

## The Golden Age Club, a new ministry for elder Unificationists

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*The Golden Age Club, a new multidimensional ministry for elder Unificationists, visited the New York Botanical Gardens for its third-quarter activity on October 26, 2013*

As the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification is a multigenerational church, the Golden Age Club developed as one such new multidimensional ministry for our elder members to honor our achievements, take pride in our gray hair and wrinkles, and celebrate the wisdom we have accrued through aging! On, Saturday, Oct. 26, 2013, 18 mature Unificationists enjoyed their third-quarter activity with a brisk autumn afternoon at the New York Botanical Gardens.



*Pastor emeritus Barry Geller and spouse Mariko from the Golden Age Club poses with the gigantic pumpkin*



*Japanese sisters admire the Ogiku (Double and Triple Stem), a chrysanthemum stem bent and cultivated with one perfect bloom balanced on top*

The Golden Age Club began its outing with a harvest meet-up around a gargantuan pumpkin. The featured events for the weekend at the New York Botanical Gardens were the Carved Pumpkin exhibit and the Kiku: Art of Japanese Gardening exhibit.

Much of the Pumpkin exhibit was geared toward a younger crowd, and the younger crowd became part of the exhibit for us. Children were joyfully jumping from one display to the next, many making an early debut of their Halloween costumes. At the end of the exhibit, immense gourds were on display, including a 2,000-pound pumpkin and a 350-pound watermelon.

Especially memorable was the annual Japanese “Kiku,” or Chrysanthemum Festival. This astonishing show featured unique mums (chrysanth) in a variety of sizes and designs growing upward or cascading downward throughout the exhibition. Many of the floral displays, including hundreds of flowers, were growing from a single stem. Outside of the conservatory housing the Kiku festival, we could hear and view musicians and dancers performing for the crowd.



*Elder Japanese sisters pose during the delightful Golden Age Club outing at the New York Botanical Gardens.*

In addition to the featured exhibits, brothers and sisters delighted in the beautiful, cool and sunny weather and in taking a relaxed stroll through the conservatory to view plants from the rain forest and desert, and water flowers and bonsai trees. Others took a wonderful tram-ride throughout the gardens. Some botany enthusiasts suggested that we should make this trip an annual or semiannual event.



*This Ozokuri (Thousand Bloom), a highly complex technique in which a single chrysanthemum stem is trained to produce hundreds of simultaneous blossoms in a massive dome-shaped array, was on display at the Kiku: The Art of the Japanese Garden exhibit.*

The Golden Age Club includes all young-at-heart members 60 and above. Each year as our community matures; we celebrate the lives of those reaching 60 years of age. The Golden Age Club provides adult fellowship, age-appropriate activities (for in reach and for outreach), and information regarding health, human services, aging and end-of-life considerations. In the future, we hope to create opportunities for members to share our Unification history, our victories and struggles, our journey, and many valuable insights with our next generation through writing and speaking.