

Jaga Gavin Says Blessed Culture and Sports Festival 2012 Biggest and Best Yet

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National Youth Pastor Jaga Gavin delivered a message harmonious with the BCSF 2012 theme "Own It."

The seventh annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF), which began on August 8th and will continue after Lovin' Life Ministries (LLM) Sunday Service on August 12th at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, is already surpassing expectations, according to co-director of BCSF Jin Kwon Kim.

"BCSF 2012 had 30 percent more pre-registered participants than in 2011, and the number is growing each day," he said. "Currently there are more than 600 people on site here, but we expect to at least double that number by Sunday, especially since Sunday Service will be held here at UTS. This year, we hope more parents, friends and families will come and support the players, especially for the Frisbee finals."



Co-founder of BCSF Jin Kwon Kim, sporting a BCSF T-shirt, welcomed attendees to the Opening Ceremony.

Various sports teams, which include eight men's Ultimate Frisbee teams, four women's Ultimate Frisbee teams, five Soccer teams, sixteen Volleyball teams, and nine Basketball teams, as well as eighteen Tennis players, are scheduled to play Thursday through Sunday in a modified round-robin style. Not only are each of the Unification Church USA's twelve districts represented by athletes and supporters from all over the nation, but for the first time, an international team from Canada is registered to compete.



Youth Leader Kaeleigh Moffitt said, "Under Senior Pastor Rev. In Jin Moon's direction, the different districts of the Unification Church in America have been trying to unite. For BCSF, now more than ever...we want to build bonds and create a community of love that will last."

The festivities for BCSF began in the Auditorium of UTS on Wednesday with Junction, a weekly, young-adult service that the Junction Band kicked off with a cover of “We Are the Champions.” The finale of the band’s performance marked the beginning of the Opening Ceremony for BCSF, during which representatives from each of the twelve districts participated in a ceremonial procession with flags, introduced by emcee and New York LLM Pastor Andrew Love.



Young Unificationists, wearing color-coordinated T-shirts that represent their respective districts, raise their arms in participation with the Junction Band's performance.

Jaga Gavin, the national youth pastor of LLM, delivered a message that elaborated on the BCSF theme for 2012: “Own It.”

“There are certain things in your life that you can't control,” he said. “Actually, 95 percent of your life is out of your hands. Some people were born with a higher risk for certain types of cancer or heart disease, some people were born from parents from New Zealand and Japan, some people were born with perfect teeth or a beautiful afro. You might have inherited athleticism, or really good social skills.

“95 percent of you is out of your control, but you do control five percent. You may know that your family is at risk for certain diseases; however, you can eat right, exercise, abstain from certain harmful behaviors, etc. You can't control the family you were born into, but you can make your family name a good name, a better name, through the way you choose to live. You may be born with certain abilities, but you have to choose to exercise those abilities. What you decide to do with your life will be passed down as your legacy and ultimately change the lives of many. This is our place, this is our time, and this is our choice. Let's own it!”



Ultimate Frisbee remains a favorite among Unificationist athletes, attracting a total of twelve teams.

The Team Spirit Cup

A new nuance that has been added to all of the competitive athletic events at BCSF is “Team Spirit,” which is to be determined by a watchful group of people organized by young-adult leader Kaeleigh Moffitt from Maryland. Good sportsmanship will be assessed during each competitive event, and a “Team Spirit Cup” will be awarded to the district that is designated to have shown the most Team Spirit.

“One special thing about Unificationists is that we have a lot of camaraderie with each other and we work together well,” said Moffitt. “This year, we wanted to do something that involved everybody. Even though there's competition, there are a lot of people who are cheering, supporting, respecting and thanking each other, even when they are on opposing teams. It raises the level of not just athleticism but also the culture of heart. And for me, that's what Team Spirit is.”

In light of the fact that BCSF has grown from less than 100 athletes to more than 500 in both sportive- and cultural events in just seven years, Moffitt stresses the need for “something to make us feel more connected to each other. It's not as if people weren't practicing team spirit before. We just wanted to

honor and recognize it. BCSF is just so big now that it's about more than just playing sports; it's about representing where we're from and being proud of all the effort that we're making as a nation."



Representatives of different districts proudly wave their flags during the Opening Ceremony of BCSF.

