

12th annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival at Barrytown - Results

Michael Balcomb
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Program Director, Oliver Noll, thanks staff and participants for another great year at BCSF

“This will be a BCSF to remember,” was the consensus among participants at the 12th annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival, after a sudden and severe thunderstorm came over the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, NY on Saturday night, causing the outdoor fashion show and open mic to have to be relocated indoors. Dozens of both staff and participants hurried to carry staging as well as audio, lighting and electric equipment indoors before the rain came down in torrents. From there, the last-minute volunteers helped set up the gear in the dojo, and the show went on only one hour later than scheduled.

Dr. Michael Balcomb, FFWPU USA President, referenced Saturday night’s storm in the next morning’s Sunday service at BCSF, relating it to the story of Martin Luther, who, when also faced with a literal storm, made a promise to God to dedicate his life to Him. He noted that True Mother, too, made a similar promise to stay by True Father’s side in his mission, no matter what happened.



Dr. Michael Balcomb gives a message for Sunday Service at BCSF

“What was [True Father] looking for more than anything else?” he asked. “Someone who could understand [the Divine Principle] exactly like he did. The one who did was True Mother. I think it was this relationship, this power, that developed between True Parents, that sustained True Father throughout

his ministry. Because, actually, you can't do it by yourself. Even God needs somebody to work with. He needs us to be the kinds of people who will not give up."

The Blessed Culture and Sports Festival, which took place from August 10-14, was accented with incredible displays of the power of community and the spirit of persistence. In the cultural aspect of the festival, each activity was led by a team of people who were dedicated to making a lasting memory for this year's participants, from the vendors' village and fashion show to the video game tournaments and CARP talks.

"It's amazing to see what we created, and I really mean *we*. It's really a team effort here," said Jin Kwon Kim, the founder of BCSF. "We have been given this opportunity to be able to take the community, values, and people we have and create something we can really enjoy."

In sports, the New Jersey soccer team achieved an unlikely victory after being the underdogs all week. Before the finals game, the players prayed together as a team, and credited their first place win to this act of uniting and re-centering themselves with God.

On Sunday, August 14, there were few dry eyes in the dojo as all of the 2016 BCSF participants gathered to celebrate their hard-working sports teams, and moreover, to experience the family culture they commit to creating each year at BCSF.

"As we were setting up for the closing ceremony, I was asking anyone I saw to give us a hand, and everyone was more than happy to help put this together," said Oliver Noll, this year's program director. "Everyone here is really grateful to each other for stepping up to the plate this year."



Jin Kwon Kim speaks at the BCSF 2016 closing ceremony

Jin Kwon Kim spoke about the power of community at the closing ceremony. "This is year number 12 of BCSF, and there are people who are here now who don't know of a time in their lives when there was not a BCSF," he said. "I refer to this event and this time as an oasis. I come here to get away from the world. What I would love to see is that when we collectively come together like this as a nation, we see the power that happens when this group assembles, and bring it to the world. My goal is that, when you all go home, what we experience here becomes the new normal out there. Imagine that. What you experience here as a community—the trust, the friendships, the sportsmanship, the culture, the talent, the skills—imagine having that with all your friends, and that all being part of what you call normal."

"I have a daughter," Jin Kwon continued, "and I'm trusting everyone in this room that my daughter, when she grows up, is going to be a part of this community. So how we move forward as a community is how my daughter is going to be raised. All I'm asking you is, as a partnership, as a creative process together, that we continue this, and we continue to grow."

After this message, the sports and culture coordinators took the stage to announce the winners for each tournament, handing out trophies and posing for photos with each team. Below are the winners of this year's BCSF competitions and tournaments:



Fashion Show at BCSF

Soccer

1st place: New Jersey
2nd place: New York
3rd place: Canada

Basketball

1st place: Texas
2nd place: Pennsylvania
3rd place: Worcester

Volleyball

1st place: New York
2nd place: Maryland
3rd place: New Jersey

Frisbee

1st place: Maryland
2nd place: New York
3rd place: New Jersey

Women's 5K Run

1st Minori Minagawa – Time 21:21
2nd SungMi Johnson – Time 30:14
3rd Sonja Moik – Time 32:48

Men's 5K Run

1st place: Yuta Suzuki – Time 21:21
2nd place: Masa Suzuki – Time 25:03
3rd place: Christopher Krienbuehl – Time 25:47

Ping Pong

1st place: Yuki Jones
2nd place: Akira Nakazu
3rd place: Resfred Arthur

Badminton

1st place: Taka Sugawara and Oji Bahian
2nd place: Kwonji Reese and Tatsumi Suenuga
3rd place: Hiro Passalacqua and Shogo