

FFWPU USA: Celebrating Our Volunteers During National Volunteer Month

Naokimi Ushiroda
April 4, 2022



April is National Volunteer Month, where we recognize and celebrate the countless volunteers who make this world a better place. Numerous Unificationist volunteers across the US and abroad not only reflect the values of our movement, but bring these principles to the various charitable projects, events and activities they engage in.

Earlier this year, two Unificationist siblings in Nevada received [national recognition](#) for their service, volunteering more than 200 hours combined throughout 2021. Jeffrey and Jennifer Silerio were given the President's Volunteer Service Award for working with the Shine City Project ([SCP](#)), a Unificationist volunteer group that has been [a staple in serving](#) the greater Las Vegas area for almost a decade. In 2021, the SCP amassed 1,150 service hours and completed 48 total service projects - nearly one every week - ranging from community cleanups to care for the elderly and the homeless.

"With volunteering, we can lead by example and live for the sake of others," said Jeffrey Silerio, the national director of SCP. The group, which doubled its efforts this year, is on track to surpass its volunteer hours from 2021.

[CARP](#) is another popular avenue of volunteering among Unificationists, and for more than 50 years students have contributed to a range of service projects on and off campuses around the country. In late February, the CARP Bay Area chapter collaborated with other nonprofits to work on an off-ramp garden in Oakland, Calif. The project, split into two parts, included neighborhood trash cleanup and gardening. A number of CARP members from both Chabot College and the University of California, Berkeley joined the effort.

"Not only did this project strengthen the desire to serve amongst the volunteers, but the bright yellow volunteer vests and telltale trash pickers prompted many honks and waves from inspired and grateful passersby," said one CARP organizer. "Some even joined in on the project!"

"I had a lot of fun doing something outside my usual routine as a Cal student," said Maria, a sophomore. "I have to prioritize what matters to me and make time for it - helping others, helping out, and making a change starts with small projects such as this one."

From teachers and students to working professionals, service projects attract people from all backgrounds to help improve their community inside and out. In particular, neighborhood cleanups are a recurring service project for volunteers from Youth and Students for Peace ([YSP](#)). The New Jersey chapter, for example, frequently organizes litter pickup in various areas and also hosted a community coat drive this past winter season.

In the US, National Volunteer Month has evolved since its debut in 1974 as National Volunteer Week. Today, there are some 1.8 million non-profit organizations across the country, providing limitless opportunity to volunteer and give back to our communities.



West

2 Siblings, 200+ Hours of Volunteering



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.

You can learn more about Shine City Project, including its upcoming service projects, [here](#).

SHINE CITY PROJECT

FROM SIN CITY TO SHINE CITY



ABOUT

NINE 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 USA)

strives 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 OF PRINCIPLES (CARP LAS VEGAS) 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?



Shine City
- Project -

9 - 11 **03.26.22**
LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD AND
WINDMILL LANE



Shine City
- Project -

9:30 - 12 **04.02.22**
MT. CHARLESTON

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

Name *

Message



West

Shine City Project Celebrates 9th Anniversary



Nine years ago today, a small group of Unificationists founded the [Shine City Project](#) (SCP), aimed at transforming Las Vegas from 'Sin City' to 'Shine City.' Volunteers organized a cleanup service project on March 16, 2013 at the corner of Sahara Ave. and Las Vegas Blvd. and never looked back.

"The Shine City Project challenges our city's culture of self-centeredness to become one of selflessness," says SCP Director Jeffrey Silerio, who has been a part of the group since it first began. "We aim to build leaders of heart and character who share love and compassion for others while being stewards for the environment."

Inspired by True Parents, the SCP has committed thousands of volunteer hours in and around the greater Las Vegas area over the course of nearly a decade. Jeffrey and his younger sister, Jennifer, were even [recognized](#) in January with the President's Volunteer Service Award for their combined 127 hours of community service through SCP during 2021.

The SCP amassed 1,150 service hours last year and completed 48 service projects in total – nearly one every week. This year, the group has already outpaced itself, with 14 service projects done in only 10 weeks.

"I believe that the efforts of any one person can create a ripple effect with other people," says Jeffrey. He

coordinates volunteer efforts with a slew of other non-profit organizations, including Green Our Planet, Ahern Orchard, and the Las Vegas Rescue Mission shelter.

