

CARP Youth Living Intentionally

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This past year True Mother placed great emphasis on the leadership education of our youth, referring to programs such as Generation Peace Academy (GPA) and the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) as viable options. As 2015 approaches and many families are setting plans for the new year ahead, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, continental chair of FFWPU USA, encourages our families to consider CARP Las Vegas as an expression that resonates with True Mother's heart and vision.

To give our families a better understanding of what the youth in our community have to gain from participating in the Las Vegas CARP chapter, three Unificationist-born young adults who are full-time CARP Las Vegas members have shared their experiences on GPA and CARP and how witnessing has helped transform their life of faith into a life of intentional pursuit to learn to love like God. For them, seeing their peers at school or meeting a stranger on the street is another opportunity to gain a new brother and sister by showing how we all share the same Heavenly Parent. Their active pursuit to see others from God's eyes and then be God's conduit of love for His and Her children has transformed the way these three young people live their lives.

Testimonies from Las Vegas CARP members

N. JESPER: Last year I attended Generation Peace Academy. Through GPA I was able to learn what a life of faith was and work on my relationship with Heavenly Parent—I felt things could become real to me.

Going to college and working for CARP are helping me take the next step in my life of faith: that is, taking my life of faith and merging it with everyday life. I would say that whereas GPA training helped me to establish my Foundation of Faith, my life with CARP is helping me more with the Foundation of Substance.

In the beginning I had a hard time seeing how Divine Principle applied to situations in my life as a college student. Then I started teaching the Principle to my guests, who could see the value of the Principle that I had never realized before. Also I started looking at the Divine Principle from the viewpoint of a person who was studying it for the first time. Then so many questions started coming up in my mind, and it made me want to study the Principle and True Parents' teachings more. Finding the answers to my questions and just the act of seeking have helped me to deepen my conviction.

Now I feel I am more motivated to show people how powerful the Principle is in every aspect of life, including school. I am grateful I can live with people at the CARP House who are also dedicated to their life of faith. There is so much power in people coming together for a higher purpose. I'm glad I came to CARP for all the experiences I've gained and friends I've made.

A. MORAES: Since building my relationship with God and True Parents I have been able to experience true happiness in my life. On the outside I had always been seen as the girl with the bright smile. However, by senior year of high school I could not fake it anymore. I had good friends and was in a relationship, but I was still unhappy. I decided to go to GPA to see if a relationship with God would make a difference. Those two years changed my life. The relationships I developed with my parents, mentors, friends and younger brothers and sisters led me closer to God.

Although the relationships on GPA supported me in my life of faith, I was frustrated at the reality of Unification-born young people who were losing their faith afterward. I especially questioned where I would stand in my relationship with True Parents. When I thought about how I would raise my children in the future, I did not want to just follow the Divine Principle and True Parents but also understand that it has real meaning in my life. It was during that time when True Mother brought up the opportunity to witness with CARP as a student at the University of Las Vegas. Reflecting on this first semester of CARP Las Vegas, I was able to practice the Divine Principle and grow my relationship with True Mother.

An aspect of my life in which I could apply the Divine Principle was school. First of all, I did not have a study habit during high school, which made it difficult to study. Also many times I wanted to blame all the CARP activities—witnessing, caring for guests, planning meetings—for taking up my time and energy. When I reached out to my Abels (CARP leaders, teachers, parents), I was able to see this situation from God's viewpoint, apply the Principle, and slowly but surely improve my grades.

Similar to being a team captain on GPA, when you are witnessing you practice having a parental heart. The more I would invest in guests, the more I could understand God's heart. Honestly it was not easy. I definitely reached many limitations in loving my guests. Through the challenges I realized that the most important thing was my relationship with God. When I saw True Mother at Hoon Dok Hwe last week, I felt that she could actually understand my heart and that I could understand her on a deeper level. I realized True Mother has had to forgive, forget herself and love many people over and over again. This was an unexpected experience for me but my first personal experience with True Mother.

I still question my faith, when I look at the people around me or when I face difficulties. Even though I want to compare myself to others, I understand that everyone has their own path. All I know is that continuing to try to build a relationship with God and True Parents has brought me the greatest joy in my life.

J. FLEISCHMAN: Looking back at myself just over three years ago, I am amazed and grateful for how God has worked in my life. When I graduated high school in 2011, I was at a miserable place in my life of faith. I didn't believe in God or True Parents, and I had little hope for my future. Life itself felt very bleak, without a purpose. My plan for my next year was to start college at University of California at Berkeley, a great school that I was proud to have been accepted at; however, my family advised me of the benefits of taking a year off to explore my faith and my purpose for life, and so I decided to sign up for GPA. To put a long story short, during my time on GPA I felt my heart and spirit transform. My second year and especially my third year were very transformative through the experience of mentoring and guiding my youngers in their own lives of faith. Through those experiences I could feel God working through me and I could understand God and True Parents' heart more deeply. My experiences on GPA have helped to define who I am.

When I finished my third year of GPA, I wasn't sure what to do after that. I had thought deeply about moving to Las Vegas and helping CARP, but finally I decided to go to UC Berkeley and start my college education. But in my heart I still wasn't sure about my decision. That summer I decided to go to Cheongpyeong for a 40-day workshop. While there, it became clear to me that Las Vegas was the place I should go to. My time in Las Vegas has provided the greatest transition from GPA that I could imagine. GPA creates a careful environment that is very conducive to young people experiencing and developing their life of faith, but that environment is hardly comparable to an ordinary lifestyle. My time in Las Vegas has helped me to translate my experiences of faith on GPA to ordinary life. In Las Vegas, in many ways we live an ordinary lifestyle. We go to school, study, take care of our food, clean our house, and have to balance our time among everything we do. Anything we do to advance our life of faith is ultimately our own initiative. The definitive factor about our life in Las Vegas is our unity of purpose and authentic relationship as a family with the CARP team leaders and members. We all feel called to be in Las Vegas to witness for True Parents, to reach out to college students and start changing the culture of the city. Experiencing this unity of purpose and living a life aligned with that purpose has made the greatest impact on my experience this past semester.

Every aspect of my experience this semester has been affected by having this purpose. Living a witnessing lifestyle means to be dedicated to helping others experience the true love of God. Quickly we discovered that in order to do this, first we must experience God's love in our own life. Next we must live in such a way that we connect each other (our CARP family) to God's love. Then we could bring fruits in our witnessing. This semester I found that I was always thinking about how to live closer to God and True

Parents. I was always thinking about how to experience true joy. This gave a purpose to my student life and also to my relationships with my parents and brothers. This also gave a purpose to my public life. The purpose of experiencing and conveying God's love was subject to the activities that we planned in our witnessing efforts. Thus we didn't feel pressured to do things for the feeling of confirmation that we are progressing in our witnessing, but could conduct our efforts with love in our heart. This has also defined my relationships with our guests. Rather than feeling anxious if they will stay and study Principle, I feel confident that they are family to me, and that the love we can share with each other is most important. Based on that, the closer I guide myself to God and True Parents, the more I can convey their love to our guests.

My experiences so far in Las Vegas have shown me that there are no barriers between the different areas of my life: public life, student life, family life, personal life, etc. In the end, every area is ruled by love, so as I develop my relationship with God and True Parents and have a greater love in my heart, ever.