opening and closing the facilities, and ensuring members’ safety at the centers by conducting security checks. In a poem dedicated to the Gajokai, President Ikeda writes: “Gajo—meaning ‘fortress’—refers to the main bulwark of our great struggle for the Law. This fortress stands firm because of heroes of unrivaled courage” (February 6, 2009, *World Tribune*, p. 5).

**Soka Group** is a young men’s behind-the-scenes training and support group committed to serving the members and ensuring their safety at activities, such as World Peace Prayer Meetings. In a poem to these uncrowned heroes, President Ikeda writes: “Even in the dark of night or in the midst of a storm, the Soka Group safeguards the citadel of Soka and ensures our triumph” (February 6, 2009, *World Tribune*, p. 5).

**Young Women’s Division**

Young women’s division leaders communicate with the other divisional leaders—men’s division, women’s division and young men’s division. In addition, the young women’s division should consistently seek guidance and support from the young women’s division and women’s division leaders within the line organization as another important aspect of communication and growth.

For example, a district young women’s leader would seek guidance and direction from her chapter young women’s leader. If she does not have a chapter young women’s leader, she would reach out to her region young women’s leader. Further, the district young women’s leader works together with the district four-divisional leaders to make their goal a reality. This structure ensures that each leader of the young women’s division can develop into the most effective leader who has many victories in the organization for which she is responsible.
Byakuren (YWD only)

Byakuren is a young women’s training group committed to protecting SGI Buddhist centers and facilities, the strongholds of kosen-rufu, while selflessly supporting the members behind the scenes at SGI-USA activities. President Ikeda writes of the group: “How infinitely worthy, beautiful and sublime is the youth of our Byakuren who, in this dark, defiled age, sincerely and selflessly work to be of assistance to others. “Vanity and foolishness lead to unhappiness; genuine happiness is found in wholeheartedly serving our fellow human beings” (January 31, 2003, Seize the Day, p. C).

Student Division

The student division comprises youth division members in higher education programs. The Soka Gakkai student division was established on June 30, 1957, at second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda’s urging to realize Nichiren Daishonin’s vision of “establishing the correct teaching for the peace of the land,” bringing about an age when society values the supreme dignity of life, and all people enjoy secure and peaceful lives.

In an essay commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the student division’s establishment, President Ikeda wrote: “What the twenty-first century needs is leadership dedicated to serving the people. I would like my disciples from the student division to be the guiding stars who are at the forefront of just such a leadership revolution, rallying the rest of the world onward” (August 3, 2007, World Tribune, p. 3).

Ikeda Youth Ensemble

Thousands of youth performers emerged at the Rock the Era Youth Culture Festivals in July 2010, and in response, SGI President Ikeda, on September 22, 2010, named the SGI-USA youth performing groups the “Ikeda Youth Ensemble.” The group’s mission is to transform society through the power of art and culture. Addressing the Ikeda Youth Ensemble members at the youth festivals as “heroes and heroines of the Mystic Law,” President Ikeda praised their noble mission to create peace in America and the world, saying, “I hope that each one of you will dedicate yourself throughout your life to Nichiren Buddhism, the great philosophy of peace that upholds the precious dignity of life, and commit yourself to protecting and serving the people” (August 6, 2010, World Tribune, p. 3).
Criteria for Youth Leadership

The entry-level leadership position for the youth division is as a district leader. Keep in mind that youth leadership in the district is primarily a developmental opportunity, so appointments at this level should be generously made as soon as a young person begins supporting the district. If, however, there is more than one youth in a district that could be appointed, then vice district, group or unit youth division appointments can be made. The primary responsibility of the youth unit and group leaders is communication with one other youth member.

The candidate may still be working on the basics of practice so this is an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Buddhism and leadership. It is recommended that youth appointed as district leaders be at least sixteen years old. Youth under eighteen years of age must have permission from their parents or guardian prior to appointment. Youth should be encouraged that their education comes before their organizational activities or responsibilities. Please note that the candidate is not expected to give guidance in faith to the members.

Responsibilities of District Youth Leaders
- Communicating with other youth in their district;
- Inviting youth to participate in discussion meetings and other SGI-USA activities;
- Working with the men’s and women’s district leaders to create an inviting, energetic and youthful atmosphere in the district;
- Communicating and working in coordination with their chapter youth leaders.

