

## Michael Balcomb, Crescentia DeGoede, Naokimi Ushiroda and UPA visit Generation Peace Academy Winter Workshop

Roland Platt  
January 23, 2014



*Both UPA and GPA take a group picture with Dr. Michael Balcomb, first row, seventh from left, during the Winter Workshop at Morgan Ranch in Blanco, TX.*

On January 8, after two weeks well spent with their families for Christmas and New Year, all the participants of Generation Peace Academy (GPA) returned from their winter break to the Morgan Ranch in Blanco, TX. The opportunity to go home and spend quality time with family and community was a precious one, and it prepared the members to come back and hit the ground running! In each community the members were able to give presentations on their experiences with GPA thus far at Sunday services, youth groups, and winter workshops. In coming back together, the joy of seeing one another was apparent on each person's face.



*Participants of GPA and UPA join together in song.*

Along with welcoming each other back from break, GPA was given the opportunity to welcome the Universal Peace Academy (UPA) to their workshop. UPA has been touring the United States for the past month and has made a point of meeting GPA for a couple of days. During their stay, GPA and UPA were able to share about their programs, participated in volleyball and sports tournaments, shared in entertainment night, and collaborated in service work together on the Morgan ranch.

Dr. Dong Woo Kim, the recently appointed president of UPA, gave a presentation on UPA and True Mother's vision for it as a training program to raise the future leaders of our Unification movement. Some of the UPA members shared a few testimonies of their experience and presented songs intermingling all

the languages and cultures of Korea, America, and Japan. The UPA members have made considerable effort in reaching out to the GPA members and they already feel as part of the family. GPA will be sad to see them go! The GPA Winter Workshop experience has been made all the richer from the presence of UPA.



*A friendly game of volleyball between GPA and UPA.*

An added blessing was having the president of our Church President Dr. Michael Balcomb share about his recent visit with True Mother in Las Vegas. Dr. Balcomb shared about how one of True Mother's main focuses is investing in the future leaders of our movement, and how much sacrifice that entails. She is very serious of how young people are essential to God and True Parents, and Dr. Balcomb encouraged everyone to search for God's plan for them.



*Two participants from the Universal Peace Academy (UPA) and Generation Peace Academy (GPA) display their program's attire!*

As for the Winter Workshop itself, the focus is two-fold: internal guidance centered on True Parent's life course, and preparation for service work overseas. The first portion of the workshop will be a three-day intensive on True Parents' life course, as taught by Rev. Kevin Thompson. After each lecture, the GPA members will participate in experiential learning activities centered on events of True Parents' course in an effort to gain a deeper and more meaningful connection to the content taught.

The second portion of the workshop focused on preparing all members for their work overseas. They will be divided into groups going to Panama, Peru, Trinidad, Barbados, and the Dominican Republic. They were given internal guidance on service, what it means to live a life of service and how to be ambassadors of God and True Parents. In addition, more detailed information was provided on their service countries, information such as a brief history of the country, the economic situation, social issues relevant to the country, etc.

GPA was also blessed to receive visits from Crescentia DeGoede and Naokimi Ushiroda, as elder young Unificationists representing the Ministry Team, the Blessed Family Department and CARP USA. They offered their support to GPA by getting to know the members on a personal level, participating in the workshop, and offering guidance of their own.



*Participants from both programs participated in a joint-service work on the Morgan Ranch.*

On January 18th, all the GPA members and staff will depart for their various service countries and will be expected back on February 8th. We pray for their success in their mission and for their well-being and safety during this time.