

## Generation Peace Academy started Overseas and Adventuring experiences

Akira Watanabe  
February 9, 2023  
Dominican Republic



GPA has started their OVERSEAS and ADVENTURING experiences! We have four groups - the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Peru, and Winter Adventuring in the Adirondacks.

Follow us with updates and blogs from our participants!

We will start with our first post from the Dominican Republic

### **Dominican Republic Day 1: Knowing their Roots**

At 3:30 in the morning, at a peaceful ranch in Blanco, TX, the alarm wakes up 17 young people of Generation Peace Academy for them to head towards the airport for a very special mission. Crowding towards the service gate, all hearts were bursting with excitement to experience this new journey for the next 21 days.



Fast forward 12 hours later, we all landed in a beautiful Caribbean country, surrounded by clear blue waters and warm, kind-hearted people... ¡Bienvenidos a República Dominicana!

My name's Rie, and let me take you along the path we'll be taking here in the Dominican Republic this month. It'll be filled with the passion and zeal that young people hold within themselves to witness this true unconditional love to the people around this country, for us to be able to contribute to building "One family under God!"

When we landed at the airport, we were welcomed by delighted brothers and sisters of the Family Federation Church in the Dominican Republic. As it was most GPA members' first time in this new country, we were also filled with the same amount of nervousness yet excitement for what we'll get to experience.



We ended this first day by simply spending time with the community, eating their DELICIOUS homemade pizzas, and closing the night by reflecting more on our determinations.

Waking up bright and early, we all prepared for the day by receiving some words from Rev. Sun Myung Moon, inheriting from the life he led as he set the example of how to see everything as a gift given by God.

This morning's inspiration and focus kept us going for the rest of the day, as this day focused on us learning more about the country and the foundation it lays on top of. The sun was bright and shining upon the city; now, it was time to explore!



Uncle Cesar, a member of the Family Federation, led us around the main city of Santo Domingo. The streets were filled with popping colors and waves of laughter from the children playing around in the town. He first took us to a Catholic Cathedral, now a historical museum, to understand this country's



spiritual and religious background. Especially as young people learning to cultivate our lives of diathermy, it was a beautiful place to cleanse our hearts in as well.

We then visited Independence Park, where independence for this country was declared back in 1844. Paying our respects to this movement's founders helped us more deeply connect to the sacrifices made for this country to be where it is today.

Later in the afternoon, we visited the Los Tres Ojos National Park, established in 1977. It's compiled with four underground coves leading toward clear still water. Going inside felt like it was leading toward paradise. The air and green colors blended with the blue waters were breathtaking and surreal.

After all the traveling, we returned to the center for one final planned activity.



After our dinner, we all gathered at the chapel to receive a testimony from the Dominican Republic's very own elder, one of the missionaries staying in this country the longest. Coming from Japan, Rev. Kono told us about his experience of being given this mission in a foreign country at a young age. Despite the initial challenges and hardships, he shared his absolute love towards God and the founders of our movement, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, which kept him going to serve this country for the past 27 years! His words for our youth, GPA, were so beautiful that I also want to share with you all: "Without you, even Almighty God cannot save the world." This mindset and attitude that he held, that God needs him must've been what allowed God to work through him and flourish this beautiful community that we see now in Santo Domingo.

From tomorrow on, we'll be preparing our hearts to share this truth and love with the people out in the Dominican Republic, so stay tuned to what we'll be able to offer for God and this country!