Responsibilities of Chapter Youth Leaders
- Being an active member of their district;
- Working with the men’s and women’s chapter leaders to create an inviting, energetic and youthful atmosphere in the chapter;
- Communicating and working in coordination with youth region leaders to organize and implement youth activities and introductory meetings where appropriate;
- Supporting and promoting organizational activities.

*Please Note: Future division leadership qualifications, etc., are listed in the future division section on pp. 34–37.*

Qualifications for Youth Auxiliary Group Leadership

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Auxiliary:</th>
<th>Auxiliary:</th>
<th>Behind the Scenes:</th>
<th>Behind the Scenes:</th>
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<td>Ikeda Youth Ensemble,</td>
<td>Gajokai/</td>
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<td>Soka Group/</td>
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<td>Byakuren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Zone/</td>
<td>Region/</td>
<td>Territory/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<td>Territory/</td>
<td>Zone/</td>
<td>National</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of</td>
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<td>1+ year at Chapter–</td>
<td>1+ year at</td>
<td>1+ year at</td>
</tr>
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<td>Chapter–Zone Level</td>
<td>District–Region Level</td>
<td>Chapter–Region Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members</td>
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<td>1+</td>
<td>1+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsored</td>
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For YMD and YWD leadership qualifications, please see page 53.
Procedures for appointing or dismissing youth leaders are the same as those outlined in this Leadership Manual for other divisions with the following exceptions:

**Procedures for Appointing Graduating Youth Leaders**

**Youth graduation age is thirty-five:** All youth division members graduate into the men’s or women’s division at the end of the year when they turn thirty-five years old (during the New Year’s Eve or New Year’s Day meeting). However, youth members who choose to may graduate before thirty-five years old.

**Graduating youth division appointments in the men’s or women’s division:** Please note that although many do, not all graduating youth division members necessarily take on leadership responsibility in the men’s or women’s division. As a preparatory step prior to graduation, the Personnel Committee at the same level as the candidate’s current youth division leadership position should discuss the suitability of a proposed position in the men’s or women’s division. The proposed candidate should not be involved in the discussion as outlined in the standard leadership appointment process.

If a new leadership recommendation is determined to be appropriate, then it is discussed with the recommending Personnel Committee for the new position. The recommending Personnel Committee discusses all points of consideration with regard to the candidate. The Personnel Committee at the same level as the candidate’s current youth division leadership position should initiate this discussion approximately six months before the planned graduation date.

If agreement is reached about the new recommendation, please follow the procedures listed in “Procedures for Appointing Leaders” on pp. 48–56.

As a point of clarification, the recommending Personnel Committee is the four-divisional line leaders one level above the new men's or women's divisional leadership position being recommended. The approving Personnel Committee is the four-divisional line leaders two levels above the new men's or women's divisional leadership position being recommended.

**Example:**

Jane is a region young women's leader who will be graduating in six months. To prepare for her graduation, Jane's co-leaders at the region level begin to discuss (without her involvement) the possibility of appointing her to a leadership position in the women's division.

The region leaders’ initial recommendation is for her to be appointed to a women's district leader position. They then initiate a discussion with the chapter four-divisional line leaders (recommending Personnel Committee). The two groups agree that a women's district leader position is best.

From that point, the chapter (recommending Personnel Committee) initiates the standard leadership appointment process (as outlined in Chapter 4 of this Leadership Manual) for Jane’s new position, carefully timing the process for the new appointment to coincide with Jane’s graduation from the youth division.

**General Guidelines for All Youth Division Members With Children**

* Please Note: These guidelines apply equally to men and women and no distinction should be made between young men or young women with children. “Youth division” refers to those members who are junior high school age through thirty-five years old. The reference to “parent(s)” refers to the youth with children.

