

Blessed Culture and Sports Festival in 2012 - In Jin Moon Highlights Importance of Culture

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The cultural aspect of 2012's Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF) reached new heights this summer through a bigger-than-ever effort into including events un-related to sports, such as Open Mic, the Talent Show and the Fashion Show at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown from August 8-12, 2012, according to participants and organizers.

"I'm very happy that we're continually working on the cultural aspect of BCSF," said BCSF's Director of Culture Ester Allen. "I think a lot of people still think of it as just a sports festival, but when we include more cultural or artistic events, we reach more people. It's also exciting seeing athletes perform at events such as Open Mic or the Talent Show. It proves that our Unificationist community is diverse and excellent in many ways.

According to Allen, every evening featured a different cultural event: Wednesday marked the start of BCSF, which launched with the young-adult ministry Junction and the BCSF Opening Ceremony, at which all of the twelve districts of the Unification Church USA presented their flags. Thursday included the Ballroom Dance Social and Open Mic; Friday included a presentation called "Religious Application of Music" and a game show organized by the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) called the "CARP Games," as well as a Super Smash Brothers video-game tournament and Poker tournament; Saturday included the Ballroom Dance Competition, Talent Show and Fashion Show; Sunday concluded BCSF's cultural festivities with Lovin' Life Ministries (LLM) Sunday Service.

Thursday Night: Ballroom Dance Social and Open Mic

The Ballroom Dance Social, which began on Thursday at 7:30 p.m., was very high energy, according to the participants. The program began with a Viennese Waltz performance to the "Pirates of the Caribbean" theme song by members of the Ballroom Practicum from the 2012 summer Lovin' Life Leadership Program (LLLP). Six couples, including Truston and Paxton Moon, Rev. In Jin Moon's youngest sons, dressed up in elaborate costumes for the dance, which was choreographed by Ariana Moon. Following their performance, Ariana Moon reminded the audience about the vision of the Ballroom Ministry, and then introduced Truston Moon and his dance partner Eun Hwa Jung, who performed a Waltz to the song "You Raise Me Up." The floor was then opened for social dancing, which continued until around 11:00 p.m.

Aaron Urbonya, 23, from Michigan said, "I really like the choreographed dance to the 'Pirates of the Caribbean' music. That really showcased the skill and beauty you can achieve when you practice and dedicate yourself to ballroom dancing. Ballroom is a great medium through which you can meet people – people come from different states and districts to make new friends and have a good time while doing so. I'd like to see more dance games at socials though, such as something like musical chairs or freeze tag to music."

"I love to dance, but last night, the highlight for me was watching the exhibition dances," said Michelle Han, 19. "I've never seen Truston and Eun Hwa perform together before, and seeing the heart behind their performance was really touching. I was choked up a few times. And the 'Pirates' one was so cool! Especially with the costumes, you could tell how much effort was put into the performance and putting it together. BCSF is where we all come together and therefore it was a great way to present our Ballroom Ministry. Dancing is such a good way to bring people together."

Friday night's Open Mic had about 150 spectators and continued from 8:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. According to Rachel Boothby, a young Unificationist from Annapolis, MD, the atmosphere was electric. There were 15

acts, including one new-Unificationist, Jeffrey Eason, who sang a song in commemoration of a second-generation Unificationist who recently passed away. “I was really amazed at all the talent of the people here, and it was cool to see non-Unificationists perform,” Boothby said. “It was definitely enjoyable to see people from my community perform, too.”

August Lindsay from Detroit, MI, said this Open Mic was “one of the best I’ve ever been to. We didn’t just have singing, but poetry and musicians of all sorts. My favorite act was Rev. Joshua Cotter, vice president of our church in America, and his wife because they got the whole audience involved in their act. The song, ‘As the Deer,’ was also a very God-centered song. They were so cute as a couple.”

Friday Night: David Eaton’s Presentation and the CARP Games



LLM producer David Eaton gave a thought-provoking presentation on Friday called “Religious Application of Music,” which he began by showing *Stand by Me*, a documentary that depicts how people sing the same song around the world and how different cultures relate to music in the same way. Eaton explained that music can have an ethical and spiritual influence over human beings, and even applied the Divine Principle to music.

“I was really blown away by his concept of applying Unification thought to music and of being sincere about music as more than an art,” said Hyun Moraes, leader of the Junction Band. “David Eaton spoke about having a heart of sincerity as a child of God, then translated that into using music to serve the world, and that really hit home for me.”

Later that evening, CARP USA held their first annual “CARP Games,” a game-show type event that used ideas from the novel series *The Hunger Games*, such as the theme of twelve competing districts. Each district, including a thirteenth district represented by international participants of BCSF, selected representatives called “tributes,” who then competed against each other in activities such as finding pins in a cornucopia filled with hay, jousting with each other using foam poles, and popping balloons attached to their opponents’ ankles while blindfolded. Anthony Jagen from Hayward, CA in district 11 was crowned winner and received as his prize enough Cup Noodles to share for his district.



