

## FFWPU USA: Las Vegas Shine City Project Volunteers Help Vulnerable Children

Demian Dunkley  
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*Photo courtesy of Shine City Project*

"St. Jude's Ranch for Children is an extraordinary place where all the staff members do amazing things," says a young Unificationist volunteer. "They all give back to society by taking in these young children and giving them love and a second chance to succeed in life."

Members of the Las Vegas-based Shine City Project ([SCP](#)), a grassroots group of young Unificationists, recently volunteered at the ranch located in Boulder City, Nevada. The charity, which features an on-site chapel, healing center, and gift and thrift shop of donated clothes and other items, has served hundreds of individuals and families in the local community for the last 55 years.

"St. Jude's is a safe, happy environment for children who desperately need it," says the volunteer. "The chapel is a quiet place [where] you can pray alone with God ... It's just a fantastic example of how we should all treat and care for one another."

On January 13, the SCP group spent the morning helping St. Jude's staff with various tasks and cleaning up different areas of the property. To date, the ranch has served approximately 600 youth, helped more than a hundred families keep their kids out of foster care, and provided nearly 30,000 meals to people in need. Currently, they have more than 300 people receiving aid through St. Jude's housing and support services program.

"This ranch does a lot of good for a lot of kids," says another SCP volunteer. "They have a gift shop, which is actually like a thrift store, and everything is donated so anything you buy is helping the kids."

The ranch is a safe haven that shelters vulnerable youth, nearly all of whom have experienced some form of abuse. Jeffrey Silerio, SCP's national director, said it's the first time working with St. Jude's, which reflects SCP's goal this year to [broaden its reach and impact](#) by collaborating with more nonprofits. In 2023, SCP partnered with more than 25 local organizations and committed almost a thousand volunteer hours, Silerio said.

As the SCP team helped organize and clean the St. Jude's ranch, they noticed the calming, historical atmosphere at the property.

"The beautiful church and serene grounds are relatively close to Lake Mead," notes a volunteer. "St. Jude is the patron saint of desperate causes and I felt this ranch definitely serves a good cause. I was happy to be able to invest my time and energy in a meaningful cause that [benefits] so many children."



# SHINE CITY PROJECT

FROM SIN CITY TO SHINE CITY



## ABOUT

TEN 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?



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JEFFREY SILERIO  
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## GALLERY





May 29, 2021 @ Vegas Roots Community Garden



October 2, 2021 @ Shaquille O'Neal Foundation – The Event



January 12, 2020 @ All Friends Animal Sanctuary



June 11, 2022 @ Spread the Word Nevada



December 4, 2021 @ Opportunity Village – Magical Forest



June 8, 2019 @ Silver Horizon Group Home



August 6, 2022 @ Ahern Orchard



May 4, 2019 @ Club Christ Ladies Tea



May 7, 2022 @ McKee Ranch Foundation



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 24, 2021 @ Harrison House



July 25, 2015 @ Clean the World



Shine City Project's 2nd Anniversary Celebration (March 14, 2015)



July 31, 2015 @ Las Vegas Rescue Mission



Shine City Project's 3rd Anniversary Celebration (March 18, 2016)



April 26, 2013 @ Lorenzi Park



August 22, 2014 @ CARP Las Vegas House



August 16, 2014 @ CARP Las Vegas Learning Center



August 15, 2014 @ Mt. Charleston



November 9, 2019 @ Just One Project – Helen Marie Smith Elementary School



October 13, 2018 @ Las Vegas Wash with Generation Peace Academy



Shine City Project's 4th Anniversary



April 25, 2014 @ El Pollo Loco



August 9, 2014 @ Rebel Recycling Center



Shine City Project's 6th Anniversary Celebration (March 16, 2019 @ CARP Las Vegas Learning Center)



April 27, 2019 @ Pittman Wash



March 9, 2019 @ Las Vegas Community Healing Garden

Shine City Project's 1st Anniversary (March 15, 2014 @ Sunset Park)



April 20, 2019 @ Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary



November 23, 2019 @ Green Our Planet - Legacy High School



Our First Service Project (March 16, 2013 @ World's Largest Gift Shop)

# CONTACT

Interested in joining?  
Have a service project  
idea? Want to  
collaborate? Send us  
an email!