1. **Youth Division Members With Children**

   It is the decision of the youth division who are parent(s) to either remain in the youth division or graduate to the men’s or women’s division after discussion with their partner or spouse. Parent/s can decide whether to:

   a. continue in their current youth leadership position;
   b. request to take on a youth leadership position in a smaller organization (for example, a chapter leader could request to take responsibility as a district leader)*;
   c. transition out of their youth leadership responsibility and practice as a general member of the youth division*; or
   d. graduate into the men’s or women’s division.*

*All changes in leadership responsibility should follow the guidelines as set forth in the SGI-USA Leadership Manual.
2. Youth Division Parents With Younger Children (below age twelve) at Youth Meetings
   a. Parents in the youth division are encouraged to bring their children who are not yet in junior high school only to activities specifically geared toward their age groups, such as elementary school division meetings.
   b. Parents in the youth division may also bring their children to four-divisional activities such as district meetings, World Peace Prayer Meetings and so forth.
   c. Parents in the youth division should not bring children younger than junior high school age to youth division activities since these are focused on refreshing the faith and encouraging members of the youth division.

3. Youth Division Parents With Youth Division Age Children (over age twelve):
   If parent and child are both youth division members, they should not participate in the same auxiliary group at the same time, as this could alter the peer-to-peer dynamics of the group. However, parent and child can participate in separate auxiliary groups. For example, the parent could participate in Soka Group while the child participates in Brass Band (part of the Ikeda Youth Ensemble).

4. Supporting the Transition to Parenthood:
   Youth division who are on the verge of becoming parents should be visited by two leaders (one from their division and one from the respective men or women’s division) two levels above the parent’s current level of responsibility two to three months before becoming a parent and again two to three months after. This is in order to support their transition into parenthood, to see how they are adjusting to their new role as a parent and to assess their ability to continue with their youth leadership responsibility.

Future Division: Elementary School Division/Junior High and High School Division

The SGI-USA future division is comprised of members of the elementary school, and junior high and high school division. This group was officially established in December 2011 as a means to foster future leaders toward the Soka Gakkai’s 100th anniversary on November 18, 2030.

The future division was also created to ensure that elementary school graduates continue to receive support and stay connected as they enter junior high school and continue through high school by receiving the consistent care from the future division organization.

Future Division Leadership
   Focusing on the growth, happiness and faith of the future division, leadership in this realm entails someone with strong faith who has the desire and ability to work well with children and teens.

Requirements of a Future Division leader
   ✦ A leader in good standing.
   ✦ A district through national level line leader.
      (i.e., A vice chapter leader can be the future division region leader.)
   ✦ An individual with a strong, seeking spirit and a firm footing in faith.
   ✦ An individual who encourages greater involvement of future division members and their families.
   ✦ An individual who completes and passes a background check (see pp. 36 and 41–43).

Roles and Responsibilities

Future Division Leaders Support
   ✦ The elementary school division members are primarily supported by the women’s division and men’s division future division leaders.
   ✦ The junior high and high school division members are primarily supported by the young women’s division and young men’s division future division leaders.

*Please Note: All four divisions are encouraged to work together to support all future division members, communicating closely with their respective line leaders.*
Appointments

- Future Division leadership exists at the region, zone, territory and national levels. In some outlying areas, chapter Future Division leaders may be appropriate as determined by local leadership.

- Future Division leadership consists of a four-divisional team (women's division, men's division, young women's division and young men's division).

For a graphical depiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate is currently a:</th>
<th>Being considered for:</th>
<th>Recommending level:</th>
<th>Approving level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line leader: District-Zone (including vice leaders)</td>
<td>Future Division Region leader</td>
<td>Zone Personnel Committee</td>
<td>Territory Personnel Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future Division Zone leader</td>
<td>Territory Personnel Committee</td>
<td>Central Personnel Committee (CPC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future Division Territory leader</td>
<td>Central Personnel Committee (CPC)</td>
<td>Central Personnel Committee (CPC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: In states and cities where distance is a factor, Chapter Future Division leadership appointments are possible. Please check with your zone and territory before putting the team together.*

Leadership Functions

**Future Division Territory Leader**

- Communicating consistently with the national leadership team in order to stay current of new initiatives, guidelines and directions for future division.
- To communicate new initiatives, guidelines and directions to the zone level future division leadership via teleconferences, videoconferences or through individual phone calls by division.
- Presenting new information regarding the future division specific for the territory at the Territory Executive Conferences, having received information from national leadership.
- Meeting with the territory line leadership periodically and when necessary to report updates and seek about future division at the territory level.
- Responsible for Trailblazers and Future Journal in rotation with the other two territories.

