

Bay Area Family Church's 10,000 Prayers for Peace in Oakland, California

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The inspiration for this event came from the many Peace Starts With Me events True Mother has been having around the world and the desire to have one here in our community. As this is True Father's 100th birthday, we also wanted to make this day of service more than just an annual gathering for service by bringing the spirit of True Parents to Oakland through sharing the message of Peace Starts With Me.

And as a kick off for the 40 days of peace, on Jan 18th we had a day of service, prayer, peace messages, and a prayer march, working together with council member Noel Gallo who was very inspired by the idea of prayers for peace. When he heard it was 10,000 prayers in 40 days he said "we need way more than that here in Oakland."



This event was carried out in collaboration with many different organizations: Service for Peace, CARP, BAFC, Noel Gallo's Office, and pastors from ACLC and the community. We had over 70 people from all over coming out to serve Oakland and to spread the message of Peace Starts With Me.

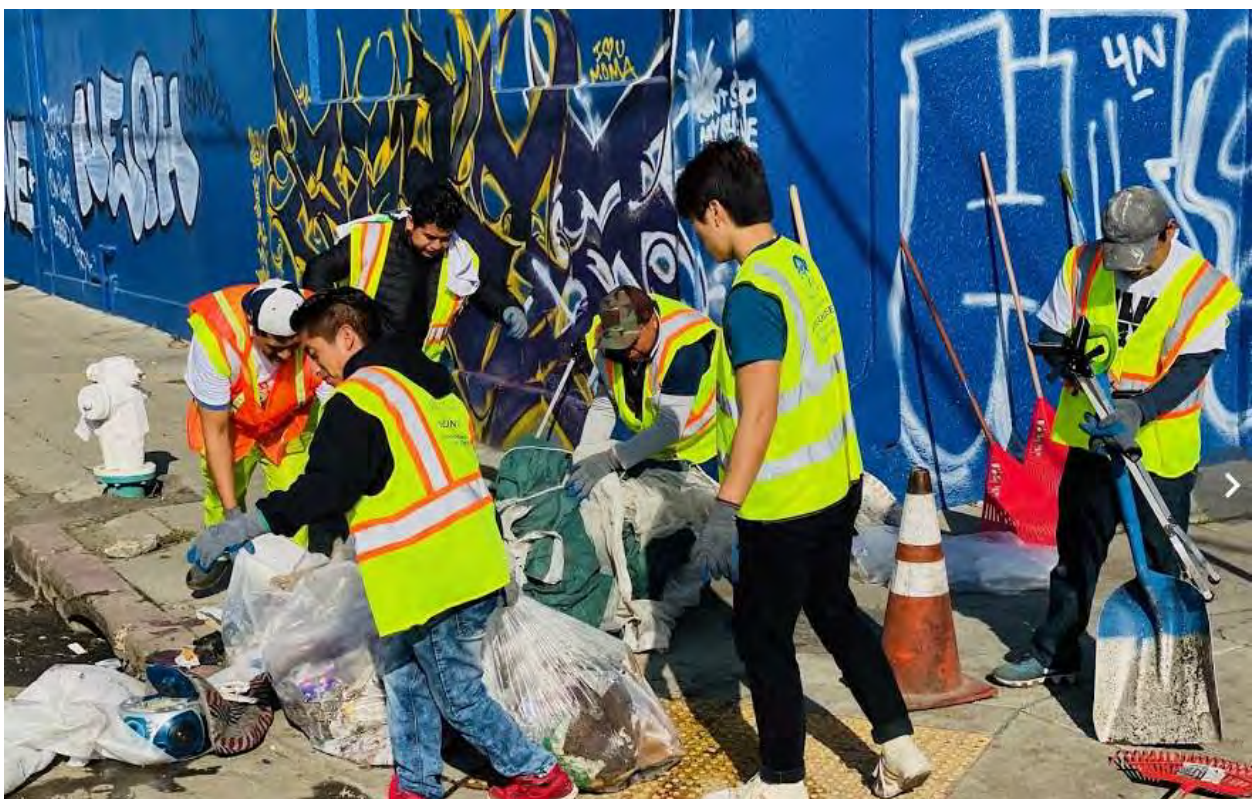
The morning began with an introduction and an explanation of the purpose to the day, which is to share the vision of bringing people together with the message of Peace Starts With Me and service. Immediately following, we broke up into small groups and went down the various streets of Oakland to pick up trash, leaving a plus wherever went. It was great to see how invested everyone was, picking up every little piece of trash. Noel Gallo was very inspired by the young people's spirit and determination. He kept commenting on how inspired he was by the young people from CARP.

Gathering together again after picking up trash, two ACLC pastors testified about True Mother. Pastor Lowery began by leading us in a chant of 'Peace Starts With Me'. He then stated that 'A world with no peace, is not a world'. He expressed his gratitude for being a part of ACLC and for being a part of the movement of peace with Mother Moon. He finished by saying that we have to keep moving forward, looking ahead to creating a peaceful world centering on God.



Next, Bishop Andrew Jackson testified about True Parent's efforts and how meeting them had transformed his life. He shared about how we have to restore the world and bring peace.

The next part of the program, which was initiated by Noel Gallo, was a peace march. Chanting "Peace Starts With Me", we marched to the Ghost Ship of Oakland where, in 2016 a massive fire took the lives of 36 people who had gathered there for a music concert. Pastor Lowery prayed, giving our respects to those who had passed away there, inviting God to the area and asking that hope and peace come to the community.



We continued along downtown Oakland, chanting and greeting everyone we met, until we came to the Fruitvale BART station, the site of much crime. Flyers were handed out that said "Pray, Serve, Unite" and contained a quote from True Mother. As we gathered outside the station, Karen shared with us the vision of Mother Moon, inviting her spirit to Oakland and sharing with us what Mother Moon has been doing. We then recited the quote on the flyer together:



"Gratitude brings about heavenly fortune, forgiveness opens people's minds, and love moves people's hearts. Let us be grateful for everything, forgive our enemies, love our neighbors as we love ourselves, and work in oneness for peace."

With this march we sought to bring the spirit of The Mother of Peace, sharing the message that Peace Starts With Me with the Oakland community and with all the community members that joined us in this march. In councilman Noel Gallo's area there are a lot of young prostitutes. The Council-member explained how he, along with others, helped the young girls get jobs and off the streets. The local Home Depot was going to close, which meant losing 300 jobs, but when Noel Gallo's office talked with Home Depot, they agreed to keep the store open. They hired prostitutes and others in the community, helping them get off the streets and being able to care for themselves.

After the march, Junta Naito, a college student and CARP core member, gave the concluding peace message, sharing his testimony of rising above personal challenges and of having hope. He shared about how the heart of peace starts with each individual taking responsibility, despite the circumstances.

To conclude the event, we honored and recognized Council-member Noel Gallo for all of his work and investment in the community, leading by example, going out to serve countless times every Saturday and Sunday, rain or shine, offering hope to the Oakland community. To honor him, ACLC presented Noel Gallo with an Ambassador of Peace Award which he was overjoyed to receive. But he said that he couldn't receive it without having his wife and children next to him.

To bring the historic day to an exciting close, CARP students danced Mujogeon, bringing a youthful spirit and smiles to many faces.

More pictures: photos.app.goo.gl/8sac2x5ZVdDQxXnaA