Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to SUA Founders. We are delighted to provide you with updates on recent university happenings and hope you enjoy browsing through these pages to take a closer look at Soka University of America (SUA).

This past August, we began the new 2009-10 academic year by welcoming the arrival of 132 undergraduate first-year students and two exchange students from Soka University in Japan, who will spend the entire academic year at SUA. With the return of the upperclassmen at the beginning of September, we held a university-wide dinner to welcome back the entire SUA community. At that time, we announced the recipients of SUA’s most prestigious undergraduate academic awards, including the Academic Excellence awards, the Merit Awards and the Ikeda Scholarships. We are pleased with the academic achievements of our students and also deeply appreciate the excellence in teaching offered by our distinguished faculty.

With our sights set on building a stronger tradition of academic excellence and service to the community, Soka University launched construction on a new performing arts center and academic building. The new facilities are now about 50 percent complete and on target for full completion in fall 2011. To thank the construction workers for their work on the buildings to date, we held an appreciation lunch followed by a Topping Off Ceremony on September 29, 2009. At that time, the final roof truss was placed on the performing arts center. The event, which was attended by students, faculty, staff, community members, and members of the design and construction team, received quite a bit of local press coverage; we were fortunate that the story was featured on the front page of the local newspaper, called Orange County Register.

Among the many developments taking place at SUA, on October 10, we held our fifth annual Peace Gala in support of the Soka Student Scholarship Fund. The event was attended by 470 guests and over $800,000 in net proceeds were raised. This is a remarkable achievement, especially in light of the current global economic environment. We are truly indebted to all of you, our generous donors who support our students and the university. Your support allows us to offer unique programs, such as our Soka Opportunity Scholarship, which provides free tuition to all admitted students to the BA in Liberal Arts program whose annual family income is $60,000 or less. I hope you can join us for our next Gala to be held on Saturday, October 9, 2010.

We are very excited about SUA’s future and the contributions our students have and will continue to make in society. Your continuous support during these difficult economic times is truly appreciated. We will continue to do our best to offer the level of academic excellence and access for all students, regardless of need, that will foster the future leaders for peace. We wish you and your families the very best.

Sincerely,

Daniel Y. Habuki, Ph.D.
President
Perhaps people who write us teachers off as “refusing to grow up and leave school” have it partly right. But only partly, in my book. The side of the coin that applies even more to my own experience is this: I’ve chosen this work in large measure because being a teacher affords never-ending opportunities to keep learning with and from young people.

And what better way to keep one’s own spirit young? Besides, “helping and watching kids grow up” is a deep source of personal joy – at least it has been for me these past forty-some years. And the same kind of excitement came over me as I set out across country from Boston in the summer of 2000 to join the rest of the “pioneers” of SUA.

This is, of course, how Daisaku Ikeda, the university’s founder, referred to us, the faculty and staff, and then to the students when the first batch arrived. And now he dubs all students and alumni of SUA “young founders”, with his profound respect for future generations of learners/educators. In the eight or nine years here since those early days, despite the growing pains our whole community has felt as members of a young institution, this ideal of being collaborative “co-learners” has been made real in practice at every turn.

Now with the help of the Nieves Foundation’s generous gifts, we have students and teachers traveling together to far-off places and learning together about topics such as fish in the Amazon, international politics in Beijing, rural poverty reduction in Panama, and so on. Spending three-and-a-half weeks each fall with entering students, too, has allowed many of us teachers to learn and re-learn what we once grappled with during our own college careers.

In China, one of the most oft-quoted ancient proverbs is “live to a ripe old age and learn to a ripe old age.” In addition to its surface meaning akin to the English “live and learn”, which is used for the acquisition of a specific bit of knowledge on one particular occasion, I think this saying points to a deeper, life-long piece of wisdom:

That learning is an inextricable part of life itself, so that no matter how advanced one’s age and no matter how learned or knowledgeable one may be, to advance, to stay young at heart and keep growing, one must make the effort day by day to learn from and with those younger than oneself.
The 5th annual Peace Gala held at the SUA campus on Saturday, October 10, 2009, was a huge success for the university. With over 148 student, staff, and faculty volunteers supporting the event, SUA was able to welcome 470 guests and raise almost $800,000 in net proceeds for student scholarships.