**Future Division Region Leader**

- Meeting with zone line team periodically and when necessary to report and seek about the future division at the zone level.
- Presenting the needs of local future division organizations at the territory level.
- Supporting ongoing, hands-on development and efforts to develop curriculum materials.
- Producing articles for publication to submit to the territory future division leaders.
- Supporting the region future division leadership.

**Future Division Zone Leader**

- Developing and promoting future division activities that are held at the region level.
- Communicating with the future division zone leadership to be current on future division initiatives and direction.
- Communicating with the region level line leadership to report and seek about future division at the zone level.
Leadership Appointment Checklist

✓ Recommending Personnel Committee reviews
✓ Paperwork is submitted to the approving Personnel Committee
✓ Home visit “approved” candidate—candidate completes forms and submits
  ◆ “Working With the Future Division” (read only)
  ◆ “Screening Form for Leaders/Volunteers Working With the Elementary School Division (ESD)”
  ◆ Background Check Application Form

Submit the background check application form by email to the SGI-USA Legal Department at legal@sgi-usa.org or fax to 310-309-3227.

✓ SGI-USA Legal Department informs recommending Personnel Committee about the background check
✓ future division leader is announced

Lion Cub Fostering Group

The Lion Cub Fostering Group was named by President Ikeda in January 2012 for all those who have supported the future division behind the scenes throughout the years.

Joining the Lion Club Fostering Group

SGI-USA members who are approved by the region and would like to support the future division may join the Lion Cub Fostering Group. The individual must be willing to have a background check completed (see pp. 36 and 41–44). If interested, the individual should contact their respective line leader or future division leader.

Communication

Members of the Lion Cub Fostering Group receive communication and direction from the future division leadership team.

Final Checklist

✓ Completed the background check FIRST
✓ Read the “Working With the Future Division”
✓ Candidate should be visited by a line leader or future division leader

Rules of Behavior for Future Division Leaders and Lion Cub Fostering Group Members (in addition to basic Code of Conduct for all leaders):

Working With the Future Division

Thank you for your enthusiasm and passion to help our youngest of members grow and learn in a nurturing environment. For the safety, respect and protection of our future division members and all individuals working with our minors, a background check will need to be completed for all individuals working with future division members. In addition, SGI-USA would like to take this opportunity to inform you about some of the requirements, caution and care expected of you.

◆ Please note that all future division activities should occur with the explicit knowledge and consent of the future division members’ parents or guardians.
◆ Future division activities must be supervised by adults.
◆ Caution and care are to be observed in all interactions with minors, including the following:
  • Inspect rooms for safety hazards prior to an activity;
  • Avoid high-risk activities such as water sports;
  • Avoid being alone in a room or inappropriately touching a future division member.

Etiquette, Rules of Behavior

1. Generally, an adult should not be alone with a minor in a closed room, including a bathroom;

2. In a meeting or guidance session involving a minor, the presence or proximity of another adult is encouraged; however, in those situations where the presence of another adult is not practical, an appropriate location should be used and, if there are no windows with easy viewing from the hallways, the door should be left open;

3. If these one-to-one interactions are expected to extend beyond two sessions, evaluation of the situation should be made together with the parents or guardians;

4. An adult should not engage in games or other activities with an individual minor without parental consent;
5. Youth group trips should have a minimum of two adult chaperones; larger groups should have at least one adult chaperone for every ten minors;

6. While on youth trips, the adults should maintain a mature posture and socialize appropriately with minors;

7. One adult, by him- or herself, should never engage in an overnight trip with minors;

8. Overnight activities are strongly discouraged at local future division gatherings;

9. Consent forms should be signed by the parents or guardians of future division members who participate in activities outside of the official SGI-USA Buddhist centers (such as trips to visit colleges, parks, community events, etc.);

10. While on youth group trips, an adult should never stay alone overnight in the same room with a minor or minors, unless a special request to do so has been made by the minor’s parent or guardian;

11. While participating in SGI-USA activities, adults should never engage in a discussion on sexual topics, and the possession or viewing of sexually explicit materials is prohibited;

12. Profanity, vulgar humor and/or sexually-explicit language should not be used in the presence of minors;

13. When an adult recognizes a personal or physical attraction to or from a minor, the adult should refrain from further engaging with the minor and shall refer the minor immediately to another future division leader for encouragement;

14. Physical contact, including hugging or other touching, must be restrained at all times in accordance with customary and reasonable societal standards. Any unwelcome contact should be avoided entirely.

