

FFWPU USA: Las Vegas Shine City Project Concludes 2022 Volunteer Work

Naokimi Ushiroda
December 12, 2022



Photos courtesy of Shine City Project

"Volunteering for Shine City Project this year allowed me to explore and learn more about different communities," says Jennifer Silerio, a young Unificationist and longtime SCP volunteer. "I was able to help those who were less fortunate, as well as help take care of the environment. I also enjoyed creating friendships and working with those who had the same mindset of wanting to serve others."



Throughout 2022, nearly 100 volunteers participated in the work of Shine City Project ([SCP](#)), a group composed of young Unificationists in Las Vegas [dedicated to serving](#) their Southern Nevada community in myriad ways. "It is so fulfilling when we are able to bring joy to others," says Jennifer. "I am grateful for all the opportunities to help those in need and to be able to appreciate our community more."

Jennifer and her brother, SCP National Director, Jeffrey Silerio, as well as Hiromitsu Kosaka, [received](#) the U.S. President's Volunteer Service Award in February 2022 that recognized all their volunteering in 2021. It inspired the SCP team to reach even greater heights this year - with more than 1,200 volunteer hours invested among the group and 52 service projects completed, averaging one per week.

"In this past year, we collaborated more with our local organizations," says Jeffrey Silerio. "We worked a lot with CARP Las Vegas and New Hope Foundation International, so members and guests of these organizations volunteered and participated more in our service projects."

The team partnered again with a number of local non-profit organizations as well, including Opportunity Village, the Doolittle Community Center, the Las Vegas Rescue Mission shelter, and Ahern Orchard,

among others. Volunteers took on a range of tasks such as cooking, cleaning, serving food, picking up litter, and planting and weeding green spaces in and around the city.



Most recently, on Dec. 3, Jeffrey headed overseas to Uruguay for a joint clean-up project between SCP and Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) Uruguay. "I worked with the YSP members there to help clean up and pick up litter at Playa Capurro (Capurro Beach)," he says. "We were able to collect so much litter in a short amount of time. The amount of trash that we collected filled the back of a small pickup truck."



Jeffrey was among some 18 volunteers who came from the U.S., Costa Rica, Uruguay and other South American countries. They all traveled with the mission to help transform a heavily littered city beach in Montevideo. "The largest item that we found was a discarded inflatable boat, which required teamwork and efforts of several volunteers," says Jeffrey. "Overall, I appreciated the unity that we had and how the service project involved the participation of people from across North America, Central America, and South America."

For other SCP volunteers, like Saracelia Hardarson and Pierre Vasquez, they found it rewarding to build community bonds while making a difference, no matter how big or small. "It has not only been a real privilege to join the other volunteers in helping our city shine," says Saracelia, "but it has also been a joy to interact with those volunteers and the communities we've been aiding."

"After over a year of participating in the Shine City Project, I still look forward to it every time," added Pierre. "It has helped make Las Vegas feel more like my home."

SHINE CITY PROJECT

FROM SIN CITY TO SHINE CITY



ABOUT

NINE YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZED A CLEANUP AT THE CORNER OF SAHARA AVENUE AND LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD ON **MARCH 16, 2013**. THE SERVICE PROJECT WAS HELD IN FRONT OF BONANZA GIFT SHOP, WHICH IS POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE "WORLD'S LARGEST GIFT SHOP". THIS OCCASION WOULD MARK THE BEGINNING FOR AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE GOAL WOULD BE TO TURN LAS VEGAS **FROM "SIN CITY" TO "SHINE CITY"**.

IN A CITY OF LUSTFUL DESIRES, GREEDY TRANSACTIONS, AND SELF-INDULGENCES, SHINE CITY PROJECT **CHALLENGES OUR CITY'S CULTURE OF SELF-CENTEREDNESS TO BECOME ONE OF SELFLESSNESS**. WE AIM TO **BUILD LEADERS OF HEART AND CHARACTER WHO SHARE LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR OTHERS** WHILE BEING **STEWARDS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**. TOGETHER, WE WILL CREATE A MORE **LOVING AND CARING COMMUNITY** WHICH IN TURN CAN CREATE A MORE **LOVING AND PEACEFUL WORLD**. IF A CHANGE CAN HAPPEN IN LAS VEGAS, **A CHANGE CAN HAPPEN EVERYWHERE**.

OUR INSPIRATION

Rev. Sun Myung Moon and
Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon

The inspiration for starting Shine City Project came from Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. The two have inspired and pioneered for a worldwide movement



for peace across races, religions, and nationalities. By creating loving families and by living for the sake of others and for the world, world peace is achievable.