To kick-start the program, six SUA students from around the world shared their experiences as recipients of the Student Scholarship Fund. Their heartfelt stories served as a reminder of the significance of SUA donors and their unwavering dedication to the university and its students. (See pages 8 & 9 for more.)

The masters of ceremonies, actors Patrick Duffy and Vinessa Shaw, graced us with their presence and always lively personalities throughout the course of the evening, and our guest entertainer, singer Howard Jones culminated the evening of fun and unforgettable moments, inspiring many guests to leave their mark on the dance floor.
This year’s gala also had a special guest appearance by baseball Hall of Famer, Orlando Cepeda. The legendary baseball player donated his time and company as part of a live auction package that featured a private jet trip (courtesy of the Nieves family) to San Francisco, limo service to attend a Giants game, and an exclusive dinner with Mr. Cepeda.

If you missed your chance to attend this year, mark your calendars for next year’s event!

The sixth annual Celebrating a Vision of Peace, Peace Gala will be held on Saturday, October 9, 2010, with guest entertainer Judy Collins.

You can purchase tickets online at http://gala.soka.edu
Or contact Linda Kennedy Safran at lsafran@soka.edu or (949) 480-4072
RYOSUKE ISHII (Class of 2010)

...My family wanted me to attend SUA, and because I trusted my parents and grandparents, I applied and was accepted. After New York City, I now found myself surrounded by people with different passions than what I was used to. They seemed to care about their studies, their families, the world, the environment and even creating peace. I felt like a blank canvas and I too wanted to find a new passion... SUA has helped me tap into my humanity and grow and polish myself as I help others do the same.

SWAPNIL MATHUR (Class of 2010)

...As I struggled at the end of my sophomore year, I was heartbroken; sure I would not be able to remain here because of finances. To my great surprise, after being called to the financial aid office, standing there, with my mouth hanging open, in TOTAL SHOCK, I was told I was awarded the Brian Daisaku McCloskey Scholarship, a scholarship created by the McCloskey family, who are here tonight. This scholarship enabled me to continue my junior year. At the same time, I also received the Soka Opportunity Scholarship for families with less than $60,000.00 a year income, to pay for my senior year, which now allows me to become a future graduate of Soka University of America. I see what my dreams are made of as I chronicle photographically the culturally rich environment I am in.

MENG-CHING LIN (Class of 2012)

...I was a member of “Peace Angels”, a very rare non-governmental youth activity group between China and Taiwan, which began in 1995. Each year, around 50 Mainland Chinese elementary school students were selected and sent to Taiwan for cultural exchange... In 2001, I was chosen to be one of the students to go to China. I was determined to fulfill my mission, which was to become a bridge between China and Taiwan...

I realized during my 10 day stay in China that it doesn’t matter whether the government is communist or democratic; we were both human beings sharing the same Chinese origins. As I hugged my newfound Chinese friends goodbye, tears ran down our cheeks. The genuineness of one person touching another’s heart can transcend all differences, boundaries and borders.
AKIKO TOMITA (Class of 2011)
...Everyone has struggles within and outside their families, and it doesn't matter what the circumstances are. In my high school years, this was especially true when I moved from the peaceful and tranquil Switzerland society to Nepal. I arrived in the midst of a revolution in progress. From day one, adapting to soldiers and armies pointing guns at you every fifty meters was frightening. I was affected by the poverty and misery all around me. Just as in a movie, a backdrop is created to enhance a scene; in my mind's eye, revolution was the backdrop of my high school years... I became determined to go to Soka University of America to take one more step to becoming a peacemaker myself.

CHRISTOPHER LARKIN
(Class of 2013)
...At the darkest point in my life I was introduced to a spiritual path that helped me view my life in new ways and dramatically alter my path. I made a decision to transform the negative cycle I was in and move away from drugs and my old patterns. I started to study again and made a determination to go to college. I had not been in school for five years, had taken drugs continuously and was in and out of institutions. I transformed from a person with no future to a person that would not be defeated. From self-teaching, to being tutored, to taking college tests, my grades just got better and better. As I traveled fifty miles a day by bus to college, I found that I loved school and learning. Who ever knew academics could be so invigorating, more so than any drug I had taken. My mom and I even began to speak again... I entered SUA last August, hopeful and eager a global citizen in training.