"It's very inspirational to see the best of the best of our community, whether we're talking about athletes, dancers, artists, singers, etc.," said Victoria Roomet, president of Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) USA. "So much practice is put into preparing for BCSF. Unification parents should be very proud of the hard work and good attitudes of their kids."

In harmony with new BCSF aspect of Team Spirit, Generation Peace Academy (GPA) graduate and Maryland-resident Rachel Boothby said, "My sport is support. I came to BCSF even though I'm not playing a sport because I value time with the people here and I want to be able to support the people in my community. People gather from all over the nation, and I think it's a culture-building and bonding experience."



The Junction Band performed a well-received Queen medley after Pastor Gavin's message.

The CARP Games

Following Junction on Wednesday night, Roomet reminded attendees to sign up for the highly-anticipated CARP Games, a game-show type event that uses themes from the novel series *The Hunger Games* that takes place on Friday.



Volleyball racked up a total of sixteen teams.

"Coincidentally, our church community in the USA consists of twelve districts, just as the city in *The Hunger Games* is divided into twelve districts," said Wendy Fiala, secretary of CARP USA. "The CARP Games will feature representatives, or 'tributes,' from each district who will compete against each other. Participants submitted their names into a bowl designated to their district and during the Opening Ceremony, we had Unificationist Tanya Triggol from Indianapolis dress up in an elaborate costume as

one of the characters from *The Hunger Games* and draw a name from each bowl. We're really excited about incorporating themes from the book, but we also want to make this about cheering for your district and supporting each other in a competitive but friendly way. To all the tributes, on behalf of CARP I would like to say 'May the Odds be Ever in your Favor.'"

Moffitt said, "Under Senior Pastor Rev. In Jin Moon's direction, the different districts of the Unification Church in America have been trying to unite, and so that *The Hunger Games* movie recently came out was perfect timing. For BCSF, now more than ever, we're focusing on representing our districts. We want to build bonds and create a community of love that will last."

Spoiler alert – in accord with the fact that *The Hunger Games* trilogy mentions a thirteenth district, organizers of the CARP Games have also allowed the formation of an additional team represented by Unificationists from international communities. Furthermore, to add an extra flair of excitement to the Friday-night festivities, CARP is also providing board games, a poker tournament, and a Super Smash Brothers videogame tournament, as well as a chance to help fellow Unificationists facing religious persecution in Japan through a CARP-sponsored T-shirt fundraiser.



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The BCSF Art Gallery

The BCSF Art Gallery, which features work from Unificationists of all ages in the chapel of UTS, is also a cultural tradition that is evolving to include more activities that are interactive and relevant to the Unificationist lifestyle.

"Last year, there was no real interaction except for the fact that there was a sale," said Shin Young Chang, co-organizer of the BCSF Art Gallery with Shannon Forringer from Red Hook, NY. "This year, we wanted to make the gallery relevant in the sense that other cultural activities are interactive and relevant. For example, ballroom dances teaches you a skill, CARP's game nights are a lot of fun and people can root for their districts, in Open Mic, people get to showcase their talents, etc. Last year, people got to show their work in the Art Gallery, but it was a stagnant space. This year, we tried to make it something that people could actively enjoy."



Unificationist spectators take a moment to showcase their district pride out on the playing field.

"So, we set up a station for bead work and provided the materials and space for people to engage in artwork such as painting if they wanted to. We also have a massage table, two henna artists, who are UC Magazine intern Hanna Rischl and Allen Taka Cooper, a tattoo artist who has some of his work displayed in the Gallery. All the money we make through massages and henna goes to support the Art Gallery. We also have workshops that teach people how to make proper prints to sell, how to price their artwork properly and even how to carve fruit."

The Gallery includes all kinds of original artwork including jewelry, pottery, clothes and books illustrated by Unificationist artists, including Chang herself.



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Chang says that she invested more effort into encouraging the older generation of Unificationists to support the artwork of Unificationist youth. “People can donate a certain amount of money and as a thank you, they would receive a print of the best piece,” she cited as an example. “Our biggest sponsor is art enthusiast and second-generation Unificationist David Stein, who really wants to help young Unificationist artists get their artwork exposed. Another big supporter was CARP. They donated art supplies such as beads, paint and paper.

“We want to help artists sell their work and so we asked them to bring pieces that were under \$50 for people to buy. For anything more expensive than that, we ask buyers to connect to the artists directly. We’re hoping that artists who didn’t know we have a gallery will see it and want to display their artwork next year.”