

FFWPU USA: Unificationists Jeffrey Silerio and Jennifer Silerio 200+ Hours of Volunteering

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Jeffrey Silerio (left) and Jennifer Silerio (right) serving their Las Vegas community

"Volunteering is a lifestyle for me," says Jeffrey Silerio. "I believe that volunteering shouldn't be an unpleasant chore or something that we do out of necessity to fulfill volunteer hours. Rather, volunteering should be an enjoyable experience where we get to go out with friends, explore our community, and make a difference."

Jeffrey and his younger sister Jennifer are well known in their Las Vegas community. He currently runs the Shine City Project ([SCP](#)), a volunteer initiative that first began among a group of Unificationists in 2013. Most recently, the two siblings earned national recognition with the [President's Volunteer Service Award](#) - having devoted more than 100 hours each to volunteering throughout 2021.

"I feel grateful for the opportunity to serve my community," says Jeffrey. "I always enjoy discovering new places where we can help out; it's very rewarding. The desire to make a change in Las Vegas also motivates me to keep going, because as a native of Las Vegas, I hope to show others that this city is our home and we can create a more loving and caring environment for everyone."

After connecting with SCP's founder on campus during college, Jeffrey has remained committed to volunteering with the group for nearly a decade. Inspired by his faith and family upbringing, he says his passion for serving others was inevitable.

"In high school, I always spent my lunch time helping other students with their math questions," he says, "so I was eager to do something again for my community. Our True Parents believed that something special can happen in Las Vegas and that our city can be a model city for others to follow. I believe if a

change can happen in Las Vegas, a change can happen everywhere."

Jennifer soon joined her brother in 2016 as she sought to make a difference in people's lives. "I like working with like-minded people who want to help the community," she says. "It brings me happiness and a sense of fulfillment when others are able to feel joy from the service work we do."

In 2021, SCP volunteers [ramped up their presence](#), partnering with a wide range of nonprofits and other organizations such as Green Our Planet, Ahern Orchard, and the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. By the end of the year, SCP had amassed 1,150 service hours in the greater Las Vegas area and completed 48 service projects in total - nearly one every week.

"Even though I am just one person, I've inspired others in my community to contribute even more," says Jeffrey. "I believe that the efforts of any one person can create a ripple effect with other people."

"Through volunteering, people in the community can see that we want to help those who are less fortunate and also save the environment," says Jennifer. "Other people feel encouraged and empowered to make a difference in their community as well."

The siblings say they feel honored to be recognized by the U.S. President with a certificate from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. Since 2003, the President's Volunteer Service Award has celebrated the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity. The award honors individuals whose purpose positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action, too.

"These are amazing young people who are really the model people in America today," says Rev. Miilhan Stephans, president of Youth and Students for Peace ([YSP](#)) USA, which presented the award to the Silerios and seven other young people from around the country on Jan. 22. YSP is certified to give various levels of the award based on age and the amount of hours volunteered within a 12-month period.

"We're honoring outstanding volunteers and recognizing the great impact they make," says Rev. Stephans. "These service opportunities also help them grow and find their own place in changing the world."

For the Silerios, 2022 will continue as a year full of volunteering, with each day a new opportunity to give and serve more people. "We will do our best to make Las Vegas shine and show others the value of living a life for the sake of others," says Jeffrey.

SHINE CITY PROJECT

FROM SIN CITY TO SHINE CITY



ABOUT

EIGHT YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZED A CLEANUP AT THE CORNER OF SAHARA AVENUE AND LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD ON **MARCH 16, 2013**. THE SERVICE PROJECT WAS HELD IN FRONT OF BONANZA GIFT SHOP, WHICH IS POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE "WORLD'S LARGEST GIFT SHOP". THIS OCCASION WOULD MARK THE BEGINNING FOR AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE GOAL WOULD BE TO TURN LAS VEGAS **FROM "SIN CITY" TO "SHINE CITY"**.