HANNAH SHIMIZU (Class of 2010)
...At SUA, everyone has to study abroad in his or her junior year; my choice was to go to Mexico... While in Xalapa, I did an internship with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that helps children living on the street and children who are working. I was involved in a project with other university students focusing on preventing sexually transmitted diseases in the local community... My study abroad experience taught me why I am here at SUA. Facing my own challenges and overcoming them I have become someone who really understands another person's suffering. I have a deeper sense of responsibility now to contribute to society. I see now that the world is waiting for those of us who are receiving the most humanistic education of Soka! I believe that because of my study abroad I can truly make positive changes in the world.
Since the day I graduated from SUA, I was filled with a burning desire to take action and make a difference in the world. I knew that I wanted to get involved in humanitarian work, but I was unsure of what career path to follow. I was left stressed and confused.

However, during my senior year I came across a unique charity, called Free The Children and decided to found a Free The Children club at SUA to fundraise and raise awareness. Free The Children is a youth-run organization that helps children receive an education in developing countries. The values of the organization were in sync with those of SUA, that is, peace, culture, education, global citizenship, and humanism. Immediately after graduating, I was offered a full-time internship at Free The Children’s head office in Toronto.

In September 2008, I started my new job working for Me to We Leadership, which is a social enterprise that offers leadership development opportunities for youth across North America to help them live as socially conscious global and local citizens. By empowering youth through education and leadership development, Me to We directly supports the work of Free The Children. I’ve had an amazing opportunity to empower students to make a difference and educate them on global and local issues through motivational speeches and interactive workshops in high schools across North America. I have also helped organize youth festivals, student curriculums, and most recently, facilitate youth trips to Kenya to build schools with Free The Children and help other development projects in indigenous communities.

In December 2008, I had an opportunity to travel to Africa (Kenya) to visit the communities that Free The Children work with. It was an incredibly eye opening experience which has motivated me to work harder to help others. In March of 2009, I returned to Kenya for the second time with a group of university students to learn about the development projects that Free The Children have established in Kenya, as well as teach them about the local and global issues affecting small communities in Kenya. We also helped build an elementary school. My life-changing experience in Kenya led me to some of the most incredible people I have ever met. The
women that I met in the rural communities of the Massai Mara emit an incredible energy of strength and hope. They welcomed us with warm songs and dancing. They showed us their homes and they took us on the long journey to fetch water from the river (which can take hours). When we passed them in our trucks, they took the time to drop the gallons of water they carry on their back and dropped the large bundle of wood they carry on their chest, just to wave at us as we passed. That is a mere glimpse of the kind of people who live in the communities we work with. It has been a truly humbling experience.

Upon returning to Canada, I was hired as a full-time manager of the Me to We Leadership Department. Empowering youth for a living is the most gratifying job I could ever ask for. I absolutely love my job, and I feel that it resonates well with the Soka educational philosophy that I received. Every day I live the mission of SUA through my job, and for that, I am ever grateful and even more determined.
My name is Jahmile Torrejon and am a part of the undergraduate class of 2010, and I recently finished my study abroad in Shanghai, China.

During the summer after Study Abroad I reflected on how learning comes to us through several different vehicles. I find Soka University’s ability to encompass its students’ different learning needs a truly thrilling quality. But these various approaches to learning also apply when it comes to a new language and culture.

I am glad Soka strongly suggested I pick between Japanese or Chinese, since I already spoke Spanish, for it would only expand my horizons. However, nothing could have prepared me for those beautiful yet very complex Chinese characters. I was definitely far from the best in my class, and once in China, I did not qualify for higher class levels.

Yet, once I was able to experience the culture, I expanded my global perspectives and momentarily quenched my thirst for a better understanding of the world and its diversity.

