

## Generation Peace Academy: Peru Update - Service = Love

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For the past week, GPA has been physically investing in Peru! Starting, we worked on beautifying the CARP center where we are staying. We improved the backyard by painting a mural and making a stage. After the outline for the mural was drawn, the first swipes of paint were placed. All the colors were bright and lively, meant to show the richness of Peruvian culture within it. In the backyard, a stage was finally completed. Now the concrete has to be set before any more work can be done. Everyone has been working along with our CARP (Collegiate Association Research Principles) members, joking around and making new connections throughout. Munching on pieces of fresh fruit and strawberry popsicles, the service was enjoyable. The service work was not only physically satisfying to see something per many being made, a sign we were here and had an impact. It made everyone feel delighted to be giving back to the community, which has constantly been bombarded with overwhelming love. We were able to embody filial piety as we strove to leave behind something through which our Peruvian brothers and sisters could admire and feel our love for them through. We all have sometimes been literally stuffed with their love. Whether it was the food they fed us, sincere attempts at conversation, or setting up and clearing tables away for meals, every action had a distinct note of "I love you, I care about you" left behind with it.



The night ended with a showing of *The Emperor's New Groove*, a Disney movie. Our CIG (Cheon Il Guk) members enjoyed some laughs with us, watching the antics of Emperor Kuzco and Pacha in Peru. A fantastic way to get a more universal take on Peruvian culture. So much love and joy were felt after the kitchen staff surprised us with a snack of salty popcorn and sweet caramel popcorn!



Another day of hard work started by driving an hour to Los Olvides, an outskirt of Lima, to plant trees. We then split into three teams for efficiency: those who dug holes and those who marked where the holes should be and brought the trees to the holes. The sun was covered by smog but still bright enough to beat down. Eventually, we noticed more people wearing neon orange and green vests. We soon learned these environmental engineering students came to help plant trees as part of their course.

Both parties were surprised that the other was there. Eventually, all gathered, and the Mayor arrived. Wearing only a white polo and beige pants, he was jovial and kind, making sure to greet every person there by shaking their hand. After a short word of thanks, we posed for a picture, and he soon left. Then to complete the planting of the trees, all three groups merged together so that nobody was with people wearing the same shirts as each other. It was a wonderful time talking and laughing with native Peruvians. All were kind and excited once they learned we were from America. A few numbers were exchanged, and hugs were given. Indeed we are all "una familia bajo Dios" (one family under God).

That afternoon we took a little field trip to Kennedy Park, just ten minutes down the street. The fantastic thing about this park is -the cats! The park is a safe haven for many cats, and nearly 50 can be seen lying everywhere on benches, people, and tree branches. The cuteness overload was too much. There were also many stores, allowing for more opportunities to buy gifts to bring home to family and friends. And as a special treat, many of us got ice cream from a far less Peruvian source- McDonald's!

As we will be witnessing over the next few days with a goal of 21 guests to come to our Saturday workshop, the whole house CARP, and GPA offered a jeongseong (sincere devotion) condition. It was a condition to prepare our hearts but also to help motivate the spirit world to assist us in bringing some of God's children home. We began by listening to an internal testimony from Dokhwa, the Vice President of Peru, about the importance of witnessing. It really motivated us to remember the most important part was the heart behind our actions, not necessarily the actions. As well as remembering that ultimately we are witnessing to ourselves, and when we practice what we teach others, that is the moment when God and the spirit world can really work through us and miracles can occur. Then we offered 120 full bows to Heavenly Parents. It then progressed to reading from the Introduction chapter of the DP in unison. Finally, we ended with a unison prayer. Sweat and tears streaming down so many members' faces, you could practically feel the spirit world jumping around, alive and excited to get moving. Despite how exhausted or in pain anyone was, voices stayed strong and steady, everyone offering their full hearts up for this group goal. "It was such a high spiritual environment that during the prayer, I connected to the deepest sorrow of God's heart. This immense pain down to my guts could not stop the flow of tears....such a sadness. This is the kind of environment that this nation is able to create in which the heavens open up, and you meet God." Mama Concha, Nation Mom.

We went for our first witnessing run in Peru! Many emotions were felt, from nervousness to excitement. We split into even teams of about 5 people each and were assigned our areas; none were more than a 5-10 minute walk from the CARP center. The goal for the first run was to invite people to come later in the afternoon for lectures and get their contact information. The second run's objective was to bring people

directly to the center for lectures and, if not, to fill out a survey. Walking back and forth for hours in the hot sun reminded us of fundraising but at a much slower pace. Minutes could go by without really being able to talk to anyone as you wait for your team members to take their turns. The language barrier also provided a new challenge, but it wasn't much of an issue for some. Still, the language was fast and confusing for most, despite practicing with Duolingo. It showed everyone how much the "frontline" really was a frontline in a spiritual warzone. You'd pray desperately just for one person to pause and listen or fill out a form, just to be walked by, invisible. But the joy when someone did stop and listen, just that one person, could make lightness explode inside our chests. Suddenly, people would stand taller subconsciously.



Friday, we went out again for a second day of witnessing. Seeing how guests could come straight to the center from off the street was amazing. It's one thing to hear about our parents being approached with a survey and joining. Still, it's a completely different experience to be part of it and see a potential spiritual child willingly come for a lecture after meeting for two minutes. It was amazing to see the level of trust in us that we had to have in God that we would be led to the prepared people and that our path wasn't just walking around a sidewalk meaninglessly.

To prepare for our one-day workshop on Saturday, we again decided to do a jeongseong condition. This time we sang four holy songs, had 40 minutes of reading from the Divine Principle, 21 full bows, and ended with a 12-minute prayer. As well as physically preparing the space, making some decorations, and cleaning and wiping down everything to make it presentable. Small gifts of origami are also being prepared. Throughout the seminar, there are multiple teams for songs, guest care, jeongseong, cleaning, food prep, crafts, icebreaker games, etc. Everyone has an important role in ensuring this seminar is as successful as possible. Ultimately everyone is very excited to see the fruits of their labor and hopefully have as many people as possible come to the seminar!!

