

True Love Peace School helps adolescents develop their dreams and talents

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The launching of the True Love Peace School and 2015 entrance ceremony

The background to the founding of True Love Peace School began with Dr. Hak-ja Han's special instructions on August 2013 that FFWPU, WFWP and other providential organizations work together to resolve difficulties experienced by bi-cultural blessed families, those from a Korean and a non-Korean parent, and second-generation members generally. According to a study conducted across Korea in August 2013 by the Multi-Cultural General Welfare Center through the Japanese Missionary Association, the number of dropouts among the second-generation children of bi-cultural parents was about sixty. The number, however, did not include unreported areas, implying that the number could be greater. The Multi-Love Counseling Center reported a gradual increase in the number children of bi-cultural blessed couples with low basic academic skills and the number exposed to ridicule for having bi-cultural parents, including ostracism by peers, maladjustment in school, dropping out of school, running away from home and exposure to criminality.

Dr. Hak-ja Han felt that we must no longer neglect this issue and with deep concern for those families, she instructed that we find alternatives or a solution.

The FFWPU Multi-Cultural Policy Support Center first collected basic data needed to carry out alternative education for these children of mixed parentage. Finally, at a welfare system public hearing for blessed families of such bi-cultural parents, on September 13, 2013, the center proposed the establishment of an alternative school customized for our second-generation children in these families.

Later, fifty-two autonomous multicultural groups came together and launched a national level group called the Korean Multi-Cultural Peace Federation on April 25, 2014. On this day, Kyeong-seuk Lu, first president of the Korean Multi-Cultural Peace Federation, presented the five core projects of the federation, one of which was the establishment of an alternative school for children of bi-cultural parents. Following the launching of this group, eighty-two entrance related consultations were submitted and forty-three people participated at the actual entrance briefing. Except for those under fifteen and those over twenty years of age among the applicants, we officially admitted fourteen second-generation children to the high school course in True Love Peace School, an alternative school with boarding facilities, on March 7, 2015.

We carried out an analysis of entrance-related consultations and found the results described below.

First, the number of families in the low-income bracket was higher than expected. Over 60 percent of the students' families were in dire financial difficulties and had been receiving low-income benefits from the schools they had been attending. Second, most had low learning ability. They showed a learning ability

equivalent to students in the first year of Korean (three-year) middle schools, revealing little grasp of even the basics in subjects including Korean, English and mathematics. Third, the students experienced discrimination in one way or another for coming from a bi-cultural family; as a result, they felt uncomfortable about entering relationships with others and had negative sentiments about their school-life. Fourth, they experienced some degree of domestic violence.

Some of their fathers would be violent -- and extremely so when drunk -- leaving deep emotional scars on their children's hearts, causing some of them to avoid being at home. They would roam playgrounds or other places until they received a text message affirming that their fathers had gone to sleep. Some, during their adolescence, tried to find psychological solace through relationships with the opposite sex; some even had sexual intercourse. In even more harrowing cases, the child sought protection from such violence (including from sexual abuse) in protection facilities such as shelters. This indicates the urgent need for different types of countermeasures.

The founding ideals of True Love Peace School are to love God, love humanity and love our country. The school's educational vision is to develop the dreams and talents of adolescent offspring of mixed parentage through "Happiness Education," which is based on the school's founding ideals. Through a two-year educational course, True Love Peace School hopes to achieve its three main educational goals, the first of which is the acquisition of high school diplomas by its students, whom we are guiding to have confidence in their own potential through subject classes aligned with the Korean High School equivalency examination (hereafter, the GED: General Education Development test). The school is also providing them with the necessary support to enter whichever high-ranking university they desire to study at or helping them find the right career path and obtain relevant certificates or licenses.

The second goal is to educate them on their identity as children of mixed parentage whose parents married through our international blessings. It is undeniably true that they not only face social prejudice for having mixed parentage but also face religious prejudice as Unification Church members. However, the school will nurture them with the aim that they become global citizens equipped with a warm personality and professional skills through education of the heart based on our strength -- the Unification Principle -- and education jointly done with providential organizations that have a global network. The third goal is to provide them with integrated education that can help them stand on their own feet.

We conduct classes through four different projects. The first is the travelling project, which includes cycling across the country, going on a cultural tour of Japan, and backpacking across the world. Travelling is a great way to elevate a person's self-esteem. The second is the language project. Traveling will also provide the students with the motivation to study Japanese and English. The third is the health project. To have healthy minds and bodies, students not only go through physical education, meditation, music, art and martial arts, but also have general check-ups and treatment if necessary. The fourth is the volunteering project. We are expanding opportunities for students to exert their abilities in sharing and volunteering, including through the active TPS Food Volunteer Group.

We conduct regular classes from Monday to Friday; morning classes focus on the Korean GED, while afternoon classes consist of special classes and experience-oriented classes essential in helping students find their career path. After 4:00 PM, the school provides support for individual learning only for students who apply for it.

Similarly, we prepared a special project during the vacation for students that submit an application. Expenses include the tuition fee (including fees for practice and field activities), which is ₩200,000 per month, an amount equivalent to that required by public schools, and additional expenses for boarding and after-school programs, which are options for relevant students. Students are free to choose between boarding at or commuting to school; however, we give priority to students from the provinces when deciding who will reside in the dormitory.

We give scholarships to students in the low-income bracket in proportion to the financial status of the family and in accordance with evaluation results. In 2015, the school received ₩13 million (US \$13,000 dollars) in scholarship money and ₩10 million (US \$10,000 dollars) in sponsorship for project expenses. FFWPU fully covers any shortage in money needed to operate the school.

Since the opening of True Love Peace School in March this year, among the initial seventeen students, three left after passing their Korean GED and two left for personal reasons.

The school's twelve remaining students and twelve teachers have had a bustling 2015. Both teachers and students shed a lot of sweat as they partook in a month-long Tongil Mudo summer camp and challenged their physical limits through a twelve-day cycling journey across the country.

Significantly, in the process they gained strong confidence that they can do it. Students also immersed themselves in a cultural tour of Japan, which enabled them to better understand Japan, their mother's country, and their value as second-generation children. Among these students, five passed their Korean

GED, one or two students will soon enter university and others passed the Korean History Examination, the Barista Qualification Examination, Japanese Language Proficiency Test and others.

In 2016, True Love Peace School plans to challenge a wider range of problems including expanding its financial independence, enacting measures to conduct classes according to the students' varying academic levels, correcting the students' lifestyles by changing their biological clocks, enriching the expertise of teachers in charge of alternative education and managing students with delinquent behavior. Essentially, the school will begin to approach these problems from a viewpoint aligned with the Divine Principle but will also take a stance that gives consideration to the students, who are basically the consumers.

We will patiently invest efforts to substantiate the essence of alternative education, which is to guide students to a level at which they take the lead from a subjective position and voluntarily participate in the school curriculum. True Love Peace School will also work toward forming empathy in school based on the spontaneity of teachers, the autonomy of the school and its flexibility in operations. We will build a cooperative system with parents to achieve these goals.