

## Witnessing in Las Vegas

Ken Doo

December 6, 2015

The ministry team in Las Vegas has been busy with many activities, including a karaoke night, a CARP appreciation dinner, and a festive BBQ.

### Evening of Fellowship



About 25 members of the community met together over food and refreshments at the “Evening of Fellowship” hosted by the Core Witnessing Team on Monday, November 30, 2015. It was a great time to gather during the week to listen to each other’s outreach stories and discuss best practices.



Yasuko Oberg and Sangmoo Borneman gave testimonies about their recent outreach experiences. Many expressed appreciation for Rev. Ken Doo, pastor of the Las Vegas Family Church, as well as for CARP and community members who helped them reach out and connect guests to the Divine Principle.

Later, Kaye Yamaguchi, Leslie Rigney, Akira Watanabe and Kimiyo Anceney spoke about their recent experiences witnessing.

CARP student Nina Jesper said, “I was deeply moved by the family atmosphere of the evening and the testimonies given. Everyone was eager to share how witnessing was transforming others’ lives and also their own. After listening to the testimonies, I realized that ... we are one family striving together to spread true love shown to us by our True Parents.”

### Karaoke Night

Japanese missionaries were treated to a special night of music and fellowship on Friday, December 4, 2015. The eight missionaries had just finished two weeks of workshops in Hawaii before arriving in Las Vegas. These young women have dedicated their time to grow stronger in relationship with God and True Parents, to travel and support other countries, and to break down their own barriers. They jumped at the possibility of coming to Las Vegas because of its significance to True Parents. The local Unificationist-born young people and guests were excited to welcome them by hosting a special karaoke night.



CARP students, Shine City Project students and other local youth sang songs in both English and Japanese. “The atmosphere was fun and chill,” commented Jinil Fleischman, the president of the Las Vegas chapter of CARP. After a long flight, the Japanese missionaries were able to relax and have fun by singing. They will stay for two and a half months and take part in local church activities.

#### **CARP Appreciation Dinner**



CARP Las Vegas hosted an end-of-semester Awards and Appreciation Night on Thursday, December 3, 2015. The night was a chance to honor CARP members for their service throughout the semester. In attendance were CARP members new and old, as well as friends and family. The night opened with a musical offering by Lourdes, who joined CARP several weeks ago.

After a video showing the highlights of the semester, Jinil Fleischman gave a toast and talked about what it means to be a part of CARP. He spoke about CARP’s recent activities, including an antibullying program at a local school for secondary students who have committed disciplinary infractions. Jinil read reflection letters written by some of the students who attended the program. One student wrote that the program “showed us that we weren’t alone with the problems that we had.” Another wrote, “I believe that programs like these should exist more to make other students connect and understand.”

Akira Watanabe, director of CARP Las Vegas, and Jeffrey Silerio, a CARP member since the chapter’s

beginning in Las Vegas, handed out awards to nine CARP members who had taken leadership responsibilities this semester. The awardees not only attended events regularly but also volunteered to come early to prepare materials and food.



Three CARP members prepared testimonies for the event. Joan explained how her life changed when she joined CARP, how step by step she began to open up and become more outspoken and comfortable with others. Joan felt that God guided her to CARP in order to surround herself with the type of happy people she needed to make a change within herself.

Next, Briana recalled how she decided to staff the anti-bullying program because she was once bullied when she was younger. Briana wanted to keep others from experiencing the same pain that she had experienced. She was touched when girls in her group began to open up and reveal things about themselves that they had never had the opportunity to disclose before. Briana realized that the whole experience was healing not only for the students but also for herself and all the staff.



Kinesha spoke about what she experienced during an activity at CARP's recent Divine Principle retreat. Through the activity she realized the importance of asking for help in life and not trying to go through difficult times alone.

After the prepared testimonies, there was time for open testimonies. The first to take the microphone was Lourdes' mother. She testified how she saw her daughter change through her involvement with CARP, from a lifestyle of keeping to herself to suddenly being involved in sports and volunteer work. (Lourdes also staffed the anti-bullying program)

She was so shocked by the change in her daughter that she visited the CARP center the day before to investigate. There she found how wonderful all the CARP members were.

Nathaniel, a recent CARP member, recalled that when he moved to Las Vegas at the beginning of the school year, he knew only one person and had a hard time making friends. Since becoming involved with CARP, he found a community of caring people and was grateful for getting a kickstart into returning to a life with God.

Next, Aftab testified how she has learned to open up through her involvement with CARP. She spoke about her experience with the same activity that Kinesha talked about from the past Divine Principle

workshop and how it taught her to begin to rely on others.



The night ended with words from Akira Watanabe and his wife, Makiko. Mrs. Watanabe spoke about Rev. Moon's vision to restore the family as the way to bring world peace. Mr. Watanabe spoke honestly about the challenges of trying to bring change to society, and his gratitude for all those who are working side by side with him.



After a group photo, everyone stayed to socialize and personally congratulate one another.

### **CARP Costa Rica Sunday BBQ**

Finally, on Sunday, December 6, 2015, the 13 members of CARP Costa Rica who were visiting Las Vegas hosted a community BBQ. A few days earlier, they had arrived in Las Vegas to do witnessing with CARP Las Vegas and also visit local holy grounds. On Saturday the group visited the Grand Canyon as the first stop on their pilgrimage.

Next, they attended Sunday service, participated in sports with the local youth and then joined the CARP

Las Vegas BBQ. Everyone enjoyed charcoal-grilled chicken and burgers as well as fellowship with one another.



Later, everyone went inside for some fun ice breakers, introductions and a few testimonies. The first testimony was given by Eduardo, who had recently joined CARP to do some volunteer work and later started studying the Divine Principle. The second testimony was by Jinil Fleischman who talked about the importance of CARP and witnessing. “I grew up with True Parents’ values and traditions, so I never knew anything outside of that,” Jinil reflected. “After coming to CARP, I realized how important it is to share True Parents’ teachings.”



After the games, each member from CARP Costa Rica paired up with a member from CARP Las Vegas to converse with each other. They wrote encouraging messages for one another and exchanged gifts. They signed a sheet that said, “One Family One CARP,” to express that all CARP members worldwide are part of the same large family that is working together to create peace. The night concluded with three cheers of Eog Mansei, a group photo and a dance performance by CARP Costa Rica.