IN A CITY OF LUSTFUL DESIRES, GREEDY TRANSACTIONS, AND SELF-INDULGENCES, SHINE CITY PROJECT **CHALLENGES OUR CITY'S CULTURE OF SELF-CENTEREDNESS TO BECOME ONE OF SELFLESSNESS**. WE AIM TO **BUILD LEADERS OF HEART AND CHARACTER WHO SHARE LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR OTHERS** WHILE BEING **STEWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**. TOGETHER, WE WILL CREATE A MORE **LOVING AND CARING COMMUNITY** WHICH IN TURN CAN CREATE A MORE **LOVING AND PEACEFUL WORLD**. IF A CHANGE CAN HAPPEN IN LAS VEGAS, **A CHANGE CAN HAPPEN EVERYWHERE**.

OUR INSPIRATION

Rev. Sun Myung Moon and
Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

The inspiration for starting Shine City Project came from Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. The two have inspired and pioneered for a worldwide movement



for peace across races, religions, and nationalities. By creating loving families and by living for the sake of others and for the world, world peace is achievable.



"Heaven is not what we are given but what we must build." – Rev. Sun Myung Moon

OUR AFFILIATES

YOUTH AND STUDENTS FOR PEACE (YSP)

To advance world peace by empowering youth and students to become global citizens through character education and peace projects supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals



Collegiate Association for the Research for Principles (CARP)

Seeks to create an inspired youth movement progressing society to become a global family united upon Universal Principles. We empower young adults to become global leaders who will contribute towards building a unified world centered upon God's love, by providing education and training based upon our core values.

WHAT'S NEXT?



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JEFFREY SILERIO OR EMAIL SHINECITYPROJECTLV@GMAIL.COM.

GALLERY





October 30, 2015 @ Haunted Harvest, Springs Preserve



October 20, 2018 @ 33 Hole Overlook, Lake Mead



March 2, 2019 @ Las Vegas Wash



August 17, 2019 @ Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada with International Leadership Training Program (ILTP)



September 2, 2015 @ UNLV Involvement Fair



July 31, 2015 @ Las Vegas Rescue Mission



July 25, 2015 @ Clean the World



Shine City Project's 2nd Anniversary Celebration (March 14, 2015)



April 26, 2013 @ Lorenzi Park



August 16, 2014 @ CARP Las Vegas Learning Center



Shine City Project's 3rd Anniversary Celebration (March 18, 2016)



August 22, 2014 @ CARP Las Vegas House



November 9, 2019 @ Just One Project - Helen Marie Smith Elementary School



October 13, 2018 @ Las Vegas Wash with Generation Peace Academy



August 15, 2014 @ Mt. Charleston



April 25, 2014 @ El Pollo Loco



August 9, 2014 @ Rebel Recycling Center



Shine City Project's 1st Anniversary (March 15, 2014 @ Sunset Park)



April 27, 2019 @ Pittman Wash



April 20, 2019 @ Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary



Our First Service Project (March 16, 2013 @ World's Largest Gift Shop)



March 9, 2019 @ Las Vegas Community Healing Garden



Shine City Project's 6th Anniversary Celebration (March 16, 2019 @ CARP Las Vegas Learning Center)

CONTACT

Interested in joining?
Have a service project
idea? Want to

Name *



Message



An Eventful Year of Giving



Courtesy of Shine City Project and YSP Bay Area & Chicago

“2021 was truly an eventful year,” said Jeff Silerio, director of the Shine City Project ([SCP](#)) in Las Vegas. “It was great to spend time with people we care about and appreciate, but we’re also grateful for the many volunteers who joined our service projects throughout the year. Together, we put in more than 1,150 volunteer hours and completed 48 service projects,” – nearly one every week.

Despite the pandemic, Unificationists across the U.S., like Silerio, were delighted to make a difference in their communities during the past year through a range of service projects benefiting countless people in need.