**Future Division: Parents Group**

**Purpose:**

SGI President Ikeda states: “Nothing is as important as parental love in giving children strength, courage, and peace of mind... Child-rearing is indeed demanding, but it is more than recompensed by the joy in witnessing children’s growth. Approaching child-rearing with a positive attitude, employing one’s full capacities, and drawing on the cooperation of others in one’s life can be opportunities for tremendous personal growth” (Living as Learning: John Dewey in the 21st Century, a dialogue between Daisaku Ikeda, Jim Garrison, and Larry Hickman, pp. 21 and 105).

In 2015, the SGI-USA is launching a “Parents Group” (PG) within the future division. The PG will hold quarterly meetings, affording opportunities for parents to study President Ikeda’s guidance, network, and make fresh determinations to advance in faith.

The future of kosen-rufu hinges on passing the baton of the oneness of mentor and disciple to successive generations, and leaders and parents are the key to this dynamic development. Nothing is more difficult and crucial than parenting, however, and the PG will provide a constant flow of encouragement to help parents overcome the many challenges they face in raising their children and as their children advance through three age groupings: birth to five years of age, ESD and JHHS.

The new PG will need the support of both the four divisional line and future division leadership.

**Vision of Parents Group Meetings:**

The main activity of the PG is to hold quarterly meetings for the parents of children (birth to high school). These meetings should take place at the frontline level, which we anticipate will be the region level in most locations. In locations of wide geographic expanse, these meetings may be organized at the chapter level.

The process of organizing quarterly meetings will take
patience, flexibility and creativity. For example, initial meetings can be held for the parents of children of all ages. With time, however, to allow more focus on unique age-related issues, the quarterly meetings can be expanded to separate meetings for parents with children in different age groups (birth to five years of age, ESD, JHHS).

A sample meeting could include gongyo, the study of some of SGI President Ikeda's guidance to parents, a prepared experience, open discussion, and Q&A with a PG leader. In addition, we hope that the four divisional line leaders will be invited to give encouragement at these meetings.

There will be a direct and ongoing relationship between the Parents Group and the future division. PG leaders will need and appreciate the support of the territory, zone and region future division leaders. In the absence of appointed PG leaders, future division leaders can help the four divisional line leaders coordinate these PG meetings.

**Appointing Parents Group Leaders:**

With input from territory leaders, zones should decide at what organizational levels Parents Group meetings will take place. Then, a trusted men or women's division (or both) leader should be appointed as the PG leader(s) to coordinate the quarterly meetings.

PG leaders must be highly trusted by the four divisional leaders as well as by parents. They should have strong faith, a deep understanding about the SGI-USA, and possess good communication and organizational skills. Organizations should select someone who is comfortable leading such a “start-up” activity. Since PG Leaders may have to give personal guidance and lead Q&A sessions, we recommend that the candidate have a chapter through zone men or women's division line leadership position. The candidate does NOT have to have children although candidates who are parents may be able to more fully understand the many challenges of parenting.

After these appointments have been made at the frontline levels, territory and zone PG leaders can, at some point in the future, be appointed to help support the frontline PG leaders.

These appointments need to follow the guidelines outlined in the SGI-USA Leadership Manual (see pp. 48–56). The recommending Personnel Committee level is one level above the organizational level that will be holding PG meetings and the approving Personnel Committee level is two levels above the organizational level that will be holding PG meetings. The frontline level that will be holding PG meetings may be consulted in the search for candidates. The future division leadership can also be consulted since future division leaders have insight based on parent participation in activities. Once the recommendations have been made, the remaining steps outlined in the Leadership Manual need to be followed. As the PG leader will be working with parents and not children, he/she will not need a background check as do future division leaders.

**Relationship to Future Division:**

Frontline PG leaders will work closely with the future division leaders as well as the four divisional leaders. This ongoing cooperation is crucial for identifying parents, building links with parents, communication, coordinating parent outreach with future division activities, and sharing ways to encourage the faith and development of children. It is hoped that zone and territory future division leaders will support PG activities whenever possible.

