

Apply Now for Generation Peace Academy 2012-2013: International Applicants Welcome!

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The Generation Peace Academy (GPA), the premier character-education program for Lovin' Life Ministries, is officially opening its doors to international applicants for the first time. Prospective trainees can apply to the program online at www.gpafamily.org from February 15, 2012 until the end of May 2012 and will enroll later that year in September.

According to Director of GPA Roland Platt, from around 2000-2007, several international second-generation Unificationists had enrolled in the GPA program, which was then known as the Special Task Force (STF). "However, it came to be difficult to get religious visas for the international participants, so, for the last two years we've had strictly U.S. citizens," he explained. "This year we want to open it up again. The legal department looked into what kind of visa we needed, and we found the H-3 visa, which is for nonimmigrant trainees, or special-education exchange visitors. This visa will work for GPA for whatever they'll be doing, whether it's international service, fundraising or dorming at the Lovin' Life Learning Center."

International applicants are encouraged to apply as early as possible as the visa sometimes takes three or four months to process.

Also for the first time, GPA is welcoming young, first-generation Unificationists to participate in its program. Platt tells the UC Newsletter that he doesn't know how many applications to expect, but he said, "It's good to start small. For the past two years we've had record numbers, as the program has gotten better and more attractive. This year, we expect that there are going to be even more second-generation applicants. On top of that, we'll have international- and first-generation youth. It'll be really great.

"The only issue is staff," he added. "Right now, the Learning Center is at its maximum capacity. We may have to add a fourth module to our tripartite module system, but we will see."



GPA trainee Lara de Oliveira steps to the forefront of the choir during its well-received performance in Korea.

Interacting with Young Unificationists in Korea and Japan

Platt says that the purpose of formally inviting youth from other countries to participate in GPA partly is to give them personal work experience with President In Jin Moon and members of her family. “We’ve developed a great program here in the US, and I’m pretty confident that this is the best program to help second-generation connect to True Family,” he says. “We want to extend that blessing to other Blessed Children in Europe, Japan, South America and other countries that don’t have that kind of opportunity. Therefore, all young Unificationists who have finished high school or the equivalent of high school are eligible to apply.

“Last month, I was in Korea with the GPA choir, and we were able to meet with the president of CARP (Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles) in Korea. He had received directions that Hyung Jin Nim wanted Korea, Japan, Europe, USA and other countries to all have a GPA- or STF-type program with the same vision, same objective, same curriculum and same standard of graduation. It’ll take time to get there, but at least we’ll be working towards that. I’m looking forward to working with our international brothers and sisters to make one, unified program and to create opportunities for those on the program to participate in exchange programs and to meet at international assemblies.

“The next destination after Korea was Japan, where we spent time with the Blessed Children there. It was really magical how the GPA trainees bonded – very naturally, very spontaneously, even with differences of language. Within half an hour of meeting, they were all sharing and talking and overcoming cultural barriers. I saw the deep bond Blessed Children have with each other, and because of this bond, we are looking forward to welcoming international applicants.

“Of course, one of the requirements to apply to GPA from another country will be some basic level of English. We haven’t yet figured out how to quantify an applicant’s English skills, but without language, it’s difficult for that person to really grow, understand lectures and services and make most of his or her year. So we’ll require them to have basics of English and the heart to master English.”

For more information, please visit www.gpafamily.org or www.generationpeaceacademy.org.