

Generation Peace Academy Dominican Republic Update: God's Gift for Us

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February 25, 2023



Hola! So continuing from where we left off last time, on our first day here in Santiago, we visited Santiago's Memorial Park, where we learned about the various historical figures that bought the Dominican Republic to where it is today as an independent country. A CARP member, Young Carlos, took us around, explaining in depth the *significancia* of each person. What touched me the most was that they were able to bring victory because they always put God first.



Later in the day, we listened to testimonies from our Cheon Il Guk missionaries, who have served here in the Dominican Republic for the past four months! Although they're the same age as us, hearing young people offer their lives for the sake of God was so touching, especially as we heard about how their lives were transforming through practicing loving others and sharing the truth.



Our time here in Santiago was only a day. After a few hours of sitting in a bus, we finally arrived at La Finca, a church-owned farmland where we'll be doing our service work. When we welcomed the morning and saw everything in full colors, words alone couldn't even express the beauty of God's creation. The vibrant hues of the flowers bloomed from across the hills to the paths surrounding the houses. Horses galloping across the fields and playing around with each other set such a peaceful atmosphere. Bananas, oranges, coconuts, and papaya, showered with a lot of love, filled us up every meal.



Time to hustle for our service work! We split into four groups to work on certain parts of the farm. The first group painted the bridge above the river for its new color to pop out. Working over the river was so

cooling and therapeutic; going inside it afterward was refreshing! The second group was composed of all the string brothers because they were responsible for picking up wood from the forest area for future projects around the farm. Some eventually came to help with the third group, which was harvesting! There was already a huge field with a couple of plants growing, but we also added corn, papaya, and pumpkin seeds to the land! I can't wait to see them grow in a couple more months! The last group added to what the previous GPA volunteers built: their basketball court. Our group added a fence around the court. Hands turned silver as they painted each stick that was eventually attached to build a fence they had to fix on the ground.



I want to share an experience that I had myself!

"Since my grandma in Japan was a farmer, I was excited to experience farming for the first time. Honestly, it wasn't easy to work at all. My back was constantly being used, eventually becoming sore, but I wanted to keep going because I knew that my grandma also had been doing it her whole life. I felt more gratitude for everything given to me already because I realize the amount of hard work that is actually poured into even one fruit to become ripe and ready to be eaten."

Meal times were incredibly filling because of the hard work we invested in bringing more smiles to this community in the future who get to spend time in La Finca. But also because we've been sharing gratitude points every mealtime, which is a very simple yet substantial way to receive love from God.

Eventually, we finished our service work and will now be transitioning to our reflection workshop to digest everything we experienced during the two-and-a-half weeks of the trip. Waking up at 5 in the morning, we drove 4 hours to Punta Cana! Once again, the clear blue ocean felt like a cleanser for our souls and bodies.

We even got to experience something even crazier... snorkeling! Riding on a boat, we sailed to the ocean and saw the little creatures living inside with our goggles. I realize each time that there's so much beauty in God's creation that should be explored through viewing the Dominican Republic's gorgeous nature.

Thank you for keeping up to date with everything we've been doing! This isn't the end of the trip, so let us know if you'd like to know more, and until next time, bye!