**Role of National Parents Group Leaders:**

1. The national Parents Group leaders, working closely with the national future division team, will help coordinate the launch of the frontline PG meetings. A major goal is to have parent meetings in every zone functioning before the conclusion of 2015.

2. The national Parents Group leaders will answer questions and help facilitate the efforts of zones in the appointment of PG leaders at the frontline level.

3. The national Parents Group leaders will support in compiling and distributing SGI President Ikeda's guidance for parents.

4. The national Parents Group leaders will serve as a source of encouragement by participating in FNCC ESD/Parents and Guardians conferences, teleconferences, publications, etc.
Frequently Asked Questions

1) Who should region Parents Group (PG) leaders contact with their questions or concerns?

Since this is a new initiative, there will inevitably be many issues. Sometimes PG leaders will need to contact their respective four divisional leaders, and at other times, future division leaders can be an excellent resource. PG leaders may also contact the national PG leaders. In this process, all leaders will need flexibility, creativity and patience.

2) What type of support will there be for PG leaders?

The national PG leaders will conduct occasional conference calls to support the frontline PG leaders. These teleconferences will focus on issues related to the quarterly meetings and ways to encourage parents. Future division leaders are always welcome to participate in these calls. Future division leaders are encouraged to include PG leaders in their frontline planning discussions/conference calls. Four divisional leaders will also function as crucial supports.

3) For those locations hosting monthly Mothers Group meetings or parent meetings held at the same time as ESD or JHHS activities, should we still conduct quarterly PG meetings?

This is a matter that is best decided at the frontline level in ways that will respect the needs of the members and the traditions of the organization. Some locations may decide to replace the Mothers Group meetings with the PG meetings being held for parents of children from birth to five years of age in order to include both fathers and mothers. It is fine to continue holding parent discussions while children are attending ESD and/or JHHS activities.

We hope the quarterly meetings can supplement such already existing activities. In many locations, there are no activities for parents whose children are too young for current ESD and JHHS activities. There are also parents needing encouragement who cannot bring their children to ESD or JHHS activities for various reasons.

It is our expectation that the quarterly format will permit time for careful preparation and will result in the most encouraging meetings. Thus, they will become important opportunities to connect parents to the inspirational encouragement from SGI President Ikeda.

4) I’m assuming the PG leaders are men and women’s division leaders. How many leaders per zone and/or region should we appoint?

PG leaders should be appointed at the organizational level where there are a sufficient number of parents who can joyfully attend and sustain meetings. Usually this will be at the region level but in some cases the PG meetings will work best at the chapter level. The PG leaders appointed need to be a men's and/or women's division leader; ideally there needs to be both a men's and women's division leader but we realize this may require time to do so. PG leaders do not have to be parents.

Our initial focus will be to conduct PG meetings at the frontline level. Therefore, unlike the appointment process for future division leaders, we want to first establish PG leaders at the frontline level. The appointment of PG leaders at the territory and zone levels can wait until a clear need arises.

5) Is the support from future division leaders permanent or temporary until the PG leaders are in place?

The help of future division leaders will be appreciated during both the initial and during the ongoing phases of PG meetings. At the national level, the PG leaders will join in the future division teleconferences; this type of partnership is ideal. We hope the PG leaders will be supported by the future division leaders and will work closely with them.

6) How can we best engage the line leadership in the quarterly meetings while respecting their very busy schedules?

We need the experience and wisdom of line leaders to encourage parents! We hope that the line leaders can take turns participating in the quarterly PG meetings. The rationale for organizing this activity is the recognition of the significance of the parent role for the future of kosen-rufu and a healthy society. Line leaders are
important resources for encouragement at PG meetings. This should not require extensive time commitment once the PG activities have successfully started and are functioning.

7) Where can I get more information on the Parents Group?

