



GPA Kick-Off 2014 Day 1

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September 12, 2014



We have officially kicked off the 2014-2015 GPA year! And it has been out of this world- literally. With the theme of “Pokemon Outer Space” the staff and first year pre-fundraising participants warmly welcomed twenty new first year participants. The lecture hall was decked out in decorations and ongoing sports, board games and activities were run throughout the afternoon. There were definitely nerves but also great excitement to meet new faces and see old faces of the brothers and sisters we’ll be with for this next year. Once the members finished registration, smiled big for their GPA photo, moved their bags into their new home, joined in on the fun on the field, everyone gathered for a welcome barbeque before the day ended.



The moment finally came when GPA was all together for the first time. On Thursday morning our GPA director Roland Platt welcomed the GPA participants together with the introduction of the core staff. The MCs followed with an orientation of the framework and purpose of the Kick Off Workshop. The participants were then asked to change into their white tshirts and sports clothes. The Icebreaker Day was ready to really begin. Confused and not knowing what to expect, the participants were led outside in three separate groups. With their eyes closed, the group leaders, third years and second years ambushed them with colored powder. Shocked and surprised they opened their eyes to the color on their shirts and the faces around them...their brand new group for Kick Off! The three groups are blue, green and red nation and this year, Kick Off workshop will be an intense competition between these groups. From there, the participants met their new teams and captains for the workshop.



After the excitement of group and team announcements, each group was given the task of creating the best chant to represent their nation. After discussion and practice, each group proudly presented their chant filled with songs and yelling and movement and much creativity. Win or lose, the groups were energized and united and excited from the chant competition.

Next the groups entered an extravagant competition called “The Amazing Race.” Teams sprinted out to ten different icebreaker stations spread widely across the UTS property. The goal? To complete each station and return back to the main base in the fastest time possible. From eating whole watermelons to carrying someone on their back, the stations were challenging physically and mentally and forced each team to get to know each other, work together and support each other. It was a difficult, fun and memorable experience until the very end. But once the teams returned, the competition still wasn't over.

Each group was asked to choose four of the best runners to represent the nation in a relay race. The four racers emerged from the hall into the field. The first two runners sprinted a single lap around the field. The next runner ran off the field around the property to the head of Father's trail. Lastly, the final runner ran (swam) through the mud (water) in the lagoon along the trail and returned to the field for their final lap. It was an exciting and suspenseful race until the finish line as the runners gave their heart and the nations cheered from the sidelines. After a long day, the first day competition came to a close with the appreciation of each other and the announcement of the winner.

After a good shower and a warm dinner, the second and third years presented videos they prepared to introduce themselves and welcome the new first years. GPA as a whole then gathered around Father's rock to close the day, sharing their experiences and enjoying the feeling of togetherness and excitement from the first day. It was the start of so many amazing experiences up ahead in this Kick Off Workshop and brand new year of GPA. The year is definitely off to a great start and we look forward to the upcoming days of introducing the GPA program, internal guidances, skit competitions and volleyball competitions. Until next time...thank you!