

## Generation Peace Academy holds annual Family Assembly and Alumni Reunion

Roland Platt  
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*STF and GPA Alumni gather to cheer on their team at a GPA Staff vs. Alumni volleyball game*

For the first time ever, Generation Peace Academy (GPA) hosted its annual Family Assembly alongside its first Alumni Reunion. From April 11 to 13, about 400 friends and family members from all over the country gathered for this eventful occasion at the beautiful YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado. A great deal of networking, reminiscing and sharing between family members and past and present GPA—and Special Task Force (STF)—participants made for a vibrant atmosphere with a promising outlook for the future.

“Family workshop was really awesome for me,” said Takanari Sonoda. “It was really cool spending time with my dad and seeing the parents interacting with each other. I was grateful for GPA to have a chance to show the parents what we’ve been doing all year and to entertain them.”

Another participant, Sayana Hallal, said, “Family workshop was a great opportunity to reconnect with my family and fully express my experiences. It was also an opportunity to love the extended family we have on GPA and share our experiences with one another.”



*A GPA team leader smiles for the camera with his mother.*

Alumni had the chance to share their life and their daily practices post-GPA with the youth currently finishing their year of GPA. Transitioning from GPA into college or work life is a challenge that the alumni know all too well, and the session not only showed a great passion to see the program and its participants grow but also yielded practical ideas for support in the years to come.



*GPA participants decorate the main hall in preparation for the GPA Family and Alumni Weekend.*

The first idea was to create a mentorship program between alumni and more recent graduates of GPA in order to ease the transition. The second was a fund initiated by the alumni that would provide yearbooks for GPA participants as a graduation gift. Organizers hope to put these plans in place this year.

Alumni from STF or GPA are invited to support their growing GPA family by becoming a mentor or donating a monthly title. Anyone interested in supporting GPA is invited to give a one-time donation toward the program or to the yearbook fund. If you are interested, please contact [connectgpa@gmail.com](mailto:connectgpa@gmail.com) or stay tuned-in on Facebook at [facebook.com/GenPeaceAcademy](https://facebook.com/GenPeaceAcademy).



*A GPA leader poses with his mother at the GPA Family and Alumni Weekend.*

GPA not only creates a sense of family among participants through a year of strengthening faith, self-discipline and leadership training together but also brings participants to value their families and cultivate their relationships with their parents and siblings. From the start, the Family Assembly was a moving and joyful reunion between parents and children, highlighting the growth and appreciation they had developed over the year. “I felt God working through this year to heal my relationship with my parents and it was at this point of the workshop where I felt the most clear and alive,” said Toshiaki Yamamura.

Following GPA director Roland Platt’s welcome address and remarks from some of the GPA staff, a skit performed by GPA highlighted the transformation of a parent-child relationship during a year of the program. The performance concluded with Sarah Takhar of GPA bringing her mother on stage to express directly to her the gratitude she felt for her unconditional love and support and her deep appreciation for all she has done for her throughout her life.

“The feeling of us all together—the support that is behind us all year in the room holding hands, and rejoicing all together—it was amazing energy,” expressed Marina Garwood.

Dr. Ki-hoon Kim, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) American Continental Director, gave a Sunday sermon, and Dr. Michael Balcomb, National President of FFWPU USA, shared True Mother's remarks that the best thing for parents is to support and love their children, and trust that God works in their lives. Everyone reminisced together with videos of GPA's overseas service projects this past year in Barbados, Peru, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Panama. Free time for hiking, sports and other family activities also allowed the GPA youth to share their experiences with their parents, siblings and friends.



*GPA participants take in the view during a hike at Estes Park, Colorado.*

“It was a great moment of time to rekindle with not only GPA as a whole, but as well as with the family,” said Kuni Okabe, a participant of GPA.

After a successful Family Assembly and an exciting exchange of ideas for going forward, GPA invites anyone interested in learning more about GPA, applying for GPA 2014-15, or contributing to the program to visit [gpafamily.com](http://gpafamily.com).