

CARP Las Vegas, NV's J. Silerio, Exemplifying the Heart of Service

Jennifer Pierce
January 28, 2019



J. Silerio (front) is the model for service.

Meet J. Silerio, CARP Las Vegas Alumni! He joined CARP in Las Vegas in August of 2014 (when it started!) until he graduated from University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) in December of 2015.



After a clean-up, J. (left) and Satoshi Inoue (right) take a final photo before Satoshi returns to Japan.

Before CARP, J. was approached by Satoshi Inoue, a volunteer from Japan, about [Shine City Project](#). Shine City Project (SCP) is a service organization in Las Vegas aimed at cleaning up Las Vegas and inspiring the community to live for the sake of others. Shine City hopes to change the culture in Las

Vegas to be about serving.



J.'s first Shine City Project service project at Lorenzi Park with volunteers. Satoshi stands third from the left.

J. joined his first service project on April 26, 2013. At the time, he had a personal desire to do something for the community and Las Vegas. As someone without an extensive friend group, J. was also hoping to make friends at Shine City Project.

"For a long time, I was really nervous about joining Shine City Project. I didn't know who I would meet and what it would be like. But when I went to my first service project, I felt welcomed, and I felt a lot of love from many of the missionaries and volunteers, especially from Satoshi-san. I felt valued as a person. It was a really great experience being a part of the cleanups. After my first weekend, I almost never missed a service project."



Taken July 2013. "At our cleanups, we are often surprised by the wide variety of things that we find, including car parts, articles of clothing, and money!" - J.

J. holds the record for attending the most service projects in a row: twice a week for 17 months straight!

Shine City Project was a new initiative at the time of J.'s joining--established in March 2013. While not an initiative of CARP, Shine City also hoped to share Unification Principles through practice and involvement with the community.



The first SCP officers with faculty advisor, Tara Pike-Nordstrom. Tara is the UNLV Recycling Manager and Sustainability Coordinator, and she has a loving heart for our Earth and the environment. Taken March 14, 2015.

After a few months, J. established Shine City Project as a registered student organization at UNLV and became its first president.

"I really cared for our organization. Coming and helping out at the service projects was not enough for me. I wanted to do more. I started to take pictures and make videos for our group, and then I created our Shine City Project Facebook page. Eventually, I made Shine City Project a registered student organization by the fall semester of 2013. It could not have been done without the help of our faculty advisor, Tara Pike-Nordstrom."



Passing out flyers and sharing about Shine City Project at the UNLV Involvement Fair in September 2015 with volunteers and John Everett, a student officer for SCP.

Tara Pike-Nordstrom is the Recycling Manager and Sustainability Coordinator at UNLV. While Shine City Project was a registered student organization at UNLV, Tara was their faculty advisor.

"Tara is really dedicated and passionate about what she does for UNLV, Las Vegas, and the

environment. Including our regular service projects on Friday and Saturday morning, we would sometimes have a third service project in the late afternoon or evening at Sam Boyd Stadium. After a sporting event at the stadium finishes, we would help Tara collect all of the bottles, cans, plastic cups, and other recyclable materials from the bleachers. Sometimes the service projects at Sam Boyd Stadium would start at around 10 p.m., and we would be there until midnight or even later. Tara and her crew would be working all through the night to get everything. We would fill many bags, and when everything was finished, the bags would fill dumpsters."

As graduation fast approached, J. had to pass on the role of president, but he struggled to find someone with the same commitment to service and Unification Principles as himself. After he left, it seemed that the clean up projects had lost connection to Shine City's original vision and higher purpose.

With the passion declining, the organization itself disappeared. A few years out of college, J. decided to lead Shine City Project once again, outside of UNLV.



Taken October 6, 2018. After months of being inactive, Shine City Project clean-ups were revived with a service project near a local CVS Pharmacy.

After its revival in October of 2018, Shine City Project has returned to weekly service projects.

"I tell the members when we start that we're not just cleaning up but we're doing something more for Las Vegas. There's a higher purpose to what we're doing. People can feel inspired by when they see us."



A group photo after one of a clean-ups at Jaycee Park in 2016.

J. continues his work with Shine City Project because of CARP's founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, also known as Father and Mother Moon respectively. Father Moon visited Las Vegas a lot in his final years. His vision was to turn the so-called "Sin City" into a Shining City of God's love and heart.

"I keep going because of [Father and Mother Moon]. I feel like Las Vegas can be a place where there is God's love instead of self-centered love. If we can make a transformation in Las Vegas, and if people can see that, they will be more inspired. Not only can we bring peace and change in Las Vegas, but we can also do so around the world."

J. hopes that Shine City Project can be registered at UNLV again in the future and expand to other cities. This year, he hopes to continue the service projects consistently.



In October of 2018, Shine City Project and Generation Peace Academy worked together to help re-vegetate an area of Wetlands Park with some native grass.

Projects, so far, include trash clean-ups of public places, planting and gardening, and food distribution. Shine City has done multiple projects in partnership with other service organizations.



Shine City Project volunteers at a service project at Wetlands Park earlier in January. Volunteers are welcome to invite and bring their families to experience the joy of service together.

An average of 10-15 volunteers come to projects, but J. has also been part of service projects where he

was the only volunteer.

"Even small, still we keep going."



Snow doesn't deter these determined volunteers. Taken at Mount Charleston National Park.

Their most recent service project was on January 19th. They traveled to Mount Charleston National Park, 35 miles outside of Las Vegas, to pick up trash.

"Since the government shut down, maybe they need a bit of help."



Outside of Shine City Project, J. does Information Technology for work at Ocean Providence, providing computer and technology-related assistance for all branches across the country. He also enjoys working as a private tutor, helping students from elementary school to college with math and other subjects. From January to May 2018, he completed four months as a missionary in Costa Rica as part of the [Generation Peace Academy](#) program. He worked closely with CARP Costa Rica while having a serving and loving heart for the country.

"Even though Las Vegas is located in a desert, there is a lot of natural beauty in this area. We can feel God's love when we go outdoors to places such as Mt. Charleston, Red Rock Canyon, Lake Mead, and Wetlands Park. Las Vegas is much more than its casinos and hotels. We want to show others that we care for Las Vegas, and that Las Vegas is our home."

Alumni like Jeffrey Silerio show us how to live for the sake of others in a practical way. In his very attitude and action, he shares that loving your city and your community isn't only words but a way of life. We are proud to call him a CARP alumni and see more greatness in him in the future.

For photos, upcoming service projects, and more information about Shine City Project, follow [Shine City Project's Facebook page](#) and website, shinecityproject.org.

Hear more from [CARP Las Vegas](#) on their Facebook page. Share your story to jennifer@carplife.org!