

## Project Phoenix in Stuttgart, Germany and Montreal, Canada Unites Generations

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It has been a busy month for Project Phoenix. At the end of October, there were back-to-back Project Phoenix 1.0 events in Stuttgart, Germany and Montreal, Canada.

Seventy European, mostly German, and five American staff members held a Project Phoenix event in Stuttgart. The majority of the German staff members participated in the May event outside Frankfurt. While the May event was primarily organized by the American team, the Stuttgart event was initiated by a team of Germans who wanted to continue sharing the spirit of Project Phoenix in their home country. With the support of the North American team, the newly formed European team did a fabulous job and are planning more events for next year.

The feeling in the room was quite formal in the beginning but ended with hugs, tears and lots of love. Responses from younger participants were especially poignant.



"I felt loved and respected and listened to and especially connected in a way I haven't felt in a long time. There are a few very precious moments for me that I can lock in my heart and take with me for the rest of my life." – Young Unificationist

"I met a Japanese mother here who offered conditions for my country long before I was born. She told us at the table how difficult it was for her to leave her family behind... Now I am standing on the foundation she helped to build. Thanks to this event, I had the opportunity to hear her moving story." – Young Unificationist

One young Unificationist made a plan to talk with his parents to clear up misunderstandings in their relationship. Another participant said, "God clearly worked through open-hearted give-and-take relationships that have been created in our family during this weekend."



The following weekend, 16 staff gathered in Montreal, Canada to bring Project Phoenix to the Great White North. Over 60 people attended, including participants from all over Quebec, as well as Ottawa and Toronto. Some participants from the northeast in the US also attended.

Through exercises and following the example of group leaders, people were able to honestly share their experiences with one other. While there was some stiffness in the very beginning, the Honoring the Generations activity really opened participants up to one another, and after some sincere and vulnerable Through Our Lens speakers, people were in tears, genuinely moved by the experiences of their brothers and sisters, and ready to receive the experiences of their family members.



On Saturday, there was an activity where elder and younger participants paired up and took turns guiding each other around the room while blindfolded. Each participant was asked to envision their blindfolded partner as either their parent, child or another important person and to gently guide them through the room. At the end of the activity, some people received new insights into their relationships and realized things they needed to work on.

Saturday concluded with another new activity where the participants formed two concentric circles facing each other. The inner and outer circles gazed into each others' eyes until the facilitator asked the outer circle to move to the right. This continued until everyone in the outer circle had gazed into the eyes of everyone in the inner circle. Despite no words being spoken, participants were really able to connect and share God's love with each other. For some people, this activity was the highlight of their day: "Favorite activity: looking into eyes on the stage. It was moving to be able to read the spirits of the younger Unificationists in front of me and give them love, recognition, affirmation, and encouragement if they needed it."



By the end of the weekend, the Montreal community was left with a greater appreciation and desire to connect with one another and others who couldn't attend the event.

"Every exercise contributed to help me experience a deep connection with God and especially with young Unificationists. This is something I have wished for a long time." – Older Unificationist

"I've been in this community for about three years, but I've been hesitant to be involved with the community because I did not feel connected with them emotionally. But after this weekend, I felt more accepted by this community." – Older Unificationist

"I was pleasantly surprised at how personal this event became for me. I wasn't expecting to be so moved and cry so much. I think Project Phoenix is really touching on some things our communities have needed for a long time, and I'm hoping I can bring what I experienced home to my relationships." – Young Unificationist

Project Phoenix is really grateful to Sandra Cusson, Marc Laurin, Catherine Fortin, Carla Claveau Ferreira, Pastor Franco Famularo and all the Montreal members who helped create this wonderful occasion for participants to grow closer to God and to each other.