Please visit:
www.sgi-usa.org/memberresources/youthdivision/future/pg/

**Forms**

Screening Form for Leaders/Volunteers Working With Elementary School Division (ESD) *(see pp. 41–42)*—
http://www.sgi-usa.org/leaders/Forms_for_leaders/index.php

Background Check Application Form *(see p. 43)*—
http://www.sgi-usa.org/leaders/Forms_for_leaders/index.php

SGI-USA Campus Club Constitution (Sample) *(see pp. 44–46)*—
http://www.sgi-usa.org/leaders/Forms_for_leaders/index.php
Screening Form for Leaders/Volunteers Working With the Elementary School Division (ESD)

Thank you for your interest in working with the children and youth of our organization. The SGI-USA takes seriously the responsibility of assuring the safety of our youth. Please fill out this form and give it to the assigned leader of the group you are interested in working with.

We appreciate your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of our members.

NAME: ____________________________________________

First Middle Last

Have you ever used a different name? ___ No ___ Yes

If yes, please list the names and the dates they were used including maiden name.

________________________________________________________

How long have you been an SGI-USA member? __________________________

HOME ADDRESS:

Street ___________________________________________________________________

City ___________________ State _______ Zip _______

Number of years at current address: ________________________________

If you have not lived at this address for at least five years, please list any previous addresses with dates.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What states have you lived in since you were eighteen years old?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Home Phone ___________________ Work Phone ___________________

Place of employment ___________________ Years at current employment ______
Have you ever been convicted of any felony criminal offense? ____ No ____ Yes  If yes, please explain.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever been accused of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation or abuse of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor? ____ No ____ Yes  If yes, please provide details.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of children and youth? No ____ Yes ____ If yes, please provide details.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

List all previous work involving children/youth.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Please list two SGI-USA references, who are not relatives, who have known you for at least three years and who are familiar with your practice or your experience with children or youth:

1) Name Phone

2) Name Phone

I authorize the SGI-USA to contact references and other sources to obtain information about my background regarding my character and ability to work with children and youth. I authorize references to provide such information about me. I hereby release and hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless the SGI-USA, its employees and volunteers.

Further, I understand that a member of the SGI-USA staff may check the sex offender registry and/or contact the local authorities for more information about my background. This information will be available only to those responsible for screening leaders or volunteers, or as required by law.

I attest that the above information is true and correct.

Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________
1. **Complete all sections, date, sign and email** this form to SGI-USA Legal Department at legal@sgi-usa.org or fax to 310-309-3227.

2. You will receive an email from “SGI-USA <background@infomart-usa.com>” titled “Background Check Invitation.”

3. Please access the link provided by the company, fill out the attached form and submit it online. Make sure to fill out **ALL** required information without typos such as SSN, Driver’s License Number and Date of Birth. A form with missing information will be rejected by the background check company.

### PURPOSE

- [ ] Future Division Leadership
- [ ] JHHS/ESD Conference Support
- [ ] Bookstore Volunteer
- [ ] Contribution Volunteer
- [ ] Other (Indicate below)

### APPLICANT’S INFORMATION

- **LEGAL LAST NAME:**
- **LEGAL FIRST NAME:**
- **PREFERRED NAME:**
- **PRIMARY PHONE NUMBER:**
- **EMAIL ADDRESS:**
- **RESIDENTIAL ZIP CODE:**

### ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

- **TERRITORY:**
- **ZONE:**
- **REGION:**
- **LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- **DIVISION:**
  - [ ] MD
  - [ ] WD
  - [ ] YWD
  - [ ] YMD

### FOR FUTURE DIVISION LEADERSHIP ONLY

The following states require a disclosure and release form for a motor vehicle record check. **If your driver’s license was issued by the state of Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania or Washington, please mark the appropriate box.** SGI-USA Legal Department staff will then contact you and provide a form to you to submit for your motor vehicle record check.

- [ ] Alaska
- [ ] Colorado
- [ ] Georgia
- [ ] Maryland
- [ ] Michigan
- [ ] Ohio
- [ ] Pennsylvania
- [ ] Washington

**DATE:**

**SIGNATURE:**
SGI-USA Campus Club Constitution (Sample)

Preamble

We are members of the ________________________________ community contributing to the creation of a culture of peace and nonviolence based on the teachings of the Nichiren school of Mahayana Buddhism as practiced in the Soka Gakkai International-USA (SGI-USA). Recognizing that the point of departure for lasting world peace is the establishment of a firm inner self that will not be shaken by the most difficult of circumstances, we aim to cultivate a network of friendship to support and encourage our fellow students to enjoy fulfilling, happy lives filled with hope for the future.