From planting vegetation in community gardens and rehabilitating recreational areas, to delivering hot meals and basic necessities to people in need, the SCP team remains determined to make Las Vegas known for hospitality beyond its infamous hotel strip.

“Our volunteers meet for cleanups with Get Outdoors Nevada and other groups,” says Jeffrey. “We’ve helped to pick up litter at Acacia Park in Henderson and along the Union Pacific Railroad Trail. This trail has a lot of pedestrians and bicyclists, so it’s important to keep it clean.”

The group is now doubling their efforts, experimenting with back-to-back weekend service projects.

“Together, we will create a more loving and caring community which, in turn, can create a more loving and peaceful world,” says Jeffrey. “If a change can happen in Las Vegas, change can happen everywhere.”

“We know that peace and change starts with each one of us,” he says. Jeffrey notes that True Parents put down roots in Las Vegas with the desire to bring a spiritual revival to the city. “With the Shine City Project, we can lead by example and live for the sake of others.”

You can learn more about the Shine City Project [here](#).

< Remembering Hyo Jin Moon

Creating the Spirit of Family on
Hawaii Campus >

 Search

LEARN

[GET BLESSED](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[DIVINE PRINCIPLE](#)

CONNECT

[FIND A COMMUNITY](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

[BLOG](#)



Principles Worth Living

//

Before I hope to master the universe, I must first master myself.

— Sun Myung Moon



A movement of students by students



Mia Taguchi

College of Southern Nevada, NV

"As my time in CARP progressed, I started to understand more and more that if I truly want to make a difference in the world, it starts with not just the individual, but the impact an individual has on the family. The impact our actions have encompasses a whole circle of people.

[READ MORE](#)

Samuel Tamura

University of Davis, California, CA

"I want everyone to see the Principle and the CARP culture and feel moved and inspired by it. I want to create a chapter that truly aims to bring a new perspective for all members and they can come out of CARP thinking that it made a positive change in their life."

[READ MORE](#)

Josue Kisile

Grand Rapids Community College, MI

"Transferring your vision and passion to others is probably the hardest part of leadership, but it takes you on a very needed journey of patience and perseverance. I have grown so much as a leader through this journey."

[READ MORE](#)

[READ MORE STUDENT STORIES](#)

CARP Chapter

Find a chapter near you!



UPDATES



Welcome to the Team, Ryota!

Mar 30, 2022



So Long, CARP - Jennifer

Mar 29, 2022



Welcome to the Team, Chungbom!

Mar 28, 2022



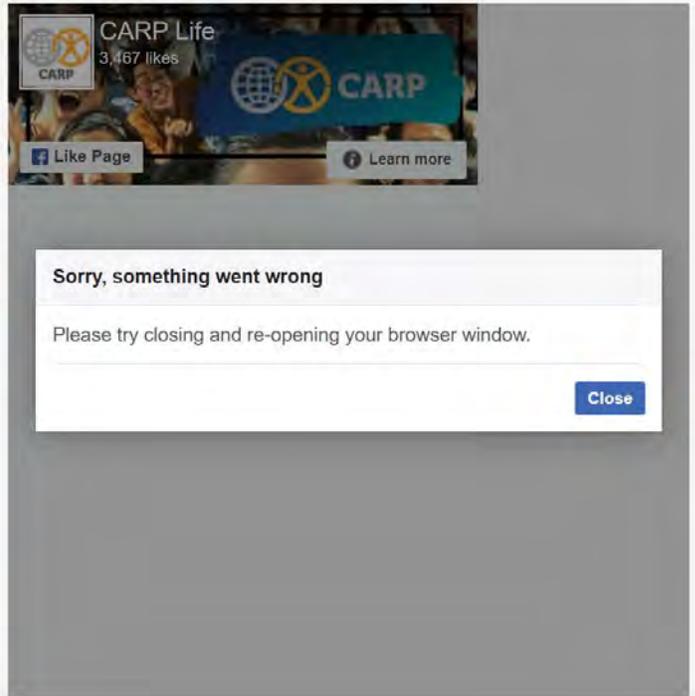
Meet the Founders

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

[LEARN MORE](#)

FIND A CHAPTER

Social Media Updates



Sign Up for the CARP Newsletter!

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Email Address *

SIGN UP

Search



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 Designer 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



[PRIVACY POLICY](#)