

10th Annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival Opens

Jaga Gavin
August 6, 2014



The Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF) is celebrating its tenth year and had its 2014 debut on Wednesday, August 6. This five-day summer festival of sports, music, dance, art and fellowship is the much-anticipated event of the year, when young Unificationists from all over the country meet at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York to reunite and compete in sports such as Frisbee, volleyball, soccer and basketball.

“This is my first time here,” says 19-year-old Michelle. “I can’t believe I’ve missed out all these years, but it’s really amazing to be able to spend time with friends in such a beautiful place, and that we can all get together and share some the things our community loves most: sports and music.”



BCSF is a chance for friends from around the country to reunite

After arrivals and excited hellos among nearly five hundred sports players and spectators, with more to come in the following days, BCSF officially began, opening on Wednesday evening with a worship service called Junction. Interspersed with six praise and worship songs, the program began with a welcome message by Jaga Gavin, and Nari Stephens gave a sermon titled, “How to Get from Here to the Goal.” Her message spoke to the dreams that are within each one of us, and how to unlock them. The band was made up of young Unificationists from all over the country, with Youngbok and Laura as vocals, Sunhwa on the keys, drummer Hyun, and guitarists Henry, Oji and Rudy.

This year, the theme of BCSF is “X”, the Roman numeral for ‘10’. Promising to be the most epic and “X-treme” BCSF yet, this year the festival features a new obstacle course and a Family Day with activities for all ages. Driving in through the long driveway to the seminary, people arrived to the sight of a 12-foot

tall wall; this structure, built by Jaga Gavin, Jake and Karlsun, is part of the Weekend Warrior: Mudder's Trail run, inspired by the Tough Mudder race, and doubles as a massive sign with this year's BCSF logo.



Every team made their grand entrance, waving their team flag

“This is a new tradition we’re starting,” said Jake Mas, who had the idea to implement the Mudder’s Trail. “It costs five dollars to participate, and the proceeds will go to John Abendroth, who is in the hospital because of a bike injury earlier this year.”

This year, BCSF is committed to giving back to the community by helping our friends who have come across hard times in their health. In addition to John Abendroth from Maryland, who is pictured on the Maryland jerseys holding the team flag, a “Marrow for Morrow” drive is under way at BCSF to find potential bone marrow donors among the participants for Morrow Willis, a young Unificationist from Texas who has leukemia. As BCSF honors and unites for those who could not be here this year, participants feel the essence of what this community is all about: living for the sake of others.



Sports began early on Thursday morning

By the evening’s end on opening day, a sea of tents were set up in one of the fields as many participants chose to camp on site overnight. The following day, August 7, the sports began. Spectators and players were up early and on the fields. Back-to-back soccer and Frisbee games occupied the main field, with volleyball beside it. Though BCSF is a vacation for many, for the players it’s serious; teams worked hard and are fighting to win. With an open mic and ballroom social on Thursday, games hosted by the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) on Friday, and Family Day, the Mudder’s Trail and a fashion show on Saturday, participants look forward to the next few days of fun and competition! See the complete photo album of Day 1 on Facebook and tag your friends!