Article I

Organization Name: ________________________________

Organizational Affiliation: Soka Gakkai International-USA (SGI-USA)

Article II

Purpose: The fundamental purpose of the ________________________________ is to help students unlock their hidden potential and achieve creative harmony with their environment through the philosophy and practice of Nichiren Buddhism in the SGI-USA. This is the ultimate expression of individual empowerment—that each student can transform the inevitable challenges of daily life into sources of growth and fulfillment and become a positive influence in his or her school, workplace, family and community. By promoting an understanding of how Nichiren Buddhism can be applied to the challenges of modern living, our activities contribute to the development of peace, culture and education within society, inspire respect for cultural diversity and human rights, and encourage the protection of nature and the environment.

Article III

Compliance with Policies

At all times, the ________________________________ will comply fully with the Regulations Governing Student Organizations, including: (list ALL relevant school policies on a separate sheet); the Code of Student Conduct; all other policies of the Student Activities Center; as well as any other agreements made with authorized university officials regarding such events and activities.
Article IV

Membership

Section 1 — Membership is open to students (including graduate and undergraduate), faculty and staff at ___________________________ (insert university name). Any eligible person who voluntarily completes and signs a club membership application shall be deemed a member.

Section 2 — Club members may voluntarily withdraw membership from the ___________________________ (insert club name).

Section 3 — The ___________________________ (insert club name) invites participation from all members of the ___________________________ (insert university name) community, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship and disability.

Article V

Officers/Executive Committee

Section 1 — The Executive Committee consists of two club members who preside as president and vice president at organization meetings, and plan events and activities. They share duties in representing the policies, views and opinions of the organization in relation to ___________________________ (insert university name) and the community at large. These officers will accept further responsibilities as required and necessary for the fulfillment of the mission of the organization. Additional officers will be elected to the Executive Committee on an ad hoc basis.

Article VI

Operations

Section 1— Campus club presidents must turn in an SGI-USA Campus Club Leadership Application for all candidates for office in the Executive Committee. All applications must be reviewed and approved by the SGI-USA region Personnel Committee before elections are held. Candidates must be enrolled in a minimum of three credit hours at ___________________________ (insert university name) and have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. Candidates for president should be actively practicing in a local district and have a leadership position within the SGI-USA line youth organization. In addition, the president should seek out the support/advisory role of the local SGI-USA four-divisional line leaders in planning and carrying out campus activities. All outgoing presidents must propose a slate of Executive Committee officers to the SGI-USA region Personnel Committee for review and approval before elections are held.
Section 2—In the event an election results in a tie, approved candidates may share a position and the corresponding responsibility of the position.

Section 3—In the event of misconduct resulting in the obstruction of the rights of members to enjoy the benefits of the campus club organization, officers may be removed from office by a two-thirds approving vote from the SGI-USA region Personnel Committee. Officers expelled from office may appeal the matter to the zone Personnel Committee.

Section 4—The role of the advisor is to support, encourage, offer suggestions and help the Executive Committee and general membership work more effectively in the university setting.

**Article VII**

**Finances / Allocations of Funds**

Section 1—The ___________________________ will submit an annual Student Association budget request to ___________________________ . Individual club members, including officers, may make voluntary financial contributions to the ___________________________.

Section 2—Funds will help provide exhibits, displays and materials to support the mission of ___________________________.

Section 3—Financial records shall be maintained by generally accepted accounting principles. Both co-chairs must authorize any disbursements. All disbursements in excess of $ ______ require the majority approval of the campus club.

Section 4—The SGI-USA has no interest in the financial affairs of the ___________________________. All matters regarding the use of funds for club activities are to be conducted at the sole discretion of the club leadership.

**Article VIII**

**Amendments**

Section 1—The Executive Committee shall propose constitutional amendments to the SGI-USA region youth leaders and national student division leaders for review and approval before being voted on.

Section 2—Upon approval by the region youth leaders and national student division leaders, a vote to pass a constitutional amendment may be held. Approval by two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular meeting shall pass a proposed amendment. The amendment shall be put into effect immediately, unless otherwise stipulated in the amendment.