

Chicago Family Church Hosts 21st Annual True Family Values Awards Banquet

David Rendel
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A fresh gush of hope blew through the windy city of Chicago with the 21st Annual True Family Values Awards Banquet on Saturday, January 28 at the renowned Providence MBC Annex Banquet Hall on the city's south side. In the same neighborhood where scores of shootings occur every week, religious, political, civic and business leaders gathered to celebrate the essence of "living for the sake of others" exemplified by True Father and True Mother.

The mission of the True Family Values Banquet is to empower leaders to work beyond race, religion, ethnicities and politics in executing real solutions to restore families and communities. It is co-sponsored by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, American Clergy leadership Conference, Women's Federation for World Peace and Universal Peace Federation.



This year's banquet is the 21st consecutive event held in Chicago since its founding in 1996 by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim. "The key to successful development is unity practiced by the sponsors and consistent investment. This is what we've learned from Father and Mother Moon and proven through our

experience”, explains Dr. Kim. This year’s banquet welcomed 300 distinguished leaders and Unificationists from throughout the Chicago area.



The program began with praise music provided by Rev. Cornelius Clark, recording artist and former musical director at T. D. Jakes Potter’s House mega-church. Welcoming remarks were delivered by Rev. David Rendel and Rev. Bruce Grodner, local and national leaders of the American Clergy Leadership Conference. The delicious luncheon was served “family style” where everyone felt right at home with their table mates.

A key component of the True Family Values Banquet is presentation of the True Family Values Award to leaders who have shown exemplary public service and “living for the sake of others” within their fields of expertise. For many, this award ranks among their greatest achievements.

This year’s True Family Values Awards were presented to a diverse group of recipients. First was Rev. Helen Carry, 92-year old matriarch of Chicago’s clergy instrumental in the founding of the city’s first mega-church ministry. A second pioneer, Ms. Michero Washington was awarded for her thirty years of leadership in developing solutions in race and cultural relations within the Chicago education and business communities.

Other recipients of the prestigious award were Mr. Frez Oguendo, a young professional boxer and founder of a nonprofit academy educating inner-city youth in pursuit of healthy lifestyles through sports, academics and social development. The fourth recipient was Dieter and Rojane Jesper who have invested earnings from their successful business into a rural retreat center that provides moral education for young people from around the world.

The highpoint of the afternoon was a profound message from Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, founder of the African-American Catholic Community and National Co-Chairman of the American Leadership Conference. His message emphasized the importance of beginning the new year with anticipation of great opportunities for change. He encouraged the attentive audience to consider personal and public needs through a different spelling of “NEADS”, where the letters symbolize the premise that if life is “now” not fulfilling “expectations”, it’s time to apply “alterations” through “decisions” that lead to “solutions”. Everyone was inspired by the guidance.

The program ended with a benediction from one of the founding members of the True Family Values initiative and a beautiful song together with all participants. “I always love attending these banquets”, proclaimed one of the guests, “and this was one of the best!”

True Family Values Banquet Team