

The 2014-2015 class of Generation Peace Academy opens

Roland Platt
September 16, 2014



A mixture of excitement and nerves filled the air as the newest class of Generation Peace Academy filed into the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) at Barrytown, New York, to register for the 2014-2015 year kickoff event. The lecture hall was decorated with the theme “Pokemon Outer Space,” and the nerves quickly melted away as the new first-year participants were welcomed and invited by staff and second- and third-year participants to join in sports, board games and other activities.

Day 1



After a day of registration and moving in, the group gathered the next morning for GPA Director Roland Platt’s welcoming remarks, which officially began orientation. But the participants were not seated for very long. They were asked to change into white t-shirts and sports clothes. With their eyes closed, the group leaders ambushed the new recruits with colored powder, and they were thus divided into their three different teams for kickoff. The blue, green and red “nations” spent the day engaged in ice breakers and competitions. When the groups huddled together over the task of creating their own chants, it was clear that win or lose, they were energized and united for what lay ahead.

The competition itself was a take on the reality TV show “The Amazing Race.” The teams sprinted out to ten ice-breaker stations spread across the UTS property, completing each task as fast as possible and returning back to base. From eating whole watermelons to carrying someone on one’s back, the task at each station not only was physically challenging but also forced each team to get to know each other, work together and support one another.

This was only the beginning of the competition, however. The next task pitted a runner from each team against one another in an exciting and creative relay race. After the winners were announced, the participants had well-deserved warm showers and dinner, while the second- and third-year participants presented videos they had prepared to introduce themselves and welcome the new first years.

GPA as a whole then gathered around Father's Rock to close the day, sharing their experiences and enjoying the feelings of togetherness and excitement from the first day. It was the start of so many amazing experiences up ahead in this Kickoff Workshop and brand-new year of GPA.



Day 2

“Just as anything in Kickoff, roll call is a competition,” said Kailey Teo, this year’s GPA blogger. At 7 a.m. sharp, the participants lined up on the sports field amid the beauty of the sunrise at UTS, trying to be the first team whose members were all there on time.

After roll call, the participants walked Father’s Trail and settled in a spot by the lagoon where True Father had stopped many times to pray or speak. They listened to True Father’s words about leaving behind a legacy of love and continued the rest of the walk in prayer.



After such an inspiring start, the participants were ready to receive various speakers throughout the day. Roland Platt spoke of the history of the STF/GPA program and the objectives for the year, and encouraged the participants to own their journey.

The group was also blessed to have Susan Bouachri, director of human resources, and Demian Dunkley, director of evangelism, give a warm welcome on behalf of HSA headquarters.

Aunt Susan affirmed the participants’ bravery in joining GPA and spoke about how a life of faith is truly worth living for. Uncle Demian explained that millions of people are searching for meaning and purpose

in their lives. He said that witnessing is making a difference in people's lives and we have the ability to do that with what we have.



The group apparently doesn't like to be sitting for too long, however. After receiving all the rules and guidelines for the program, GPA hit the field once more for volleyball training, demonstrations, drills and pickup games.

The year is definitely off to a great start, and we look forward to the upcoming days of introducing the GPA program, internal guidance, and competitions in skits and volleyball.

