

True Parents Award First Prize to Generation Peace Academy at Choir Competition

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True Father and True Mother award GPA choir conductor Nancy Kubo (left) the first prize plaque and \$10,000.

Five months of rigorous practice paid off for the Generation Peace Academy (GPA) choir when it dazzled its audience and took the first prize of \$10,000 at the Second Unification Church Choir Competition in Cheong Pyeong, South Korea at the Cheon Jung Gung on January 27, 2012.

With its ladies dressed in traditional Korean *hanbok* and its young men dressed in western suits, the GPA choir performed Queen's "Somebody to Love" and a breathtaking medley of "Daniel Goes to Battle" and "Glory, Glory Hallelujah" in a meaningful display of cultural diversity. Unlike many of the other competing choirs, which had been preparing to perform before True Parents for more than a year, the GPA choir had been training at the Lovin' Life Learning Center in New York with conductor Nancy Kubo only since September of 2011.

The choirs participating in the competition were the following: The Cheon Bok Gung Cheon Shim (Heavenly Heart) Choir, the Cheon Bok Gung Cheon Il Eum (One United Heavenly Sound) Choir, the Changwon One Love Choir, the Nigata Pure Hearts Choir, the Jiba Seonhak Choir and the GPA Choir, representing the United States.

True Father, True Mother and members of the True Family attended the event and selected the first-, second- and third-place winners after an extraordinary 14-hour *hoondokhwe* session, which lasted from 2:00 a.m. that morning up until 5:00 p.m., at which time the program for the competition began. In light of the True God's Day festivities taking place, the theme of the competition was "Celebrating True Father's 93rd Holy Birthday, True Parents' Golden Wedding and Jubilee Year and True Mother's *Gohui*."

"I missed a whole week of classes to be here and I have to say, it was wonderful," said Preston Shin-Myung Moon, one of True Father's grandchildren who had provided custom-fitted suits for the GPA choir through his clothier Bespoqe. "When I saw the different choirs, some of which were made of little kids half my height just belting it out, I wondered, 'What's going to happen to GPA? It's stiff competition!' But then GPA came up in dapper suits and beautiful *hanboks* and even before hearing them sing, I was speechless. The two songs were wonderful and I couldn't have been happier for them. Thank

you for making my grandparents, aunts and uncles so happy!” he added.

Roland Platt, director of GPA commented: “This experience of ten minutes performing – and winning! – for True Parents, True Family and our movement will forever mark these young people’s lives. In Jin Nim gave us an incredible opportunity to carry out her vision. They took it, worked tirelessly on it, and through the concerted effort of many people delivered internal and external excellence.”

“These kids were transformed through their experience,” said conductor Kubo. “They started from zero and went to a thousand. They developed their voices and as a choir so quickly it was astonishing. They’ve come so far and they’re so united. They’re like one voice. Coming to this competition, I had a lot of fear that things would be out of my control, that I wouldn’t be able to fix things that weren’t quite to my liking. So we all had to give ourselves up and trust God and trust our support team and that everyone was doing their utmost, which they did.”



Members of the GPA choir stand before True Parents during the awards ceremony, grinning from ear to ear.

Testimonies from Members of the GPA Choir

Eika Davis, third-year trainee: “Korea has been amazing. For me, the journey of being in a choir and being in an elder-sister role in the choir has been a journey of heart of attendance. Coming out of it, I just started crying and felt such peace. I was so grateful because I never imagined that singing in front of True Parents would be possible. To have been able to do that fills my heart with a lot of joy.”

August Lindsay, second-year trainee: “The thing that helped me through the hours and hours of practice was always going back to my center – my purpose for singing. I would always remember that no matter what I was feeling at the time, I was given the opportunity to make True Parents happy. To directly offer something to True Parents – it wasn’t about me anymore, it was about True Parents.”

Satoe Sakuma, first-year trainee: “Being in this choir made me realize that if you have a vision and you work hard at it, it’s achievable, whatever it is. I feel like all of us come from different backgrounds, but In Jin Nim had a vision for us, and we all united with this vision. We wanted to represent In Jin Nim, we wanted to represent America and Lovin’ Life. To be able to come here and make something that has been a vision for so long actually happen was just amazing. The first thing we said when we got off stage was, ‘In Jin Nim would be so proud of us!’ Thank you In Jin Nim, thank you True Family, thank you Mrs. Kubo and staff, thank you everyone for making this happen.”

Christopher Hall, first-year trainee: “It was a great experience being in Korea and having the opportunity to offer our voices for True Parents. I can truly say that I just wanted to see True Parents smile and make

In Jin Nim and U.S.A. proud after thinking about our purpose there. My motivation changed for the better once I stopped making the choir about me and about winning, but instead about gratefully making a humble offering that could make everyone and God happy.”

Erika Hiromitsu, first-year trainee: “All I can really express is gratitude. There are so many aspects to this experience that I am grateful for, that the entire choir is grateful for. We are so grateful to In Jin Nim for always encouraging us to be internally and externally excellent and to work hard for our goals. She has proven that we can accomplish dreams, but that it takes work to get there. We are so happy and grateful for her love and investment into us. Without her, none of this would have been possible.”

Natasha Honey, second-year trainee: “I am so, so, so unbelievably grateful for everything that I was able to experience through this choir adventure. Singing is definitely my biggest passion in life, and being able to offer that to True Parents is only something I would’ve imagined in my wildest dreams. I was so surprised that we were able to win the choir competition, but at the same time its not so far fetched because of how much support and love In Jin Nim put into the choir. I know the only reason we were able to win today was because all of us were really focused on two things: making a beautiful offering of gratitude to True Parents and representing and making In Jin Nim proud. I could never express the amount of love and life I have received from In Jin Nim, and I think this choir competition overall has helped me understand on a much deeper level how blessed we are to have her so close to us. I have gained so much from this experience, and definitely checked off one of my life goals – that of making True Parents smile.”

Johanna Fleischman, first-year trainee: “On stage, the only emotion that I felt was joy. I realized that our actual performance was only as valuable as the amount of investment we had put previously into practice, and the amount of unity that we had with our central figures, specifically our choir director, Mrs. Kubo, and In Jin Nim. Just like all of the other choir members, the first thought that I had after hearing that we had won the grand prize was gratitude towards In Jin Nim. I felt that we hadn’t won, but that she had. I am so grateful that God and In Jin Nim trusted us with this mission, and that we could have this opportunity to represent True Children, Lovin’ Life, second-generation, and America.”