“In 2020, everything changed; our service projects were put on hold, and there was uncertainty about when we would be able to see each other in person again,” said Silerio. “We learned to live our lives at home, learned new skills and hobbies, and familiarized ourselves with virtual meetings. But 2021 was different.”

With some ease of restrictions, volunteers hit the ground running.

“For 11 consecutive weeks, we focused on helping with meal services for both residents of the Rescue Mission shelter and our local community,” said Silerio. “We also mixed soil in garden beds, revegetated areas with plants, raised funds for a community garage sale, performed yard work, welcomed visitors to a holiday theme park, and we handed out food at a mobile food pantry. We even had the opportunity to help out at a gala and auction for the

Shaquille O'Neal Foundation.”

SCP welcomed familiar faces and connected with new people as well, with many looking to contribute their time and talents to various causes. Partnering with a host of local organizations – including CARP Las Vegas, YSP USA, GPA, Green Our Planet, Ahern Orchard, Harrison House, and Get Outdoors Nevada to name a few – the group was able to make a tremendous impact, particularly during the holidays.

On Dec. 4, SCP volunteered with Opportunity Village, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing enrichment, empowerment, and employment opportunities to people with disabilities. SCP helped staff the nonprofit's Magical Forest fundraising event, which supports different programs, services, benefits and wages for those with disabilities.

The following week, on Dec. 11, SCP supported The Just One Project to distribute food through its mobile food pantry, which provides and delivers groceries across Southern Nevada to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. The group went to Jim Bridger Middle School, one of the 13 locations where food is given away every month by The Just One Project.

In other parts of the country, YSP chapters in the Bay Area and Chicago were also hard at work with charitable endeavors.

YSP Chicago partnered with the local CARP chapter at Harper Community College on Dec. 8. The group put together snack bags for people in need at All Saints Lutheran Church in Palatine, Ill. The group wrote positive affirmations on gift bags filled with assorted snacks and decorated bookmarks for the church.

In Oakland, YSP members supported a toy giveaway on Dec. 17 hosted by B.A.S.I.C. Ministry. Volunteers collected more than 60 toys and surpassed \$300 in donations to buy toys for kids in need. The gifts were then distributed at Elmhurst Park where there was live music entertainment, food, and a bouncy house for kids.

“The atmosphere was filled with joy from the community coming together,” said a local YSP volunteer. “The kids waited patiently for the moment when they could receive their gifts. And after lots of anticipation, the kids approached in small, excited groups and left with big smiles on their faces... To see the joy and many smiles of families as they were handed gifts was a wonderful and heartwarming experience for all of us. I would do it again in a heartbeat.”

For Silerio and many volunteers, this new year is about more opportunities to give and serve – putting their faith into practice with those they meet.

Have a story idea you'd like to share from your community? You can submit it to info@unification.org.

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International Association of

YOUTH AND STUDENTS FOR PEACE

Sharing the Culture of

HYOJEONG

[LEARN MORE](#)

IAYSP IS A GLOBAL FAMILY OF YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE WITH TRUE LOVE.

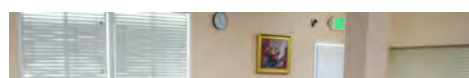
"While we may identify with a particular nationality, ethnicity, religion, or culture, we should affirm our common humanity, a value that transcends our individual backgrounds."

Sun Jin Moon, IAYSP Thailand Inaugural Address

FEATURED EVENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS



WHAT WE DO





Character Education

Peace Design Seminar

Intercultural Activities

TAKE ACTION

Do you know what the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are? In 2015 the member states of the United Nations created goals to address poverty, environmental issues, and how to ensure prosperity in all aspects for the people of the world. Each of these 17 areas have a specific goal to achieve by 2030 and it's up to each of us to learn and be aware of what they are in order to help with these global goals.

[Find Out More →](#)



International Association of Youth and Students for Peace supports the Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

