

Young Unificationist Testifies to True Parents on Radio and TV in Suriname

Liana Gaarder

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A group of 15 college age young adults from the Special Task Force (STF) recently completed service work for three weeks in Suriname, a former Dutch colony on the northern coast of South America. Liana Gaarder, 18, from Maryland, shares her story of being interviewed by a radio DJ in the capital city, Paramaribo, and realizing her potential to broadcast, representing her beliefs, and being the “face and voice of our True Parents.” The following is Ms .Gaarder’s report to STF leaders.

On our first night in Suriname, our team was asked who wanted to go to the radio station in the morning to talk about STF and our upcoming “Friendship America” concert. Surprisingly, the group seemed hesitant and urged me to volunteer. At that moment, the endless list of possibilities of what I had the power to broadcast across the entire country flashed through my mind. I never imagined it would be me who would be the Special Task Force’s (STF) representative.



STF volunteers help paint the walls of the Rankin School.



Liana is interviewed at the Dhamaka TV station, a popular local youth station.



STF Volunteers with children at Rankin School in Suriname.



Aunt Georgia and Liana teach English to the kids at Rankin School.

I considered what Rev. In Jin Moon would say if she had this opportunity, and suddenly I felt like a true representative of True Parents, going to the corners of the world to spread our message of One Family Under God.

The next morning I had no idea what to expect. I was supposed to air together with Keishu Greene and Misha Panzer, but the DJ instead asked for only one STF representative. The next thing I know I was in front of a microphone being introduced live by the radio DJ who was speaking Dutch – the nation’s language. First, I explained that STF is a leadership training program for college aged students who want to deepen their faith in God and become global leaders who can serve the world and love people transcending the boundaries of race, religion, and nationality.

After explaining briefly about the reason we’re here in Suriname, I thought I was finished. Therefore, I tuned out the DJ who continued to speak eloquently in Dutch. The small recording studio we were standing in seemed to be in a motioned blur, and every word I spoke over the radio was racing through my head, repeating like a broken record. Suddenly I shifted back into reality when I realized the DJ was motioning for me to return to the microphone. My eyes desperately locked on my team leader as I walked over wondering what in the world he expected me to say.

Looking at me he said, “Liana, are there any words of encouragement you can share with the young people of Suriname?” Although I felt frantic inside, I remained calm and replied, “Well, if there is anything I’d like to say to you, it would be.....” I carried on with some jumble about never giving up, believing in yourself, shooting for high goals. My team leader, Keishu, reassured me that I did an excellent job, considering I was put on the spot over live radio.

As all the quotes I used when fundraising flashed through my head, I realized how much had sunken into my heart this past year on STF, and for the first time I really believed that I do have great potential to influence this world at a large scale. This is what God put me on this Earth for, to support True Parents' mission of restoring all mankind back to God – and what better way to reach out to people than through the media? There is something within me that is so powerful – I can feel it. And the only person that can limit my potential and compromise how far I go in life is myself.

A few days later, Georgia told us we would be featured on a television show that is popular among the young adults of Suriname. Again it was decided I would be the one to speak as the representative of STF. Although the situation didn't provide the opportunity for me to eject God's Words and give recaps of In Jin Nim's sermons, I was able to have that kind of heart towards the interview. As True Father says, "It's the spiritual attitude that makes all the difference." He also says, "You have to make things consistently larger and better... If you think of your task as just a job, you will never excel."

This overseas experience has consisted of many opportunities to represent True Parents, and each time I feel I was able to make a bigger impact than the time before; not only an impact on the audience, but an improvement on my own spiritual growth. I don't see each public appearance simply as me with a microphone – rather, this is special training God is giving me for the person He wants me to become in the future.

I also was chosen to introduce STF at the "Friendship America" concert in front of an audience of 300 people. I was able to share the vision of our program on an even deeper level than before, expressing our desire to build relationships as brother and sister with the people of Suriname. I explained how we're not North Americans and they're not South Americans, but we're all God's children, and we're all one big family.

Somebody needs to be an excellent face and voice of our True Parents, not only in front of a camera or audience, but by the way one's life is led on a daily basis. I want to be that person. I will be that person. They deserve nothing less than that.

"All glory to God and True Parents." Thank you.
Contributed by Liana Gaarder, STF