Name *
Email *
Subject

Message
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## Serving Others: It's About 'the Big and Small Things That We Do'



Photo courtesy of SCP

"2023 was a challenging year for me in my personal life and my relationships with other people, but through our service projects, Shine City Project helped me to realize that each person is essential for building a more loving and peaceful world," said Khary Dixon.

Dixon, a member of the grassroots Shine City Project ([SCP](#)) volunteer group launched by Unificationists in 2013, discovered more personal fulfillment and a higher purpose serving others. "The biggest life lesson that I've gained from joining Shine City Project every week is that serving others doesn't just happen on Saturday mornings," she said. "It happens every day with both big and small things that we do."

Throughout 2023, SCP commemorated its milestone 10-year anniversary with more service projects and partnerships with other Unificationist organizations, such as the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles ([CARP](#)) and the Universal Peace Federation ([UPF](#)). By the end of the year, the group of young Unificationists and other twentysomethings had committed nearly a thousand volunteer hours.

"There has been more collaboration and teamwork between Shine City Project and CARP Las Vegas in particular," noted SCP National Director Jeffrey Silerio.

"More of our service projects have been able to be attended by members of CARP Las Vegas."

"Additionally, in the fall semester, Shine City Project decided to support more monthly Divine Principle workshops hosted by CARP Las Vegas," he said. "We were able to dedicate two weekends over the last few months for the



workshops, instead of our weekly service projects.”

A founding member of SCP, Silerio has seen firsthand the team’s growth and transformation over the years as they seek to improve the greater Las Vegas area. And, amidst his leadership, 2023 marked a huge life change for Silerio personally.

“In March 2023, we were unable to hold an event to commemorate the [founding of SCP], but in the same month, our volunteers were invited to attend the commitment ceremony of me and my wife, Valeria Pellejero, who leads Youth and Students for Peace in Uruguay,” Silerio said. “We later received the Blessing together in May in her country. My wife was able to visit Las Vegas a couple times this past year, and she was able to join and support our service projects.”



As SCP has evolved, it’s also become a family endeavor of sorts — quite literally composed of brothers and sisters. Inspired by her older brother, Jennifer Silerio became increasingly involved in SCP, investing in her community while developing a more public-minded outlook.

“One of the highlights from volunteering at Shine City Project this year was being able to explore and learn more about different communities in Southern Nevada,” Jennifer said. “We were able to do some service projects outside of Las Vegas, such as a planting event in Moapa Valley, a cleanup in Lake Mead, and some gardening in Boulder City. It was nice that we got to explore and hang out in the areas after working hard at our service projects, and also meet so many new people.”

“I had a lot of fun working with Shine City Project this year doing things like feeding the less fortunate, or planting native plants to restore areas of our natural environment here in Las Vegas,” shared another volunteer, Saracelia Hardarson. “It was fulfilling to give my time and energy to healing our environment and also laughing along the way.”


Other major service projects included the group’s work with UPF Las Vegas for

a local [Peace Road](#) event during the summer, conservation efforts with Generation Peace Academy ([GPA](#)) members participating in the Cheon Il Guk Youth Missionaries program, and honoring the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement at the Nevada State Veterans Memorial.

Still, for SCP volunteers like Dixon, serving others is about the interpersonal connections and relationships built along the way.

“[Regardless of our differences], cultivating healthy relationships and creating a heavenly culture is essential for becoming true children of God,” Dixon said. “If we make an effort to grow our hearts and our capacity to love by serving others, we can develop love for even people that we have never met before.”

You can learn more about the work of Shine City Project [here](#), and connect with a Unificationist community near you [here](#).

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