

Unificationist Singles Gather in the Pocono Mountains for 24+ Connect Retreat

David Young
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The third BFM-sponsored 24+ Connect Retreat was held June 2–5 in the beautiful background of the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. This year, fifty-two single 24-39 year-old participants from over 20 states and five countries flew, drove and carpoled to a campsite up near Stroudsburg, PA for four days of connecting, reflecting, and relaxing. This year’s retreat theme was “Here to There,” and participants were encouraged and supported to reflect on where they were at regarding their relationship goals and the blocks and action steps to move towards reaching their goals.

As the main facilitator and program coordinator, David Young, a professional Life Coach, lead participants through activities and sessions on re-imagining their future relationships and reflecting on the types of qualities they would want and any ways to change their current behaviors to start attracting their goals. Most of this was done through group reflection and pair sharing with new partners every so often.



Bay Area Family Church Pastor, Kevin Thompson, returned this year, offering a presentation on Conscious Dating, in which he shared tips for intentionally and strategically finding a life partner, in addition to individual counseling for any/all participants.

Another session was held in which matching resources and testimonies with Q&A were shared, including a letter from a previous 24+ Connect participant, and three staff testimonies from Chigo Ahunanya & Honey Fong, and Jessica Sattinger. In addition, resources from the BFM were shared from Crescentia DeGoede, BFM Director and co-emcee at the retreat.

“I very much felt like there was a support team in place that was adequately able to talk to about anything and everything.” – Participant



In response to last year's retreat, the program included "speed-sharing" sessions where participants could briefly interact with the majority of attendees one-on-one. Participants were encouraged to continue conversations started with persons of interest. Many participants mentioned that this was one of the best aspects of the retreat.



"I most enjoyed the prospective discussions. It fulfilled the goal of introducing and connecting participants in the most time-efficient and effective way, allowing participants to hear and share their values in a natural way." – Participant

"We were given more time to talk and connect on a deeper level. I felt I could genuinely listen to my partner." – Participant

"[I would recommend this to] anyone serious about taking a more active role in finding their spouse, discovering themselves, or networking with young professionals in the UC community." – Participant

There were high ropes courses, volleyball, ballroom dancing, yoga, hiking, kayaking, boating, and many other activities throughout the retreat. Participants spent time connecting with one another and taking time to reflect on their own lives in the midsts of the Pocono Mountains. One participant noted that, "The activities in our free time gave us an opportunity to get

to know each other in a relaxed setting.”



Overall, after the retreat 97% of the surveyed participants reported feeling more clear about where they stand with their current relationship goals, and 95% felt ready to take action steps towards creating their ideal future.

Our team of staff thank all of this year’s participants for an amazing experience, and for really investing so much time and energy during our weekend together. We look forward to our next 24+ Connect Retreat and to implementing feedback and new ideas to bring it to the next level.

Many thanks to the entire team of staff not already mentioned, Lee Hee Wolf, Yuka Sato, Sammy Uyama, and Esther Flores for all of your contributions towards making this retreat great!

Other Testimonials from Participants

“Any single Unificationist should attend. This is by far the best way to meet other singles currently, support one another, network, understand where you are at, and move forward with your own life and relationships.” -Participant

“Thank you guys, so much. I felt like the structure made this workshop successful and super enjoyable.” – Participant

“I would recommend this retreat to any [young Unificationist] serious about moving forward with their relationship status. From selectively single to seriously seeking.” – Participant

“Any single Unificationist should attend. This is by far the best way to meet other singles currently, support one another, network, understand where you are at, and move forward with your own life and relationships.” – Participant

“I would feel comfortable recommending this program to any young, single Unificationist. This program gets better and better each year. It addresses all the challenges that 24+ encounter in their search for love, all the while respecting each individual’s journey.” – Participant

“[I most enjoyed how] the activities in our free time gave us an opportunity to get to know each other in a relaxed setting. – Participant

“[I most enjoyed the] best practices panel. Good advice and reflection from people with experience.” – Participant