"Heaven is not what we are given but what we must build." – Rev. Sun Myung Moon

OUR AFFILIATES

YOUTH AND STUDENTS FOR PEACE (YSP USA)

strives to advance world peace by empowering youth and students to become global citizens through character education and peace projects supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



COLLEGIATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE RESEARCH OF PRINCIPLES (CARP LAS VEGAS) seeks to create an inspired youth movement progressing society to become a global family united upon Universal Principles. We empower young adults to become global leaders who will contribute towards building a unified world centered upon God's love, by providing education and training based upon our core values.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Shine City
- Project -

9 - 11 **12.10.22**
SUNRISE TRAILHEAD



Shine City
- Project -

8 - 11 **12.17.22**
DOOLITTLE COMMUNITY CENTER

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JEFFREY SILERIO
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GALLERY





May 29, 2021 @ Vegas Roots Community Garden



October 2, 2021 @ Shaquille O'Neal Foundation – The Event



January 12, 2020 @ All Friends Animal Sanctuary



June 11, 2022 @ Spread the Word Nevada



December 4, 2021 @ Opportunity Village – Magical Forest



June 8, 2019 @ Silver Horizon Group Home



August 6, 2022 @ Ahern Orchard



May 4, 2019 @ Club Christ Ladies Tea



May 7, 2022 @ McKee Ranch Foundation



October 30, 2015 @ Haunted Harvest, Springs Preserve



October 20, 2018 @ 33 Hole Overlook, Lake Mead



March 2, 2019 @ Las Vegas Wash



August 17, 2019 @ Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada with International Leadership Training Program (ILTP)



September 2, 2015 @ UNLV Involvement Fair



July 24, 2021 @ Harrison House



July 25, 2015 @ Clean the World



Shine City Project's 2nd Anniversary Celebration (March 14, 2015)



July 31, 2015 @ Las Vegas Rescue Mission



Shine City Project's 3rd Anniversary Celebration (March 18, 2016)



April 26, 2013 @ Lorenzi Park



August 22, 2014 @ CARP Las Vegas House



August 16, 2014 @ CARP Las Vegas Learning Center



August 15, 2014 @ Mt. Charleston



November 9, 2019 @ Just One Project – Helen Marie Smith Elementary School



October 13, 2018 @ Las Vegas Wash with Generation Peace Academy



October 13, 2018 @ Las Vegas Wash with Generation Peace Academy



Shine City Project's 1st Anniversary (March 15, 2014 @ Sunset Park)



April 25, 2014 @ El Pollo Loco



August 9, 2014 @ Rebel Recycling Center



Shine City Project's 6th Anniversary Celebration (March 16, 2019 @ CARP Las Vegas Learning Center)



April 27, 2019 @ Pittman Wash



March 9, 2019 @ Las Vegas Community Healing Garden



April 20, 2019 @ Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary



November 23, 2019 @ Green Our Planet - Legacy High School



Our First Service Project (March 16, 2013 @ World's Largest Gift Shop)

CONTACT

Interested in joining?
Have a service project
idea? Want to
collaborate? Send us
an email!

Name *	<input type="text"/>
Email *	<input type="text"/>
Subject	<input type="text"/>

Message

Send



West

Season of Giving: How Las Vegas Youth Are Serving Their Community



As we enter the season of giving, Shine City Project ([SCP](#)) volunteers are doing what they do best – serving their Las Vegas community in a variety of impactful ways. The group of young Unificationists spent the past several weeks initiating and contributing to different service projects benefiting those in need as they explore more opportunities to give back.

In September and October, the team volunteered at the Las Vegas Rescue Mission, a local homeless shelter that provides a number of community services. “Our volunteers helped out with the community dinner for all the guests,” said SCP Director, Jeffrey Silerio.

The group kept busy with an unexpectedly large turnout of people. “Our volunteers were put into positions and responsibilities that we have never tried before in order to keep the dinner service running smoothly,” said Silerio. “While

some volunteers helped out with quickly distributing food trays to guests, others helped to count and keep track of the food trays by using a small, handheld clicker.”

Other preppers handed out condiments, refilled water pitchers, and removed empty food trays from tables. “With all of our hard work and effort, we were able to have a successful dinner service,” said Silerio, whose team also wiped down tables and chairs, and swept the dining hall. “It’s been a great experience volunteering at the [shelter],” he said.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of families across the nation become homeless, including more than 1.6 million children, according to federal data. November is National Youth Homeless Awareness Month, drawing more attention to the children who make up 60 percent of all people in homeless families. Many of SCP’s volunteer efforts cater to families in particular.

