

## CARP USA: I couldn't help but run with burning love and joy in pioneering CARP

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My name is Alicia, and I'm a nursing student and pre-professional science major graduating Spring 2023. My journey with CARP started in December 2017 when I attended a Divine Principle retreat and thought "never in a million years am I going to start CARP at my campus" - and yet, by the end of the retreat, I was strategizing how to pioneer a chapter with my mentors.

My heart was touched by the lectures and testimonies presented that shared how my loving Heavenly Parent has been aching in pain as He longed to embrace his children. I began to realize how much God's love and grace had been working in my life, and I couldn't help but run with burning love and joy in pioneering a CARP family on my campus where God could feel that His heart could joyfully and peacefully reside in.

I quickly realized, though, that pioneering a chapter was not as simple as it seemed on paper. My biggest challenge came when I transferred from my community college to Westminster and was almost immediately met with backlash. I was blessed to have met my to-be advisor, Jan Saeed,

who is the Director for the Office of Global Peace and Spirituality, and she helped me find the connections and students to start a chapter.

However, a group of students pushed back and spread flyers and stories around campus saying malicious rumors about CARP. They met with my advisor and pushed her to drop her position as an advisor and even petitioned to prohibit the establishment of CARP altogether. There were days where I was afraid to walk around campus because people would say horrid things or even throw things at me. In my darkest hour, I felt so hurt, alone, and misunderstood - my dream from the sincerest place of my heart was to build a family where we could dream what a world of peace would be and actualize this vision through the teachings of the Divine Principle in living for the sake of others.

I found myself swelling with anger and hurt. I wanted to turn around and report the obvious religious discrimination, and I questioned why God had guided me to lead CARP at all, for persecution was what challenged my faith the most. But a couple of weeks later, I watched Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of CARP, stand in front of 30,000 people in New York; I watched as she chose to love unconditionally. I watched as she loved those who have worked against her, as she loved in the face of the greatest fear, and how she even loved the country that wrongly placed her husband in jail.

In witnessing this, I have discovered a piece of what composes CARP's incomparable beauty: the ability to love so unconditionally. At that moment, I dreamed to also love unconditionally. I discovered this is what it truly means to live for the sake of others, to love someone who has caused you the greatest pain and to do so for their sake. In realizing this, I was determined from the deepest sincerity of my heart to be united with God in overtaking my campus with love.

A few weeks after the rally, my school's administration apologized for the discrimination and CARP was approved.



As time went on, I realized that it is the young people who change the world because they are the ones who determine the cultural and philosophical thought of the future, and the tremendous importance of CARP is to substantially realize God's original dream, vision, and hope of fostering a culture of heart. God longs to find a place in our hearts where His heart can joyfully and peacefully reside in, and He dreams of us building peace-loving families that embody His innermost dream. CARP is the organization that raises these young leaders who can do this.

In my own life, I've come to know that God didn't need me to be just another college student, but that God needed me to be a CARP student; I am overwhelmed by that realization and love in how God has guided my journey. I've learned what it means to fly in my faith, to find real love in my relationships by having a desire and willingness to continually grow - and that in order to become the kind of wife that I want to be for God and my future spouse, I must first become the kind of daughter and sister who seeks to live for the sake of others. CARP has shown me what it means to be a truly unconditionally loving person in the face of great challenges and persecution and to embrace the journey of growth and humility that accompanies such a path.

Regardless of where my journey takes me next, I know that CARP has been the instrumental framework in sculpting the moral compass in which I want to live the rest of my life.