

CARP's "Mr. The Fish" Swims to New Campuses in 2011

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Victoria Roomet, Vice President of CARP at the 2010 Gala.

Victoria Roomet, Vice President of the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), explained her vision for CARP this school year in an interview for the Unification Church newsletter.

“Under In Jin Nim’s guidance, CARP has become an organization whose purpose is, in a nutshell, to support Unificationists and friends in college. Our three focal points are: Nurturing a spiritual life (internal excellence), academic excellence (external excellence) and creating a generation of peace. We work together – as opposed to separately – with the Lovin’ Life young adult ministry,” said Roomet, 24, a recent graduate of Brandeis University.

Creating a Difference in Students’ Lives

“The reality is that there aren’t Unificationist groups on many campuses – there are eight official CARP Chapters and one WFWP [Women’s Federation for World Peace] chapter. The number of Unificationist students is fairly small at many colleges, so we want to make CARP an organization that supports those students and actually gives them something valuable that can enhance their college experience. Hopefully, as we grow and develop, we’ll be able to reach out to all the students in the country so that they feel we’re here for them. Our purpose is to think about what we can do for college students, not what they can do for us. I think in the long run, creating an organization that makes a difference in the lives of college students will naturally make these students want to step up and take action, which could mean starting a CARP chapter – which is great – but can also mean starting a WFWP chapter, or becoming the best student on campus. We just started a scholarship fund to support college students in need, and so far we have raised \$1,275.

“Specific CARP activities are up to the members on campuses, and depend on the size of the Unificationist community there. They evaluate their specific needs and decide what they want to do throughout the semester. Current CARP leaders have been involved in community service on campus,

organizing social events like BBQs, and raising awareness about the movement and what's going on in Japan. One young Unificationist at the University of Maryland who is involved with the CARP chapter there, was even planning to partner with the Ballroom Club at the school in order to host a CARP gala on campus.

“We're also officially launching the national 4.0 club, which was founded by several second-generation girls in our community. These girls were really inspired about how In Jin Nim focuses on internal and external excellence at the same time, so after STF [Special Task Force, now known as Generation Peace Academy] they decided that they were going to work towards getting a 4.0, which I believe they achieved. The 4.0 club is not going to be an exclusive club, but we're going to offer perks for people who get a 4.0 for a semester, like for example, getting a free ticket to the CARP Winter Ball.”

An Increase in Interest towards CARP

“We're definitely seeing growth. There's a CARP chapter opening up in New Jersey at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and the members are interested in raising awareness about the situation in Japan where our members are being "deprogrammed," or undergoing forced conversion. Students at Ohio State University are about to register a “Lovin' Life Ministries on Campus” club at their school, and they are planning exciting activities, like ‘Live Out Loud,’ a young adult gathering similar to Junction in NYC. These students are also thinking about renting out property so that the Unificationist students could all dorm together.

“A lot of CARP will be shaped by this STF year that has just graduated, because while they were in New York, we were able to build relationships with them. Now a lot of these young adults have graduated and are either starting college or are in the process of getting back into college. So our plan is to keep up with this STF class by periodically calling them up and checking to see how they're doing. They are the first large group of young Unificationists who CARP will be reaching out to intentionally. We're really going to try to support them, and expand through them.”



Introducing the CARP Mascot: Mr. The Fish

“It was a spontaneous idea to get a mascot. Universities have mascots so we thought we should have one, and because our organization is named CARP, we thought ours should be, of course, a fish. So we got the

Mr. The Fish bodysuit just in time for BCSF [Blessed Culture and Sports Fest], and he was an overnight sensation! He met all the BCSF participants, rooted for the teams, and was the star in one of Sonic Cult's music videos that was played during following Sunday service at Lovin' Life.

"Now we're really excited because he'll be giving advice to college students. We want to let the students know that Mr. The Fish, CARP, and everyone at Lovin' Life is here for them, and also that Lovin' Life is a place for them. We'll use Mr. The Fish to reach out to these students, because students who feel that they are supported through college are more likely to succeed. And," Roomet said with a laugh, "people trust mascots more than they trust people."



The CARP Winter Ball

"The purpose of the first CARP winter ball two years ago was to celebrate the achievements of young members, to let them know how amazing they are and that they are eternal sons and daughters of God. About 350 people showed up. Last year, we decided to have the late 1950s-1960s Golden Age as the theme, and we ended up having over 500 people. The Ball then became an event to look forward to.

"This year the Ball will probably take place on New Year's Eve, which is really exciting. We used to have our God's day celebration on New Year's, but because God's day was moved to the lunar calendar, Unificationists across the country didn't really know what to do. Consequently, what people would probably start doing, because it's mainstream in American culture, is going out and partying. So the Winter Ball is giving young Unificationists, who are our focus, a healthy party to go to.

"Also, because the Winter Ball is becoming the big event for the winter, we want to schedule other things around it, so that if members are traveling across the country, which many of them do, they'll get a lot out of their trip to New York. We're thinking about having a cultural festival, similar to the artistic, cultural events that took place at BCSF this year."