

## CARP USA: Welcome to the Team, Ryota!

Ryota Naito  
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Ryota with his parents at his graduation

Hello everyone! My name is Ryota Naito. I am honored to be the newest staff on the National CARP team!

I graduated cum laude from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Media Studies. I was a member of the [CARP Las Vegas](#) hub for five years. I served as a chapter member, vice-president, president, outreach coordinator, and media team member/director during my time.

My life started on the other side of the country; I was born in New York, raised in New Jersey. I am the eldest of four; I have two brothers and one sister. We were raised by loving and hard-working parents. No matter what challenges life brought them especially as immigrants navigating family life in America, my parents' desire for us to freely grow to our individual selves never changed.

Growing up as a Japanese-American, a big part of my upbringing was finding belonging. One aspect was cultural, but I realized it was more

than that. I picked up skateboarding in sixth grade, and that was where I found a place for my creative expression. It led me to other interests like video-editing, photography, illustrating - mostly anything related to visual arts.





Although I found a part of myself, I couldn't deny that I wasn't fully happy with my life. In high school, I had a lot of friends, but I found myself being cynical. I was skeptical if people were being authentic with themselves or just putting on a facade, which inevitably made me question if I was being true to myself. My plan was to go to art school, but I wasn't satisfied with that decision. If I continued the path I was on, I felt I would simply follow the societal flow without making any conscious decision for my own life.

When I learned about a faith and leadership program initiated by Father and Mother Moon called [Generation Peace Academy](#) (GPA), my heart was clear that this was something I wanted to do. I wanted to seek answers to what kind of life I wanted to create and find out if God was real; this opportunity gave me a chance for that. I deferred my first year of college intending to become an art student and took a gap year to join this program.

My time on GPA was the first time really looking at myself - my character, my relationship with others, and what values I believed in. I had moments and experiences of feeling genuinely loved, at peace, and finding belonging. I also had moments when I was confronted by my self-limiting thoughts, challenges to love myself and others, and more. As a way to contribute back to GPA, I decided to continue with a second year by helping others on their journey of self discovery.



*Ryota with fellow team leaders and core staff from GPA at Poon Hill, Nepal*

This was also the first time I learned about Father and Mother Moon's life. It gave me hope that there are people in this world who gave their entire lives for peace. Traveling to many new places across the United States and especially overseas to the Philippines and Nepal helped me see the scope of their love that impacted lives worldwide.





After GPA, I was looking for a place where I can start school while continuing to nurture everything that I learned from the past two years. CARP Las Vegas was presented to me, and although it was a leap of faith, I quickly realized this was where I needed to be.







CARP challenged me to discover what I truly believed in and what would bear the most meaning in my life. In particular, I learned more in depth about the principles that CARP stands for and learned to share it with others. Seeing how practicing these principles transformed my life and others, I knew it was something worth sharing. When I share these principles with another person, I step into the role of supporting them in their spiritual journey and self discovery. To be part of that journey for someone has been one of the most precious experiences for me in my life.







CARP also allowed me to experience what it's like to strive for a vision that I find purpose in. For our Las Vegas chapter, we wanted to make a difference on our college campuses by standing for the values of marriage, family, and sexual integrity. We did it through [Campus Talk](#), an initiative where we wanted to create a platform for professors and students to have dialogue on relevant issues in our society. Within two years, it grew from a two-hour conference inviting local professors as speakers, to a full-day conference garnering experts and like-minded organizations in the field from across the nation. I realized what we have to share is not just for people who are seeking religion or spirituality - it's for all people.









An especially rewarding experience for me was putting together a social media campaign during my final semester of university, where we collaborated with [CARP Bay Area](#) and [BYU-Idaho Child and Family Advocacy Society](#) to produce content on the topic of, "[The Honest Truth About Marriage](#)." I felt the power of sharing positive, meaningful, and bold content to the world, and creating opportunities for like-minded, like-hearted people to work together under a common cause.

When I think about my time in CARP Las Vegas, I realize how everything was set up to bring out the best in me. I was living with people who were all making steps to discover themselves and step out of their own comfort zone with whatever their personal journey called them to do. I had mentors who were so present and committed to my growth. Even though it hasn't even been a year, I already fondly look back at many of my CARP experiences.



CARP has a lot to offer the world by raising youth to discover their purpose in life. I believe in CARP's work and its mission. I'd want CARP to be available for all young people because it helped me change my life and helped others' change their lives. If I can be a part of sharing these opportunities, I know it would be something meaningful.

Now, I will be doing exactly that, as the new Communications Coordinator for National CARP. My mission is to make sure that the world is informed of all the great work that CARP leaders are doing across America. I will showcase the campus impact that they are making and the lives that are changing through CARP.

I want to especially thank [Jennifer Pierce](#) for the incredible work she has already done in this role, and the whole staff for welcoming me. Happy to be on the team!

Ryota Naito

Communications Coordinator