

Grants Awarded to Unificationist Schools at Educators Conference

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Rev. Joshua Cotter offered welcoming remarks at this year's Unificationist Schools Conference.

Rev. In Jin Moon, President and CEO of the Unification Church USA, awarded grants on behalf of the church to Unificationist schools at a luncheon that included educators and representatives from Unification-based schools at the University of Bridgeport on Nov. 6, 2011. These annual grants represent the interest of Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, the founders of the Unification Movement, to promote quality education for young Unificationists and to support them to realize their God-given talents and potential. Unificationist schools should exemplify not only academic excellence but be institutions that nurture internal, or spiritual excellence in their students. The education grants of up to \$10,000 per school enable schools to offer scholarships to deserving families.

Following her Lovin' Life Ministries Sunday service in Bridgeport University on November 6, 2011, Senior Pastor In Jin Moon invited various principals (or their proxies) of church-linked schools to discuss her vision for these schools at the luncheon at Bridgeport University.



The New Hope Academy, with students from pre-kindergarten to high school, was established in Landover Hills, Maryland in 1990. The college-preparatory school is dedicated to academic excellence and character-building.

Educators attended from the Principled Academy of San Leandro, CA; New Hope Academy of Landover Hills, MD; Bridgeport International Academy and Bridgeport Hope School of Bridgeport, CT; Jin-A Child Care Center and New Hope School of Clifton, NJ; and Blessed Teens Academy, soon to be relocated on the East Coast.

National Youth Pastor of Lovin' Life Ministries Mr. Jaga Gavin, Lovin' Life Service MC Mr. David Hunter, University of Bridgeport President Neil Salonen and Rev. In Jin Moon each addressed the participants of the luncheon.

Rev. In Jin Moon underlined the need for recipient families to give back to the church by offering volunteer efforts according to their families' situations. Furthermore, she stressed the importance for the Unificationist schools to include in their curricula the vision of their founders, Father and Mother Moon, including aspects of *The Divine Principle* and a presentation of True Parents' life course.



The Bridgeport International Academy is located adjacent to the seaside campus of the University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Unificationist-Schools Conference

The day before the luncheon, on Saturday, November 5, 2011, the representatives from the Unification-based schools gathered at the Lovin' Life Learning Center in New York City for their second annual conference.



Above, pupils of the New Hope School, an officially recognized "Friend of Core Knowledge School," the only one of its kind in New Jersey.

At last year's conference, each principal gave an introductory presentation about his or her school, followed by a general discussion on a number of topics, including ways of incorporating *The Divine Principle* into the curriculum, various financial issues, marketing and outreach to the surrounding community, accreditation issues, and attracting second-generation Unificationists interested in education. Although most of these schools were started through the inspiration of first-generation members wanting to offer Principled-based education to their children, in recent years more non-church families have been enrolling their children, which has thus challenged the schools to maintain their identity as Unificationist schools while serving more of the general community.



The Blessed Teens Academy (BTA), founded in 2003 by Steve and Jeri Tamayo, is a high-school program created for second-generation Unificationists.

This year's conference was opened by welcoming remarks from Rev. Joshua Cotter, Executive Vice President of the Holy Spirit Association (HSA) and Mrs. Heather Thalheimer, HSA's Director of Education and Ministry Development. The conference focused on two main topics: school leadership, and parental and community involvement. Dr. Hugh Spurgin and his wife Nora, president and principal, respectively, of the Bridgeport International Academy, were the main presenters on the topic of school leadership. Mrs. Spurgin talked about the importance of recognizing and connecting to the bands of angels in heaven to support her work as principal. She told the gathering that she regularly calls upon them to guide and protect her students and staff. After this, Dr. Hugh Spurgin spoke about the more

practical aspects of school leadership, including their successful efforts to obtain accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The second session on parental and community involvement was led by Ms. Kristina Seher, principal of The Principled Academy, who stressed the value of getting out into the community and making personal connections to promote the school. She encouraged students to share stories of how their lives have been affected by the school and encouraged parents to pray for their children, connect with them on a daily basis and to express interest in and to support their activities. She suggested that parents be involved through an active parents' association through which they could promote and contribute their talents to the school, all the while expressing appreciation for their children.



The Jin-A Child Care Center has served families in the multi-religious, multi-cultural community of Clifton, New Jersey for more than twenty-two years.

The educators came away from the weekend with a renewed sense of purpose; in addition to having received practical ideas that are applicable to day-to-day school operations from the conference presenters, participants received guidance and support from Senior Pastor In Jin Moon regarding the future of the Unificationist schools in America. Principals and teachers say they are already looking forward to next year's conference.