

Lovin' Life Ballroom Dancers Make Their Mark at the "New York City Ball" Competition

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Participants of the "Generation Peace" dance team from Lovin' Life Ministries.

Sparkling costumes, high-heeled dance shoes, slicked back hair, and *samba* music greeted me as I walked into the Grand Ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel on Madison Avenue in Manhattan on May 8, 2011. I was observing my first ballroom dance competition and I had no idea what to expect. I saw some seemingly professional dancers and plenty of dance fanatics, yet there were also 60 Lovin' Life-trained dancers competing! After seeing the entire competition, I have to say that each couple had definitely acquired "simple elegance" to show on the dance floor.

The "New York City Ball" competition, held by World Promotions on a Sunday afternoon drew a mixture of competitors of all age-ranges, from as young as three years old to over 50 years old, at all levels of experience. The "Generation Peace" dance team from Lovin' Life Ministries was filled with members of the STF and college-age young adults from the tri-state area who had discovered ballroom dance during the past year, some even two months ago. Nonetheless, it was obvious that they were going strong to leave their mark.



Evening competition at the Grand Ballroom of the Roosevelt Hotel on Madison Avenue in New York City.

After receiving personal training from Ms. Ariana Moon, a member of Harvard's Competitive Ballroom Dance Team, for four to five hours a day, for a 2-week intensive, both the determination and enjoyment of these Gen Peace youth was on display in their sequential quick steps together with bright smiles that filled the room in each of their "heats," or 40-second time slots. By the end of the night, each dance couple had shown their moves in three to five heats each, performing the *samba*, the *cha cha*, and the *swing*, together with other competing dancers; it was a new and exhilarating experience that may only be the beginning for many.

"Who would have thought I would be performing in a ballroom dance competition after two weeks?" said Victoria Roomet, who competed and achieved 1st place in her category. "Thanks to the empowerment of Rev. In Jin Moon believing we can do it, I now see that I can do anything I put my mind to. Our whole team drastically improved, even over two weeks. The only way to get better at something is to keep working at it. And this is exactly what Rev. In Jin Moon talks about in her sermons each week. It looked like it would be impossible, but everyone around us kept us in good spirits and never doubted."



The "Generation Peace" dance team poses for a group picture at the Lovin' Life Learning Center after the competition. Many competitors took home a commemorative medal as an award for excellence.

Ms. Roomet, who entered into the competition with her dance partner, Sean Kim, and won a medal, explained that the competition was a valuable experience in terms of learning teamwork, "You realize you are not the only one dancing out there," she said. "You need to work together, like you would in many other relationships, because it's not all about you; it's the two of you."

Many Generation Peace competitors that night took home a commemorative medal as an award for excellence. "Entering into the competition gave us a reason to work hard at our dream: because we had a goal to work towards. And everyone did great just because they put in the effort and stuck through and made it to the competition, looking wonderful," Victoria said.

Ms. Roomet said that even though everyone on the Generation Peace was feeling nervous, each felt it was a team effort. "We were in it together," she said. "Our generation peace team was the most supportive out there. World Promotions also really appreciated our team being there, because we were cheering for each other the whole time. It was very refreshing for everyone in such a competitive environment."

Lovin' Life Ministries' Generation Peace dance team now hopes to enter competitors into local ballroom dance competitions throughout the year.