On Oct. 22, the group distributed food to individuals and families at a local middle school with help from “The Just One Project.” The giveaway, part of a series of pop-up mobile markets held at different schools and senior housing communities, helps offset food insecurity and hardship faced by some community members. “It takes just one person to make a difference in the lives of many people,” said one SCP member, “so a whole group of volunteers is unstoppable.”

SCP has been dedicated to cleaning up city streets and preserved areas as well. “We returned to the Springs Preserve for a service project outdoors,” noted Silerio. “We helped pick up litter on the trails of the preserve and focused on part of the Sloan Flood Channel, [which] was heavily littered with items such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and fountain

drink cups.”

The group collected some 71 bags of trash, along with wooden pallets and an old, abandoned wagon. “It was great to see the transformation of the area from a place covered in trash to one with natural beauty,” said Silerio. SCP cleanups have also been held at the Duck Creek Trailhead at Wetlands Park, the Historic Westside neighborhood, Warm Springs Natural Area in Moapa, and along Las Vegas Boulevard and Windmill Lane.



The latest SCP partnership, providing hot meals with Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada on Nov. 5, marks a new avenue in which the group is expanding its presence and serving the community. “For these last two months of the year, we are finding a lot more ways to give back and express gratitude to others,” said Silerio.

You can learn more about the Shine City Project [here](#).



West

2 Siblings, 200+ Hours of Volunteering



Jeffrey Silerio (left) and Jennifer Silerio (right) serving their Las Vegas community

“Volunteering is a lifestyle for me,” says Jeffrey Silerio. “I believe that volunteering shouldn’t be an unpleasant chore or something that we do out of necessity to fulfill volunteer hours. Rather, volunteering should be an enjoyable experience where we get to go out with friends, explore our community, and make a difference.”

Jeffrey and his younger sister Jennifer are well known in their Las Vegas community. He currently runs the Shine City Project ([SCP](#)), a volunteer initiative that first began among a group of Unificationists in 2013. Most recently, the two siblings earned national recognition with the [President’s Volunteer Service Award](#) – having devoted more than 100 hours each to volunteering throughout 2021.

“I feel grateful for the opportunity to serve my community,” says Jeffrey. “I always enjoy discovering new places where

we can help out; it's very rewarding. The desire to make a change in Las Vegas also motivates me to keep going, because as a native of Las Vegas, I hope to show others that this city is our home and we can create a more loving and caring environment for everyone."

After connecting with SCP's founder on campus during college, Jeffrey has remained committed to volunteering with the group for nearly a decade. Inspired by his faith and family upbringing, he says his passion for serving others was inevitable.

"In high school, I always spent my lunch time helping other students with their math questions," he says, "so I was eager to do something again for my community. Our True Parents believed that something special can happen in Las Vegas and that our city can be a model city for others to follow. I believe if a change can happen in Las Vegas, a change can happen everywhere."

Jennifer soon joined her brother in 2016 as she sought to make a difference in people's lives. "I like working with like-minded people who want to help the community," she says. "It brings me happiness and a sense of fulfillment when others are able to feel joy from the service work we do."

In 2021, SCP volunteers [ramped up their presence](#), partnering with a wide range of nonprofits and other organizations such as Green Our Planet, Ahern Orchard, and the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. By the end of the year, SCP had amassed 1,150 service hours in the greater Las Vegas area and completed 48 service projects in total – nearly one every week.

"Even though I am just one person, I've inspired others in my community to contribute even more," says Jeffrey. "I believe

that the efforts of any one person can create a ripple effect with other people.”

“Through volunteering, people in the community can see that we want to help those who are less fortunate and also save the environment,” says Jennifer. “Other people feel encouraged and empowered to make a difference in their community as well.”

The siblings say they feel honored to be recognized by the U.S. President with a certificate from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation. Since 2003, the President’s Volunteer Service Award has celebrated the important role of volunteers in America’s strength and national identity. The award honors individuals whose purpose positively impacts communities in every corner of the nation and inspires those around them to take action, too.

“These are amazing young people who are really the model people in America today,” says Rev. Miilhan Stephans, president of Youth and Students for Peace ([YSP](#)) USA, which presented the award to the Silerios and seven other young people from around the country on Jan. 22. YSP is certified to give various levels of the award based on age and the amount of hours volunteered within a 12-month period.

“We’re honoring outstanding volunteers and recognizing the great impact they make,” says Rev. Stephans. “These service opportunities also help them grow and find their own place in changing the world.”

For the Silerios, 2022 will continue as a year full of volunteering, with each day a new opportunity to give and serve more people. “We will do our best to make Las Vegas shine and show others the value of living a life for the sake of

others," says Jeffrey.

You can learn more about Shine City Project, including its upcoming service projects, [here](#).

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