

East Coast High School Graduates Celebrate Together

Kaeleigh Moffitt
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On June 11, 30 Unificationist high school seniors gathered in Maryland to celebrate their graduation with brothers and sisters from all over the east coast. While enjoying a delicious meal, they had a chance to get to know one another and to hear words of wisdom from their mentors about transitioning into adulthood.

The night started out with encouraging remarks from Tamami Okano, Juliana Gaval, and Toyomichi Hagiwar, youth pastors of Worcester, MA, Bridgeport, CT, and Westchester, NY, respectively. Each shared about the value of cultivating one's personal relationships with God and with family, as well as the value of the time into which the graduates are entering.

Each youth was given a special award by their youth pastor during the evening which recognized their unique value and personalities.

Later in the evening, the graduates had a chance to compete in a trivia competition held by Teresa Ferrete, National Program Director of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) USA. They also competed in a contest between districts that was styled like a Mr. & Mrs. Pageant, in which the graduates from different communities shared their talents, participated in a model-stye catwalk to feature best-dressed outfits, offer answers to the question "What is the biggest dream you have for your future?", and display their community spirit.



The evening ended with a fun dance lesson led by Heung Kook Stephens, who helped the youth and youth pastors open up and become more comfortable. By the end of the night everyone was dancing and having tons of fun.

National Youth Ministry Coordinator, Kaeleigh Moffitt commented after the event, "It was a great night and the start of a great tradition for our future. This chance to gather as a national community helps the youth see their identity in our wider church community and also allows us to send off young Unificationists into adulthood with our utmost love and support.

"I'm especially inspired by the collaboration between communities that was able to take place for the sake of this event. It's such a blessing to work with such amazing youth pastors in the United States."