

Kensaku Takahashi's Ocean Church Ocean Festival in Little Ferry, NJ

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The day was overcast and grey, threatening rain and strong winds like the previous days, but not a drop fell from the sky as the Ocean Festival commenced at the Ocean Institute for World Peace and Unification, the “Ocean Church,” in Little Ferry, NJ on October 1. The event, commemorating the 36th anniversary of the founding of Ocean Church, began with opening remarks and a prayer from Ocean Church USA Director, Kensaku Takahashi.



As you walked down the row of vendor tents and games, a variety of goods, artwork, and information were available to you. You could buy some fine clothes and handmade crafts, find out what the LEDA Project is and what they are doing in Paraguay, get a manga-tized portrait of yourself, join the GO FISH club, buy a fishing rod to start your fishing adventure, and grab a grilled hamburger and hotdog for lunch. The most notable booth was the goldfish game, which attracted children (and adults) of all ages who

crowded around the blue kiddie pool, attempting to capture one of the many colored goldfish to take home, or just cheering on the determined fishers.



Within the warehouse there was also a Board Game Café fundraiser, inviting all ages to join and have fun learning a new board game or competing with each other on a video game. Out near the dock was the Bucket Game, a simple, but entertaining game where your aim and knowledge of recycling was tested; and the cast net game, which revealed the hidden fishing talents and skills of some of our elders.



At the stage (an old floating dock set on the pavement in front of the warehouse) there were musical performances by Jinwoo Moraes, Naria McGee, and Cynthia Nakai; a group game of ships and sailors; an impromptu play of “The Blind Man’s Daughter” involving audience volunteers as the main actors; and a Tongil Mudo sword demonstration by the Little Ferry chapter. In the demonstration, the three Tongil Mudo students and their sensei showcased their awesome ninja-like skills as they leaped tumbled, sparred, dodged daggers and stopped katana blades with their bare hands.



Going into the Ocean Church office, people were greeted by a collage of photos hanging all over the walls showing True Parents, members of their family, and Unificationists during the Ocean Challenge days in Gloucester and the Ocean Providence activities from all over the country, which began more than 30 years ago. Flipping through one of the many photo albums on the table, you might see a face you hadn't seen in many years, or even your own from those adventurous and spirited times.



The highlight of the event was most likely the boat rides, available right at the dock on the Ocean Church property. As families lined up, life vests were secured onto each person before they climbed into one of the two Good Go boats, with Captains Manuel Liba and Benny Axelsson ready to take them for a spin out on the Hackensack River. Riding in a speeding boat with the wind whipping at your hair and seeing the water spray out like wings from the sides of the boat is a thrilling and refreshing experience for both young and old. It was a nostalgic ride for some and a taste of what True Father must have experienced many, many times.



We want to thank all our volunteers and community members for their commitment and help in preparing and putting together this exciting start for the Ocean Festival. We couldn't have done it without you!