

## Chicago Family Church Makes Hundreds of Send a Smile Cards for the Elderly

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About 120 handmade cards, created by a group of Chicago Family Church (CFC) Unificationists, are now being delivered to the elderly and people with disabilities in the township of Schaumburg, Illinois. The letters are part of the "[Send A Smile](#)" campaign, an ongoing city initiative aimed at supporting and uplifting vulnerable members of the community.

"I was inspired by a post I saw in late April on the Schaumburg library's Facebook page that was advertising the campaign," said Eugene Avila, a young Unificationist and program manager of CFC. Avila also worked at the library prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. "There are many seniors in the Schaumburg area, and since they are often more isolated than others during this time, I thought it would be great to send them letters of love and support."



Avila quickly teamed up with Helena Moreno, a longtime Unificationist and community service organizer of CFC. With the help of a few volunteers, they more than doubled their initial goal of 50 cards within a week. "Writing the letters gave me such joy and enthusiasm that I wanted others to join me with making them," said Moreno. "We poured our hearts into it, giving such love and care with each card. We felt so

much happiness and really wanted the recipients to feel loved and that we are thinking about them."



"I'm accustomed to readily having a support system since I'm part of a large family of nine people as well as a large church community," added Avila. "But not everyone has that, so it felt great to be able to help out and show support for our elderly neighbors."



Among the volunteers were CFC Pastor Kunihiro Sagisaka and his wife, in addition to entire families. But the spouse of Rev. David Rendel, midwest subregional director of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA, was particularly excited to help as much as possible. "Agnes Rendel probably made at least 50 cards," said Avila. "Our community has been thinking about what we can do and how to contribute to our [Offering Table](#) goals while everyone is stuck at home. Being able to do something creative and helpful that is also a form of outreach toward the greater Schaumburg community was a triple bonus."

The group spent more than 30 hours making the cards over the past week, eager to give back to the town as they dropped them off at city hall. "I truly believe that community service is a tool to connect with others and meet good people," said Moreno. "It can open the door for our community to network more closely and invite people to learn more about the Unification movement."

"I'm really proud of our involvement in this campaign," added Avila. "We get to show our love and appreciation for the people here. The City of Schaumburg and village staff were very helpful toward helping us get our [new church building](#) in 2018, so to have this opportunity to give back is a gracious blessing."