

Competitors are Prepping to go “All In” at the 2011 Blessed Culture and Sports Festival

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Hundreds of athletes and spectators from around the country are getting ready to participate in the sixth annual Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF) to be held at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, NY, from August 10 – 14, 2011. This year’s festival will consist of both sports tournaments and cultural events, and will conclude with a live Lovin’ Life Ministries Sunday Service given on site by our national pastor, Rev. In Jin Moon.

The theme of this year’s BCSF (aka Sports Fest) is “All In,” encouraging each attendee, not only athletes and performers, to invest everything they have in what they do, according to Jin Kwon Kim, founder and coordinator of BCSF. “For the community itself, everyone’s in; let’s all join together, let’s all be a part of this team, and let’s make this happen!” The BCSF website (BCSF2011.com) put the purpose of the event simply: “Each year we seek to bring together our Unificationist community and friends, to celebrate the traditions of culture and sports that our True Parents have given us. Our purpose is to provide value for the community, and in so doing, raise the consciousness of the community in giving back as well. This year our theme is “All In,” putting it all out there during the games and competitions and coming together as a community to create the culture of a big family united under God.”



Attendance at BCSF has been growing consistently since its founding in 2006, originally as the Blessed Children’s Sports Festival (the name was changed in order to introduce cultural elements and open the

festival to non-Unificationist members as well, according to Kim). In 2006, just over 100 people attended, however this year 200-250 athletes are expected with 300-400 spectators to cheer them on. This number does not include the hundreds also expected to flock to UTS for Lovin' Life service on Sunday.

Sports this year will include: men and women's ultimate frisbee, co-ed volleyball, optional co-ed basketball and soccer, tennis, and table tennis. At the first Sports Fest, only youth from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut participated, but this year twelve different regions around the country will be sending representative athletes to compete in the tournaments, including: New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New England, Maryland, Florida, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois, Texas, California, and Washington State. This is the largest turnout so far in the history of BCSF, and the number of represented states is expected to continue to increase in years to come.



The cultural aspect of the event has also grown since the first BCSF (which was solely dedicated to sports) in terms of participants and number of events. This year's events include the youth service *Junction*, a ballroom dance class (as well as a ballroom dance social and competition), a talent show, an art gallery, a photography competition, an Open Mic event, and both poker and blackjack tournaments. There will also be a fashion show, where young people will be given tips, not only on how to dress well, but how to present themselves with dignified confidence. The fashion show was started last year with the intent to help young Unificationists reflect their internal excellence in their external appearance.

Since BCSF is an official Lovin' Life event "there is definitely a tremendous level of financial support from HSA," said Kim, "however we are moving forward and are looking to become self-sufficient," said Kim. The entire four days of events costs between \$30 and \$80 for participants, depending on the number of sports they will be playing and whether or not they chose to stay in the dorms at UTS. However, Kim compared this price to the \$50-100 you could be charged at a normal soccer or basketball tournament for only a few hours of activities, and also stressed the incredible amount of content and number of sports and cultural events to take place.

The Blessed Culture and Sports Festival is an important piece of what Lovin' Life is trying to do for the world, according to Kim, as it is "a time and place people can come together and see the value of our community and what God, True Parents, and True Family have established for us." It is a tournament where we, not only get to exhibit the "high caliber of sportsmanship" that athletes in our community have, but also "a place for our community to foster, nurture, and to continue to support and be a part of what we have."

Registration will continue to be open until August 7 on BCSF2011.com.