

## **Belvedere Estate open to the general public for the first time in over 20 years**

Michael Balcomb  
May 13, 2016



On Sunday June 5, the Belvedere Estate will be opened to the general public for the first time in over 20 years to celebrate several landmark anniversaries of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA.

True Mother will be joining us for the celebration of the 62nd Anniversary of the founding of HSA-UWC in Korea in 1954, the 54th Observance of the Day of All True Things, and the 40th Anniversary of the Victory of the Yankee Stadium Rally, returning to one of the most historically significant places in the history of the Unification movement and True Parents' ministry in America.

Belvedere, located in America's historic Hudson Valley, was purchased on October 19, 1972, which was made possible by a national fundraising effort under the guidance of early Unificationist missionary Dr. Young Oon Kim.

In the early days of the movement, from 1973 until 1976, Belvedere served as the venue for several 100-day International Leadership Training sessions. The Belvedere Estate has served as the site for countless celebrations and Holy Days in the Belvedere Training Center as well as major events on the grounds with several thousands in attendance.

Some notable events that took place at Belvedere were the 4th of July celebration open to the public in 1974 with crowd of 10,000, the 74 Couple Blessing in 1977, Heung Jin Moon's Seonghwa (ascension) service in 1984, and the 21st anniversary Ocean Church Festival in 1994.

The God Bless America Family Festival on June 5 will feature a self-guiding tour to some of the most memorable portions of the estate, including:

### **The Mansion House**

The Belvedere Main House has recently been undergoing a major renovation project which began in July 2014 and has been largely completed. The mansion was originally built in 1908, and is being restored to maintain its original grandeur but modernized so it can be used as a guest house and a venue for special events.





**The Holy (Prayer) Rock**

The Holy Rock behind the main house was consecrated by True Father on January 7, 1973, and is recognized as one of the most sacred Holy Grounds in the entire Unification movement.



**The Training Center**

Belvedere’s greatest treasure is the fact that the Training Center served as the venue where True Father gave the vast majority of his sermons and addresses during his providential work in the United States for over 30 years. Speaking without fail, each Sunday and first of the month, it was the profound content and themes of his sermons at Belvedere that served as the guiding principles for the growing Unification movement in the United States. Much of the content found in the three Holy Scriptures came from True Father’s Belvedere Sermons. True Father’s final Sunday Sermon at the Belvedere Training Center was



given on Sunday, May 5, 2002. After that time, he spoke at East Garden almost daily through Hoon Dok Hae sessions in the early morning.



### **The Agora House**

The Agora House, allegedly a speakeasy during the prohibition years, was built of local stone that allows it to be cool in the summer and warm in the winter, which was an important feature before the age of air conditioning. The house was used by Unificationists as a martial arts dojo for 20 years, as well as for Sunday School. On the day of the festival, visit the Agora House tea terrace for refreshments and a quiet talk with friends, or play pick up basketball on the adjoining court (previously a tennis court).



## The Music Studio

Hyo Jin Moon, True Parents' eldest son who ascended to the spirit world eight years ago, wrote many of his songs at the Belvedere Music Studio.

Hyo Jin Moon also delivered speeches on Sundays at Belvedere.

As we gear up for the God Bless America Family Festival at Belvedere, we are rediscovering the history of Belvedere and invite you to join us on the journey. Register today for the God Bless America Family Festival and make sure to check out the Belvedere historical tour while you're there.

“For many of our family and friends, this will be a profound opportunity to connect with our personal and shared faith history,” says Michael Balcomb, President of FFPWU USA. “At the same time, we hope to offer our friends and neighbors who are visiting for the first time an intimate, behind-the-scenes glimpse about what it was like to live and work with our Founders.”

