

At Columbus Youth Bash - They Partied Hard the Lovin' Life Way

Trimon Lamson
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Communities from Michigan and Ohio gathered for a picture after an afternoon of sports on Sunday.

More than 120 young Unificationists from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and North Carolina gathered in Columbus, Ohio to attend the month's Youth Bash on November 12, 2011. The first Columbus Youth Bash at which members from other states convened, this monthly social attracted an unprecedented number of second-generation for an activity-packed weekend. Organizers in Ohio made sure to welcome their brothers and sisters traveling from out-of-state and to party hard the Lovin' Life way.



A group of boys from Michigan gather for a picture at Splatter Park, Ohio's premium paintball location.

The weekend began at Splatter Park, Ohio's premium paintball location, and we had a blast, literally. I have discovered that there is no better way to meet new people than to go into battle with them. After five hard-fought rounds of paintball with more than 20,000 paintballs fired, we departed for Ohio Pastor Michael Lamson's house with bruised bodies and empty stomachs.

At the Lamson's, more than 200 hamburgers, 300 hotdogs, 150 sodas, 15 bags of chips, 20 tomatoes and more found their ways into our digestive tracks. After a few hours of fellowship and friendly chaos, it was time to head to the Columbus Lovin' Life Learning Center for our spiritual food for the evening.



(From left to right) Aika Callahan, Sakura Ogino and Rena Kanazawa strike a pre-battle pose.

“Junction,” our weekly youth ministry program, started out with some heart-thumping songs from our Junction band. Performances included favorites such as “Hosanna” by Hillsong and “Wake Up” by Arcard Fire. Max Heuft, a member of the Ohio youth ministry team, gave us an inspirational and practical message about our identity as second-generation Unificationists and the responsibility that comes with it. The three main points from the message were “to remain humble, be good to others, and be the best at whatever you do.” After a few more songs, it was time to begin the real show with ballroom dancing. Yuka Sato, an Indiana resident, taught the basics to Waltz and Swing as this was the first time for many of the participants. We concluded the evening with a thunderous line dance to Shakira’s “Waka Waka.”

Jonathon, a young Unificationist from Michigan said, “The BC (Blessed Children) Bash was an incredible experience for me and our community. It was great to be able to meet up and have fun with so many people from other states. This weekend was such a needed break from school and studying. I enjoyed all the activities from ballroom dancing and paintball, and the Junction message about our identity as Blessed Children [second-generation Unificationists] was something that I could really take to heart. I hope that this can be a start of bringing together people from different communities.



(From left to right) Ohio band members Joe Yamakawa, Minna Akutsu, Chris Culbertson and Tatsumi Suenaga got the audience up on their feet.

“Also the Columbus church has done the best job that I have seen in inheriting from what Rev. In Jin Moon has started in New York and replicating it in their community. I lastly want to thank the Columbus community for giving us such a warm welcome. They opened their homes so that everyone could have such a nice time.”



(Center left) Sarah Fukatsu and Benji Uyama enjoy a Waltz together among other dancers.

“The Youth Bash was a really good experience for me,” said second-generation Unificationist Sachika, from Indiana. “The activities included paintballing, ballroom dancing, listening to a lecture, and eating dinner at the Lamson’s house. Playing paintball was really fun. The whole week before Youth Bash, I was stressed out, so shooting people you didn’t know was kind of nice. All the kids listened to a speech by Max Heuft. There were three rules we said we should follow: Do not be arrogant about being a Blessed Child, be good to others, and be the best! After his speech we did ballroom dancing, which was really fun. I was able to meet people I had never met before. Being part of the BC Bash made me really happy, and I hope we have another one.”



(Center) Max Heuft and Yuka Sato instructed newcomers to ballroom dance on Waltz steps.

The following day, all the different travelers joined us for Sunday Service and sports, including football, Frisbee, basketball and soccer.

I am so grateful that we had this opportunity to share a little bit of what we have inherited from the New York Lovin’ Life community. Having talked with the other youth group leaders, we decided that holding interstate youth events is something we have to do more often, as it is so valuable for people to realize they are connected to something much bigger than their own local communities.

Contributed by Trimon Lamson, youth minister in Columbus, Ohio .