Mikaela Hoegl from Minneapolis, MN said, “I thought the CARP Games was great. It was really creative, the energy was very high, and the entire auditorium was packed. Everyone was so excited about it! My favorite part was when Andrew Love interviewed the tributes from each district. He was hilarious. He was the perfect host, and he made the show. It was fun getting to learn about each tribute, each of whom wore costumes to represent his or her district.

“There was a lot of district-, or team spirit. That’s a big part of BCSF. If a district didn’t have a lot of representatives present, other people would cheer for them. That was really nice.”

The CARP Games wasn’t the only crowd-pleaser on Friday night; the Poker Tournament, which had a

\$20 buy-in, attracted 30 participants and extended from 8:00 p.m. to past midnight and the Super Smash Brothers Tournament, which drew 60 competitors, continued from 7:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m., when Rexton Moon emerged as victor.



Saturday: Ballroom Competition, Talent Show and Fashion Show

Several BCSF participants woke earlier than usual on Saturday morning to prepare for and compete in the 2nd Annual Ballroom Dance Competition in the Auditorium of UTS, organized by Jana Iparraguirre and members of the Ballroom Ministry. The competition dances were divided into three categories of “Beginner,” “Intermediate” and “Open” and tested the skills of approximately 20 couples, who were cheered on by more than 100 spectators. Performances included the two choreographed dances that were showcased during Thursday’s Ballroom Dance Social, as well as three additional dances by Filipp Akopyan and Natalia Sosnina from Russia.

Brian Tassey, 19, from New Hampshire said, “The Ballroom Ministry is one of my favorite parts of Lovin’ Life Ministries. Seeing the dance exhibitions that were choreographed just for BCSF was great. The ‘Pirates’ one was really interesting and stunning. Ballroom is definitely a great way to build relationships with new people or people you already know.”

After an afternoon of sports, participants of BCSF regrouped in the Auditorium to attend BCSF’s Talent Show, followed by the Fashion Show.

Talent Show Director Chelsea Legay said, “The Auditorium was completely filled so that most of the 300 people there had to stand.”

Victoria Roomet, president of CARP USA, Ben Lorentzen, lead singer for Sonic Cult, and Hyun Moraes, leader of the Junction Band presided as judges for the Talent Show, for which there were 10 acts, and the audience voted for their favorite acts through cell phone texts. First place went to guitarist Henry Legay, a young Unificationist living in Ohio, second place went to the dance troupe One Pulse from Chicago, and third place went to Jeff Jacobs, a non-Unificationist who had won a talent show at the Lovin’ Life Learning Center in July and was invited to compete at BCSF.

Naomi Froelich from Castro Valley, CA called the talent show “awesome. I stood in the back of the room, and it was completely packed in there. There were people flooding out the doors. The energy was really high, and the audience was so focused for every act. Everyone was so engaged, discussing the acts. The people I was standing next to couldn’t decide who to vote for – they kept saying, ‘Everyone was so amazing!’”

The Auditorium was quickly converted into a runway for the Fashion Show models to exhibit clothing designed by Unificationists. The four male models consisted of Hyo Nam Heller, Karlsun Allen, Young Jae Fontaine and Emerson Lykes, and the five female models consisted of Julie Owens, Katherine Williams, Jung Mi Hosoya, Crystelle Tape, and Kay Joon Quispe. Others involved with presenting the Fashion Show, assisting with hair and make-up and coordinating the models included Hyo Tek Kim, Janelle Oh, Janie Kinney, Julie Soai-van and Nocynthia Shibuya.

Fashion Show Director Leonard Soai-van told *Unificationnews*, “We had two stylists: James Gomis and Tamara, or ‘Tammy,’ Gavin. Basically, their task was to find clothing that would be appropriate to the theme of fall and winter, and also BCSF’s theme of ‘Own It.’ Tammy Gavin, in terms of her color palate, was inspired by a Moroccan desert, while James Gomis was inspired by a more classic, fall-forest scheme. Therefore, both of them designed in ways very appropriate for the themes, but came from very different climates and origins. This falls into the whole theme of ‘Own It’ very well. We also had Nari Stephens as the backstage manager and a live DJ, Adam Santiago. Santiago really helped with the energy, because I was able to work with him before the show to work with the transitions.”

Sunday: Lovin' Life Ministries

Lovin' Life Ministries Sunday Service was held on the morning of August 12th, during which Rev. In Jin Moon congratulated the participants and encouraged them towards excellence and altruism:

“[Sports can be] really, really competitive. The emotions can run incredibly high. And of course, there are some teams that are very good. One [Ultimate Frisbee] team here was more like a neophyte team just coming into their own, learning the rules and learning how to play. But Jaga told me that he was so inspired by the really good [Ultimate Frisbee] team. During their off time, they were helping their opponents with the game, giving them tips and being encouraging towards them. If we can carry forth this kind of attitude not only on the sports field but also into our own lives, into our own companies, into our own communities, our movement is going to be unbelievably powerful and beautiful.”