

Generation Peace Academy Looks Forward to a Record-breaking Year - Roland Platt

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Roland Platt, Director of Generation Peace Academy (GPA)

Generation Peace Academy (GPA), a year-long character-education program for young Unificationists, envisions reaching for higher ground in its second year, according to Director of GPA Roland Platt.

“This year, we will have a record-breaking number of applicants for the third year in a row,” said Platt, who explained that GPA was formerly known as the Special Task Force and underwent the name change in 2011, during which the program itself was heavily restructured. “Currently we have over 130 applicants, and counting. We will need to cap it at 140 simply due to the limitation of staff.”

Platt says the results are “amazing” given the fact that the total number of Unificationist-born youth who are eligible to apply is decreasing as a demographic statistic. “The peak in terms of applicants was about three or four years ago, due to the Unificationist ‘baby boom’ after Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s 1982 mass wedding. Despite that fact, the number of applicants is increasing. To me, this is substantial evidence that Senior Pastor Rev. In Jin Moon is successfully creating a program that is relevant to the young people and to the time we are living in. Furthermore, this is the first year that we have not made any special efforts to promote the program.”

This year GPA welcomed applications from overseas and now looks forward to hosting seven participants from out of the United States this Fall. According to Platt, a handful of young, first-generation Unificationists are expected to enroll as well.



Countries visited in the Overseas Module may include Trinidad, Peru, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Nepal and more.

A Four-Module Rotational System

Because of the influx of applicants, the GPA program will feature a fourth module in addition to the original three modules known as “Fundraising Module, the Overseas Module and the Leadership Program.” Platt says: “Half of the new module will consist of an ‘outdoor challenge’ consisting of either wilderness- or ocean training, and the other half will take place in Morning Garden, Gloucester, where participants will study the Divine Principle and learn how to lecture its contents.

“Rev. Moon has spent and continues to spend much of his time on the ocean and has spoken deeply about his experiences with God out on the ocean. In her sermons, our senior pastor shares about her experiences on the ocean as instrumental in building her character and her trust in God. In essence, we go out on the sea to inherit Rev. Moon’s heart towards the ocean.

“As for adventure training, many of our young people have grown up in suburbs and have become totally accustomed to the conveniences of life. By going out into the wilderness where all of that materialism is taken away, we hope they will encounter their innate strengths and limitations, as well as the incredible beauty and rawness of God’s creation. We are very excited about this new module – it makes the GPA experience even more complete and holistic.”

The GPA participants will rotate through these four modules throughout the year, spending two months in each module. The Fundraising Module is designed to provide a condensed experience of the course taken by first-generation Unificationists in the early years of the Unification Church. Divided into small groups that travel throughout the United States by van, GPA participants will fundraise in various states in order to develop personal resilience and the heart to

reach out to non-Unificationists. For the Overseas Module, participants will raise money to finance a trip to a third-world country and complete 21-days of public service there, renovating and building schools and educating local youth in subjects such as abstinence, pre-marital sex, drugs and alcohol.

“Overseas, those on GPA will cultivate a profound love and compassion for humanity by living and serving in developing countries,” said Platt. “They will come to appreciate how blessed they are in comparison to most of humankind and realize how impactful their lives can be. They will have unforgettable and life-changing adventures.”

For the Leadership Program, participants will experience Lovin’ Life Ministries (LLM) firsthand and have the opportunity to intern at LLM Headquarters in New York and therefore develop proficiency in a certain area of ministry. “We hope that through this module, participants will inherit the culture of LLM and gain the skills to contribute to LLM in their home communities,” said Platt.



From left to right: graduates of GPA Cynthia Jones, Emma Tecun, Kimisei Miyaki and Klein Gauthier.

New Staff and Workshops

As assistance for the 20 or so second-year- and four third-year participants committed for the upcoming year, GPA has hired new staff, many of whom are parents of GPA trainees. These include Louise Honey, whose daughter, Natasha Honey, graduated from GPA this spring, Francis Marsal, Gerard Servito, who will train GPA trainees to lecture the Divine Principle, and Andy and Lauri Shoultz as “dorm parents.”

Similar to last year, GPA’s class of 2013 will have opportunities to mingle altogether during workshops interspersed throughout the year. The program will launch with a 20-day Kickoff Workshop at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, NY, during which all participants of GPA will gather before separating for their assigned modules. During that time, organizers of GPA will create a choir that will begin training for the third annual Unification Church Choir Competition in Cheongpyeong, South Korea. Participants will be allowed a week-long break during Christmas and will be expected to return for a workshop that will prepare attendees for the New Year and the Winter Gala, which is organized by the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP). Finally, a “Families Workshop” is scheduled to take place in Las Vegas in the Spring as an opportunity for parents and siblings of the GPA members to get a glimpse of what GPA has accomplished so far through testimonies, entertainment and activities.



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“In previous years when we held such workshops, many parents had ‘revival’ experiences, as they remembered how inspired they were when they were young members,” said Platt.

The year will conclude with the Commencement Gala at the Manhattan Center in June, 2013. “We’re very excited about the class of 2013,” Platt said with a smile. “This is a historical time, and there are a lot of exciting changes taking place, inside and outside GPA. The upcoming year will be unforgettable.”