

Midwest CARP chapters' Leaving a Legacy of Love retreat in Benton Harbor, MI

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From May 17th to 19th, the Midwest CARP chapters held a retreat in Benton Harbor, Michigan, with the theme, "Leaving a Legacy of Love". There were 19 participants: 14 from Michigan, three from Indiana, and two from Chicago. One of the Michigan participants was Dr. Steve Barton, the CARP faculty advisor at Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC).



Dr. Robert Beebe (left) gave the presentations for the weekend.

Our guest speaker, Dr. Robert Beebe, flew in from New Jersey to give three presentations from the CARP Curriculum: Education, Love and Sexuality, and Marriage and Family. From the presentations, participants deepened their understanding about the value and importance of families.



Farhan, a CARP member from Indianapolis, shared he learned about love.

"[The lecture] was talking about the different kinds of love, [starting with] the love of parents and children. The more they grow, they find their significant other, they have another kind of love. They are all loves but different types... Families are the foundation for society."



"This is my first time here and I just want to thank everyone. I learned a lot about love and family. I learned in the group discussion how the way you are raised is what you are gonna take into your relationships." - Sabex



Aside from lectures, we also had family discussions, icebreaker games, internal activities, and a trip to the St. Joseph's beach. On the second evening, participants took part in an activity in which they could look back on their life and imagine their funeral--who would come and what would they say. They shared that it helped them to look at their own life from a distance and redetermine their purpose and goals.



By the end of the retreat, participants were able to create familial bonds with each other and feel the love in action. Multiple participants especially acknowledged the two Muslim CARP members from Indianapolis who were fasting for Ramadan during the retreat. Nina Jesper, the host for the workshop site, was so inspired by the Muslim students.

She shared, "Two people that exemplified the theme of love relationships and family and were so open whenever I talked to them--Farhan and Gaddafi. I was so moved about their topics and warmth. This is what the kingdom of heaven feels like. This is what family feels like. They are fasting for Ramadan and surrounded by food but still choose to be here and engage with others."

This retreat sparked in the participants some of the same desire that Rev. Moon had to build a peaceful world by uniting people of different religious backgrounds.



The biggest takeaway from the retreat by far was the feeling of family and love.

"A lesson I learned from my family, is even though we are angry, the love is still there, you still have someone to support you. Our parents always act in our best interest. I have struggled to understand that. I think at the end of the day, all of our parents wish the best for us. There is love there, there is support at the end of the day. I'm grateful we get to bring that all in here, all of our values, and make this environment so special." - Cynthia