

## Jin Kwon Kim: Blessed Culture and Sports Festival Lifts Unificationists Spirits

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*More than 500 people participated in the 9th annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival held at the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, NY on July 31-August 4, 2013.*

Unificationists from across the United States travelled to the historic grounds of the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York to get their “Game ON!” at the ninth annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF) held from July 31 to August 4, 2013. The festival concluded with more than 500 people in attendance for a series of games and performances that returned to BCSF’s grassroots tradition.



*Basketball was one of the sports included in the tournament.*

BCSF incorporates an athletic tournament and intramural sports during the day and cultural events during the evenings. There were various teams from different regions in the United States and a team composed of Unificationists from Canada, Puerto Rico and Europe that competed in the six tournament sports of Tennis, Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, 5-kilometer Run and Ultimate Frisbee. The intramural sports were Flag Football, and a new addition of Badminton.



*The soccer goalie kicks the ball away from the goal post.*

“This year BCSF had a much more laid back feel and it felt like we were able to get back to the grassroots level,” BCSF co-coordinator Jin Kwon Kim said in an interview. “We were expecting a significant drop in attendance at this summer’s festival because of sudden changes. However, despite this, there were more than 500 people who showed up this year and it really felt like we were able to organize a BCSF based on the community’s needs and we could see that people were really excited and happy about this year’s event.”



*The New York team (in blue) battled it out against the Maryland team (in white) during a game of Men’s Ultimate Frisbee.*

“BCSF is significant because after the collapse of Lovin’ Life and Father [Moon]’s ascension, we understood that many people were disillusioned, and our young adults were not participating in the church as frequently as they had before,” said Dave Hunter, co-director of BCSF and National Youth and Young Adult Pastor. He continued: “BCSF was created nine years ago [based on Jin Kwon Kim’s vision] to encourage a community of young adults to come together based on specific interests in sports and culture. As a grassroots event, the fact that participation actually increased is of tremendous significance to me.”



*An athlete from the Maryland Women’s Ultimate Frisbee team attempts to complete a pass.*

The festivities for BCSF began in the Auditorium of UTS on Wednesday with Junction, a young-adult ministry, and the Opening Ceremony. David Young, a young-adult Unificationist and the Pastor of the church in Columbus, Ohio, delivered a message that elaborated on the BCSF theme for 2013: “GAME ON.” “He spoke about not being scared to be yourself and to not live life safely, but to live daringly and to take risks especially in your life of faith,” said Jaga Gavin, co-director and Support Manager of BCSF, in an interview.

The sports tournament took place from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a two-hour break for lunch. In the evening there were various culture events, supervised by Esther Allen, according to Hunter. On Thursday night there was an Open Mic, Ballroom Dance Social and a movie screening of *The Princess Bride*. On Friday, David Eaton gave a lecture about media and culture. On Friday night, there was another movie screening of *Star Wars: Episode IV*, a Super Smash Video Game tournament, Poker Tournament, in which Dr. Ryan Fong won first place of \$260, and the CARP Game show, renamed the “SUPER Game Show.”

The Super Game Show, co-organized by Yuka Sato and Yemi Harford of Indiana, had male and female representatives from each team complete weird, quirky Japanese-game show inspired tasks. For one activity the participants had to wear a diaper on his or her head, dunk it in water, race to the other side and squeeze the soaked diaper in order to fill a bucket. In another game, the contestants had a cookie placed on their forehead and had to refrain from using their hands and to try to eat the cookie by using only their facial muscles, according to BCSF co-director Jin Kwon Kim.





*The New York Volleyball team (navy shirts) blocks an attempt by the Minnesota Team (pink shirt)*

The Saturday-night cultural events were the movie screening of *Sandlot* and “The Fashion Show,” organized by James Gomis. The Fashion Show included the participation of several young-adult Unificationists who are interested in fashion, David Valentin, Joonmi Veith and Anthony Hagen, who owns UNIFIED, his own clothing- and accessories line. According to Jin Kwon Kim, there was no particular event that stood out, but rather it was the team spirit and atmosphere created by the participants that was the highlight of the festival.