Growing up in Latin America, I seldom encountered authentic exposure to Chinese culture. To my pleasant surprise, I found several cultural,
gastronomic, and social similarities between China and Latin America. However, I also learned that my unfamiliarity with this culture was indicative of the lack of cultural awareness that exists between the two civilizations. Consequently, I began having meaningful exchanges with my Chinese roommate. Every so often we cooked our traditional meals and ate while sharing and noting the similarities and differences of our customs. At the end of my study abroad, I left with a better understanding of areas where misunderstandings and prejudices could be formed due to lack of understanding, as well as other common areas that should be highlighted and celebrated. She expressed her new appreciation for the exposure to a culture she had never really given much prior thought. And naturally, I was extremely grateful for the intercultural experience, for it gave me a tease of a beautiful way of life that I look forward to exploring further. It also gave me a possible orientation as to where to focus my desires for cultural exchange… hopefully in the near future.

While recently traveling in the mountains of Peru, I met a Shanghainese lady. To my own surprise, I was able to carry on a short but informative conversation in Chinese…leaps and bounds from where I had begun. Study abroad gave me the chance to learn outside the classroom, which was imperative for my way of learning. We not only leave more knowledgeable in a language but we also get a small piece of a “different”, and perhaps not so different, culture. It has brought me closer to something that once seemed so foreign.

Today, although I am still not where I would like to be in terms of my Chinese language abilities, my desire to perfect the language has grown immensely. Exposure to the language dramatically improved my existing language capabilities and exposure to the culture expanded my life and future goals.
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SOKA STUDENT: PETER KARUPPIAH, SOKA STUDENT UNION (SSU) PRESIDENT

BREACKFAST!

Urban Anthropology with Professor Ted Lowe

Health class with Professor Jill English

A quick break for a chat with friends

Executive Committee meeting as SSU President

SOCCER
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SOKA STUDENT: PETER KARUPPIAH, SOKA STUDENT UNION (SSU) PRESIDENT

Walking to lunch with Kamron Jafari (Class of 2010)

LUNCHTIME!

Cultures of Learning with Professor James Spady

Work at Founders Hall!

Recycling for charity!

DINNERTIME!

End of the night: Homework time!
The landscape of Soka University of America is changing dramatically this Fall as our new state-of-the-art performing arts center is coming out of the ground. This distinctive facility will herald in a new level of excellence, exploration, and discovery on campus. At Soka University, imagination and creativity are regarded as essential qualities for global leadership. Through the creative arts, students develop an appreciation for the universal human creative spirit and enhance their creative thinking and problem-solving skills, which can be transferred to other endeavors. The new facilities will strengthen the university’s capacity to offer our students an academically rigorous, international liberal arts education.

The three-level performing arts center will feature a multipurpose theatre that is innovative and flexible enough in its design to create a concert hall stage environment within the theatre. The performing arts center features acoustical design by world renowned acoustician, Yasuhisa Toyota of Nagata Acoustics, whose notable achievements include the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Suntory Hall and Sapporo Hall in Japan.

Soka University of America would not exist or continue to exist without the generous contributions of many donors on an annual basis and through periodic gifts to support capital projects, endowment or special programs.

Envision is Soka University of America’s capital campaign to raise funds for the construction of the new performing arts center and academic building that allow for program expansion and excellence. Envision will officially launch publicly on January 4, 2010, with a new “Take a Seat” campaign. Donors, friends, alumni and members of the community will be able to dedicate a seat in our new 1,000 seat hall with a gift of $10,000.

Over the course of the university’s brief history, SUA has benefited from the extraordinary donors whose cumulative charitable contributions have been instrumental in supporting the university’s phenomenal growth and academic excellence.

Beginning January 4, 2010, you can donate to the “Take a Seat” campaign online at www.soka.edu/giving.
The Founders Circle is the bedrock of Soka’s philanthropic support and recognizes generous donors who have gifted $100,000 and above to the university. Donors’ names are inscribed on the Founder’s Circle wall, a travertine stone wall located outside of Founders Hall at Peace Fountain overlooking Peace Lake.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the opening of Soka University of America at Aliso Viejo, California, SUA has created three new levels of recognition for our Founders Circle donors to honor and appreciate their generous support of the university since 2001.

These levels are:

**Founders Circle Platinum Donors:**
$250,000 and above

**Founders Circle Diamond Donors:**
$500,000 and above

**Founders Circle Pillars of Soka Education:**
$1,000,000 and above

Founders Circle Platinum and Diamond donors will be honored on a donor wall prominently located in the new performing arts center.

