

CARP Las Vegas' End of the Semester celebration at the Cheon Hwa Gun

Ken Doo
May 12, 2018



On May 12th, 2018, CARP Las Vegas hosted an End of the Semester celebration. This event was held at the beautiful outdoor garden of Cheon Hwa Gun in the Las Vegas Family Church property. It gathered over 100 people of families and friends, faculty, professors and supporters of CARP.



The event began with the MCs of the event, Mr. C. Katayama and Ms. A. Moraes welcoming everyone to the venue. They acknowledged a few special guests and thanked everyone for bringing their unique potluck dish for the evening. The dinner plates were filled with all sorts of food from all different backgrounds.

After everyone had the chance to grab their plate of food and was enjoying their meals, two brothers, M. and H. Takahashi, shared a testimony of how they used to fight and hate each other but life has transformed through GPA training. Then offered a song with beautiful harmony as brothers. After a roaring applause, the CARP band performed as well, offering beautiful music to the crowd. They performed, "You Raise Me Up" and used this opportunity to honor all the elders that have passed on their love and wisdom to the younger generations.



In order to fill in all the extended family members of some activities CARP was involved in, CARP member Kailey T. gave a short overview of some highlights from within the past year. Kailey mentioned that through being directly involved in activities such as the Peace Starts With Me rally held in Madison Square Garden the previous summer to being able to go to Japan and Korea this summer, we are privileged to be connected to the good that is happening in the world. And that a small part of that good is here in this community.



Testimonies were then given from some of the newest participants of CARP, as well as one parent and one faculty member. (Ralph, Mr. Loyola, Denzel, and Dr. Glasper). Mr. Loyola thanked CARP for creating an environment where his son could feel free to express himself. ***More testimonies***



Towards the end of the program, CARP Las Vegas director and co-director, Mr. and Mrs. Akira Watanabe, were welcomed to the stage to present their congratulatory remarks to all the graduates of the semester. It was beautiful to have the graduates be recognized by CARP Las Vegas for their efforts in not just their dedication toward CARP but also their grades and future careers. Those graduates were Y. Shimada, M. Fuller, J. Batayola, and Jinil Fleischman. Each one of them received a graduation gift that was suitable for next steps in their journey. They gave a special recognition to Mr. Jinil Fleischman, who has been a part of the

club from the very beginning as the first CARP Las Vegas president. The parents of Jinil, Justin and Pat Fleischman, were welcomed onto the stage to share a few words. They expressed their pride and trust in their son for always being receptive to the callings that God directs him in his life.

As the weekend was a Mother's Day weekend, the MCs acknowledged all the mothers and mothers-to-be, whom were invited up to the front to receive a rose from one person that is very dear to them whether it was their own children, wife, sibling, or even a student that was impacted by them. The rose was a symbol of gratitude and love for all that the mothers have done to raise their children.



Near conclusion, the audience was shown a video that captured the highlights of the semester within CARP. It brought out a lot of precious memories as they reminisced about all that happened in such a packed semester. The video even included a short testimony from Ms. Vivien Brock, vice-president of the student government in CSN. She mentioned how she truly believes and trusts in CARP and how she wants their activities to be held to over 500+ people within the next semester. She expressed her wholehearted support toward the student organization.



As the program came to an end, everyone gathered in a circle to sing "Imagine" by John Lennon, as a reminder for everyone's innermost desire of wanting to live in a world of peace. Mrs. Makiko Watanabe closed the program with a sincere prayer for each person in the circle to truly extend the love they felt to others in their life.

Even as the party and evening closed, many of the family and friends stuck around to bond, greet, and even take some photos at the photo booth. Through the celebration, the people there were able to taste what it is like to be in a culture of family, heart, and a spirit where God could reside in.

Few testimonies from those who attended:

"The end of the semester party was a celebration of hope. I felt it was a place where we all came to recognize that peace really is possible, it's out there and it begins with us. It was about celebrating those around us for contributing to that hope, and raising each other up for the change we have made in each others' lives. And determining to continually invest into cultivating that hope and making it a reality." - M. Taguchi, GPA participant

"We came here 2014, when CARP just started. That time there were only four CARP members. At the end of the semester, they only had a small gathering! Not many students, only a few. As they progressed there were more people. Last time they had it at the sanctuary. Now this time, there was not enough space so they had to do it outside the sanctuary. Most were guests, few community members. Most were from UNLV and CSN, including professors and ministers came. It was really inspiring to hear the testimonies. Numbers just keep expanding. Last time, most people were the CARP members but this time, most of them were guests. We didn't know anyone! It was a good problem." - Y. Oberg, local Las Vegas community member