*Bystanders cheered on the athletes.*

“There were several older Unificationist-born young adults that I hadn’t seen in a very long time that showed up to what I feel was a very ‘grassroots’ BCSF,” said Shinyoung Simonds, who led the fundraising efforts.



*Jin Kwon Kim, co-director of BCSF, spoke before the Trophy Ceremony on Sunday.*

This year, there were a lot of older Unificationist-born young parents with their young kids, according to Jaga. He added: “Hopefully next year and in the years to come, we want to focus on how to incorporate this demographic into BCSF in order to make it into a family event. We are already brainstorming ideas on how to make that happen.”

BCSF was able to proceed this year through the efforts of the planning committee, the numerous, eager volunteers, and a generous philanthropic contribution from a young-adult Unificationist from California. Hunter reported that the BCSF organizers are grateful for the gift from David Stein of California, a self-

proclaimed connoisseur of Unificationist-born youth fine arts, who donated \$3,000 toward the prizes and equipment necessary for the cultural activities.



*Archbishop Ki Hoon Kim (left), the continental director of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) – North America, congratulated athletes at the Trophy Ceremony.*

The BCSF planning committee included Dave Hunter (national youth and young adult pastor), Jin Kwon Kim (overall coordinator), Oliver Noll (sports Coordinator), Esther Allen (Culture Coordinator), Karlsun Allen (General affairs), Keimi Kanno (Volunteer Coordinator), Eva Clark (Finance Manager), Jaga Gavin (Support Manager), Chigo Ahunanya (Soccer Coordinator) and Shinyoung Simonds (Fundraising Manager). Tanya Triggol from Indiana led two other-medically trained Unificationist-born youth at the on-site first aid tent.



*Some members of the BCSF planning committee, from left, Shinyoung Simonds, Oliver Noll, and Esther Allen, worked to make BCSF possible together with the help of more than 100 volunteers.*

“All of those on the planning committee had a responsibility, whether it was sports, games, ballroom, etc., and we were each given the freedom to plan out and conduct our event the way we wanted,” said Simonds. “So, in that sense, people really took ownership of BCSF and their event, as it was made by them for them.”



*Dave Hunter (left) presents a representative from the New Jersey (right) Team with the “Flag Award,” which is one of the awards in the Spirit Award Category.*

Simonds explained that there was a tiered-volunteer program this year, where a certain number of hours allowed for a percentage taken off of the entrance fee. “This drew in many volunteers [more than 100]



who were very happy to help and make sure BCSF happened. In the end the planning committee realized on a very concrete level that BCSF is going to happen every year, no matter what, because the youth of our community want it. They expect it to take place.”

To view and share photos of the 9th annual BCSF 2013 "GAME ON" visit the Unification Photos Facebook page: [on.fb.me/14kLNR9](https://www.facebook.com/on.fb.me/14kLNR9).



### **BCSF 2012 Sports Results**

#### **Soccer**

1. Northeast/Connecticut
2. Minnesota
3. NJ

#### **5-Kilometer Run**

1. Colin Savage
2. Sung-in Johnson
3. Rafael Fish

#### **Basketball**

1. Seattle
2. New York
3. Worcester, MA

#### **Volleyball**

1. New York A
2. Minnesota
3. Worcester B



#### **Tennis**

1. Miilhan Stevens
2. Karlsun Allen
3. David Takahashi

#### **Men's Ultimate Frisbee**

1. Maryland
2. New York
3. Bridgeport

#### **Women's Ultimate Frisbee**

1. Maryland
2. X-Factor
3. Ohio

**Spirit Award Category Winners** – (each of these first prize winners received \$200)

#### **T-shirt Contest**

Minnesota

#### **Flag Contest**

New Jersey

#### **Team Spirit**

Maryland

#### **Super Game Show**

Worcester, MA

### **Evening Culture Night Tournaments**

#### **Poker Tournament**

1. Dr. Ryan Fong - \$260
2. Marcus Hill - \$40