Founders Circle of Pillars of Soka Education will be recognized on a pillar located in the lobby of the new performing arts center.

For additional information about the Founders Circle, please contact:

Linda Kennedy Safran
Director of Philanthropy
at (949) 480-4072
or call toll-free at
(800) 600-SOKA
THROUGH A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

Charitable gift annuities provide streams of income paying 5% to 8.6%, depending on the age of the donor. Charitable gift annuities allow donors to make a gift to benefit Soka University of America, receive an income for life, and also for a spouse's lifetime, and obtain a charitable income tax deduction at the time the gift is made. This vehicle requires a minimum gift of $5,000. Cash, appreciated securities and real estate may be gifted in exchange for a charitable gift annuity.

Benefits of a Charitable Gift Annuity

A charitable gift annuity to Soka University provides mutual benefits to both the donor and Soka University. A charitable gift annuity provides the following benefits:

- A stream of income for the lifetime of the donor and/or the donor’s spouse
- A charitable income tax deduction
- Avoidance or reduction of capital gains taxes on gifts of appreciated property
- Membership in Soka University’s Legacy Society
- A reduction in federal estate taxes
- A chance to support the mission of Soka University of America

Charitable Gift Annuity

Soka University of America has partnered with the Orange County Community Foundation to offer its supporters an opportunity to make a gift to the university through a charitable gift annuity. The charitable gift annuity is a contract between the donor and the Orange County Community Foundation. Through the contract, the Orange County Community Foundation is obligated to pay a fixed payout rate to the donor and/or donor’s spouse for life.

### SAMPLE RATES

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Deduction amounts are based on applicable I.R.S. discount rate of gifts in February 2009.

IRA Rollover Update: Utilize your IRA to Support Charity

If you are 70 ½ or older, the “Extenders and Alternatives Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008” allows you to transfer up to $100,000 from your traditional IRA directly to charity without impacting your income tax level. Extended through the end of 2009, this act allows you to support SUA and may reduce your required minimum distribution for 2010.

For More Information

You can contact Linda Kennedy Safran at (949) 480-4072 or email her at lsafran@soka.edu
2010 calendar of Events

FEBRUARY 14 & 15, 2010

MARCH 4, 2010
Classical Piano Concert with Dan Franklin Smith, Founders Hall 1st Fl, 7 pm, Admission: $15, free for under 18. Tickets for concert sold at the door. Free parking. Questions: info@soka.edu, (949) 480-4081

MARCH 26, 2010
Jazz Monsters Concert, Founders Hall 1st Fl, 7 pm, Admission: $15, free for under 18. Tickets for concert sold at the door. Free parking. Questions: info@soka.edu, (949) 480-4081

MAY 1, 2010
Soka University’s 9th Annual International Festival, 10:30 am - 5:30 pm, Admission Free, Parking on campus: $10 (please carpool!).

MAY 26, 2010
Jazz Monsters Concert Under the Stars, Outdoor Campus Green Stage, 7 pm, $15 for adults, free for under 18, Free parking. Directions and map: www.soka.edu/directions. Questions: info@soka.edu, (949) 480-4081

MAY 28, 2010
Class of 2010 Commencement Ceremony, Recreation Center, 2 pm. Admission with ticket only.

For more information on these events, please contact Soka University of America at (949) 480-4000 or visit www.soka.edu/sokanews.
A NEW WAY TO SUPPORT SUA
The Development Office now has the ability to set up recurring online credit card donations. Just call Coleen Scherf-Ghara, Manager of Domestic Development, at (949) 480-4073. Every month your donation will be charged to your credit card and automatically deposited in the Soka Education Fund. What could be easier?

Have You Moved Recently?
We would like to keep you informed of the wonderful news from SUA, so if you have a new address, please let us know by sending an e-mail to Coleen Scherf-Ghara at cscherfghara@soka.edu or contact her directly at (949) 480-4073. If you know someone who has mentioned they no longer hear from SUA, please make sure they contact us so we can update their information.

SUA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER: UNDER CONSTRUCTION