

## National Parent's Day Award Ceremonies - James Gavin

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July usually conjures up images of fireworks and barbeques at the beach, but for Unificationists and their allies in more than a dozen states, it also is the month they will celebrate the federally designated day known as "Parents' Day." In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed a law creating the holiday Parents' Day, "recognizing, uplifting, and supporting the role of parents in the rearing of children."

Unificationist James Gavin, president of the Universal Peace Foundation USA and a national coordinator of Parents'-Day celebrations recently said, "America has both Mother's- and Father's Day, but what makes Parents' Day so special is that we honor both parents together as the people that raise our children and future generation. We note the importance to celebrate parents and what they mean to our families, communities and nation; we should respect people throughout our everyday lives. We can do that through family picnics, at church we can do that through giving awards or in our nation's capital like this year. We can honor our parents many different ways this year."

The Capitol Hill celebration will be on September 19, 2012, Gavin told *Unificationnews.com*, adding, "We encourage all states to celebrate but not all have the time or take the time, to do it. In each state, about twenty-five parents are nominated for their local award. Each nominee gets an award and two parents are taken to DC to be [acknowledged] in a national ceremony."

Award ceremonies at the state level will include the following.

A Parents' Day celebration will be held on Tuesday, July 17, 2012 in St. Paul, Minnesota at the State Capitol Rotunda at noon. Awards will be given to exemplary parents and grandparents. One of the nominees this year is Larry Scandin from Vadnais Heights. Over the years, Larry took in over one hundred foster children, many with addictions, who have been abused, and who found a new beginning in Scandin's home.

"Larry always took some of our very toughest kids that came from very difficult homes. I can't say enough good things about him. He would always say 'I'm willing to try,' and he always was. And he tried to the Nth degree. He never gave up on his kids," said Mike Stevens, Juvenile Probation Officer in St. Paul.

The UPF activists in New York will hold an event on July 20, 2012 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the steps of the Adam Clayton Powel State Office Building on the outside stage and plaza, according to Rev. Bruce Grodner, the state pastor of the Unification Church of New York. A “Hero of the Year” award will be given to two nominees, one for a single parent, and one to a couple. Local parents will be chosen from every part of the greater New York City area. Rev. Grodner says that nominees include two single parents, one a mother and the other a blind father, each with five daughters and who raised their girls with exceptional strength, commitment and love despite their the difficulties. He says the winners of the awards will go to Washington, D.C. in September for the national event.



*Manassas Mayor Harry J. Parrish, Jr. issued this proclamation declaring July 29, 2012 "Parents Day" in the jurisdiction of the Manassas City Council.*

In Virginia, the Parents' Day 2012 program will be held on Saturday July 28, 2012 from 11:00 a.m. at Choice Books of Virginia, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow (part of greater Manassas), Virginia. Awardees are still being selected, but one award winner is likely to be Rhonda Williams, a resident of Sterling, whose heroic story of raising four children under conditions of duress was told in the July 9, 2012 of Sports Illustrated. Williams instilled in her four children a remarkable work ethic and public-mindedness that guided two of her sons to distinguish themselves as scholar-athletes.

In Texas, Parents' Day, 2012 will be celebrated on Sunday, July 29, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Dallas Family Church, 1922 Anson Rd., Dallas. Organizer Jon Halsey has announced to the Dallas Unificationist community: “Bring your family, friends, and neighbors to enjoy a wonderful banquet, superb entertainment, and inspiring fellowship. We will select several ‘Model Parents of the Year. For guidelines and requirements, fill out the attachment application and e-mail it to me by July 27th. We will also install several ‘Ambassadors for Peace,’ who are exceptional individuals in the community by virtue of their service to others. One could say that they are parents on the community level because they love their fellow citizens and take responsibility for their problems and needs.”

Parents' Day is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of July. Citizens, organizations, and federal, state, and local governmental and legislative entities are encouraged to recognize Parents' Day through proclamations, activities, and educational efforts to recognize, uplift and support the role of parents in raising their children. The first national Parents' Day celebration was held on Capitol Hill in 1994. Famous television mothers arrived for the celebration: Barbara Billingsley, the iconic June Cleaver from the 1950's sitcom "Leave it to Beaver," Harriet Nelson from "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet" and the former Mrs. Clair Huxtable from "The Cosby Show" Phylicia Rashād, were all there to play tribute to all the parents of the American classics.