

Sunday BBQ Gives Education a ‘Boost’ at Los Angeles Unification Church

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August 9, 2011



James Calix, Kokil Gomez, and District Leader Mark Tengan, showed their cooking skills.

Hundreds of Unification Church members flooded into the backyard of Pasadena House in Los Angeles for what George Kazakos, the LA Lovin’ Life Pastor, called the “Boost Sunday” BBQ kick-off on Sunday July 31, 2011.

“The purpose of the BBQ was to have fellowship together and create educational opportunities for all ages,” said Kazakos. “We saw the importance of having education for everyone. That way Sunday Service can have a focus on worshiping as a family. So the question was not whether we should or shouldn’t have Sunday school – the question is, ‘How can we do both, worship and education?’ In that way this was an important step in that direction. In addition, we will be having one day workshops one Saturday a month that will be focused on education.

“We’re trying to attend God, True Parents, and True Children as one extended family, and worship as a family once a week at Lovin’ Life. By creating personal, emotional relationships with In Jin Nim, we can connect to True Parents. She gives us a window to True Parents.”



Moms mug for the camera at a 35-foot water slide.

The idea of Boost Sunday as a monthly community event was suggested by the Unification Church Headquarters of America in the form of the LAUNCHpad, a Lovin’ Life Ministry Tool, which was

pecially prepared and sent to all district leaders to help uplift and improve their ministries. Boost Sundays will educate its attendees on four subjects: the Divine Principle, the Family Pledge, relationship skills, and the emerging concept of membership. In addition to this initial Boost event, small groups of the Los Angeles Unification Church will be arranged so that children and young adults can keep up Sunday-School education on a weekly basis.

“When I’m looking at the LAUNCHpad and its directions, the question is not whether I’m going to follow those directions, but how I can take the intention of the LAUNCHpad to another level,” said Kazakos. “I wanted people to have an emotional response to the event so that they would come back in the future. The last time we tried to give a membership class, about six people attended. This time, with the help of Headquarters, we had over 380, way above the expected 150. So we’ve learned that it’s about the give and take between field and Headquarters. We want to take directions and amplify them.”

Local Unificationist Children worked tirelessly to prepare food for hundreds of friends, families and guests, as well as members of the True Family, who visited to support the event. In addition to the BBQ, a swing band called “Jumpin’ Joz,” a favorite of the Church community, provided entertainment, and a 35-foot water slide was installed near the pool at Pasadena House, much to the delight of the children.



Local residents enjoyed the Pasadena House pool.

“The boost event was totally awesome!” said Raymond Gallagher, the MC for Lovin’ Life in Los Angeles. “We definitely need to have more events like this where members can get out of the church and feel a little freer with themselves. I also saw a few faces that I didn’t recognize, which is saying something since I stand in front of everyone each Sunday!”

“The boost BBQ was a really good experience,” said Johnny Faris. “I think having more events like this one will bring our BC [blessed children] community closer. Things like this keep me coming to church.”

During the BBQ, In Jin Nim’s husband offered a personal testimony about True Parents and True Children that was well-received by the community.

“In Jin Nim’s Husband made very clear that despite his deep passion and all the work he put in towards his career, he felt that True Parents were much more important,” said Fred Miller, a second-generation Unificationist visiting from London. “I have never been around True Family before and having this experience truly made the image I had of them into something I could relate to. It is very hard to feel you have anything to do with the True Family when you grow up without ever seeing them – as I did – but through times like this members can feel like we are part of their family.”

“I couldn’t ask for anything more than for Jin Sung Nim to speak,” said Gallagher. “He always knows

what to say to inspire people. I always love how Jin Sung Nim makes me feel connected to True Family. He makes True Parents real and tangible, and he makes being part of True Family something achievable. He gives inspiring testimonies about True Children and how hard they are working to achieve something great. I feel that making the Boost event monthly is going to change or church community in a good way, as long as people keep coming and taking it seriously.”

“Boost Sunday wouldn’t have been as powerful a kickoff without the True Family,” said Kazakos. “It set a precedent. It made the event a tradition in one shot. I think it created connections within the community – usually people leave after church and don’t communicate, but the BBQ went perfectly.”



Blessed Children got their boost at the bounce house.