

FFWPU USA Youth and Young Adult Ministry (YAYAM) workshop: The Summit

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From August 16 to 19 Youth and Young Adult Ministry (YAYAM) held their workshop The Summit, a leadership experience that welcomes primary leaders from Children's Ministry (CM), Youth Ministry (YM), Young Adult Ministry (YAM), the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), and Parent Mentors at the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, New York. This annual workshop brought in 110 participants from around the country with hopes of uniting these youth leaders to their subregions.

The program started off with a devotion service featuring live music and a meaningful message from Rev. Mark Abernathy. Throughout the summit there were many breakout sessions divided by ministry and subregions, as well as practical sessions focusing on skills and spiritual habits that can be used in leadership positions. Some mornings began with Hoon Dok Hwe and yoga, while other mornings included a light taekwondo session. On the weekend, the group decided to take a quick tour to see Heung Jin Moon's crashed car which brought tears to many.

Midwest subregional director Rev. David Rendel was "greatly amazed by the quality of the young adults and felt the motivation of the leadership team." Rev. Rendel continued, "It was especially wonderful when the young Unificationists shared their testimonies about what motivated them to keep moving forward."

A major highlight of the program for most participants was the chance to create deep heartistic bonds with like-minded youth leaders along with the sense of unity created for YAYAM nationwide.

Upcoming events: Generation Peace Academy kicks off September 10; UTS Accelerated Masters Program starts September 6.



Reflections

Kyosei Nagai, California, LA CARP – I am excited to start creating ties to our young adult ministry! We have not been able to do much in the past, but I really see the potential that LA has through the unity of the different ministries. Communication was our biggest issue, so these meetings are important for us to move into the next level that God is guiding us toward.

Yasutaka Ozawa, New Jersey, YM – My greatest highlight was during the cardboard testimonies when my leaders were vulnerable and shared their struggles to us. I mostly saw my leader's prominence and didn't think about the struggles he may be facing. Having them share made me more empathetic towards them. It even motivated me to do better to lift the burden off them as much as possible.

Teddy Biggin, Arkansas, YAM – I really liked seeing how other communities my size were thriving. I especially liked coming together as a subregion and bonding as well as creating a clearer plan. I'm very excited to start developing my own life of faith in cooperation with other young adults in my community.

Sunmi Rinkema, Illinois, CM – I feel very connected with my subregion and I have a better understanding of the national education standards like the Rubric. It was inspiring to see so many young future leaders gathered together. The energy was high and the people were serious.

Abi Gilfillan, Minnesota, YAM – I loved Reverend Abernathy's quote about if you are stressing with your past, is it really in your past? I think that was something I really needed to hear at this point in my life.

Marin Kitamura, California, YAM – Being able to meet with representatives from my region and having discussions with them really showed the passion of our second generation. I felt so much hope seeing them try to improve their communities and creating a space where our culture can thrive. The task to help our own communities seems less daunting now that there's a structured organization and knowing the resources that are available. Each community has different challenges which is why communication is extremely important not only within each local community but with the region and headquarter so we can better support each other.

Kai Moyonga, Minnesota, YAM – I appreciated the evening program where I had the chance to connect with other young ladies my age and talk about our real concerns. I felt much support because of it. I also enjoyed the coming together of the communities in our general region of the mid-west. It was exciting, uplifting, and fueled my spirit and soul.

Keisetsu Nakamura, New Jersey, CARP – When Naokimi shared his testimony about True Mother appointed him as CARP President when he didn't necessarily have a calling to be a CARP leader, I felt so much gratitude not only towards Heavenly Parent and True Parents, but also directly towards Naokimi. He was the one who revamped CARP in America after it had dwindled and I wouldn't have been able to know who God truly is without CARP so I owe a lot to Naokimi.

