

Alaskan National Ocean Challenge Program Teaches Father's Love for Fishing

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Ocean Church coordinator in Kodiak, Alaska



National Ocean Challenge Program (NOCP) is a unique youth-training program in Kodiak, Alaska that honors Rev. Sun Myung Moon's heart and vision for the Ocean Providence. Dr. Balcomb stands fourth from right in the front row.

“I launched the boat with the belief that, in a similar way to how we receive life from the water, we need to go out onto the ocean and pass through a series of trials there in order to become capable of surviving the trials we face on land.” -- Rev. Sun Myung Moon

Sunday, July 21, 2013 marked the official start of the three-week National Ocean Challenge Program (NOCP) for 2013. There were 26 participants from all over the United States who arrived in Kodiak, Alaska, along with three international participants from Japan, Korea, and China, and four Captains-In-Training (CITs). The Unificationist-born youth stepped up to leadership roles, filling four key staff positions this year (Program Coordinator, Jr. Commander, Jr. Captain, and CITs).



From August 1-5, 2013, Dr. Balcomb joined the NOCP participants on fishing expedition in Kodiak, Alaska and brought a box full of Salmon back to New York

The program couldn't have kicked off at a better time with the best summer weather Kodiak residents have seen in 25 years. In the first few days, the program focused on proper training with an organized Coast Guard boating safety and Red Cross CPR/ First-Aid course in which all participants passed and received Certificates of Accomplishment.



NOCP participants and Rev. Larry Krishnek (far right), district pastor of the Northwest region, show off their beautiful salmon.

From August 1st to 5th, Dr. Michael Balcomb, the president of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA joined the participants in Kodiak to fish, hike, bask in the scenic nature and introduce the simple yet effective Discovering the Divine Principle Lecture series. Rev. Larry Krishnek, the district pastor of the Northwest region, also came up to visit NOCP as well.



Surrounded by the emerald-green, Alaskan mountains and the crisp, clean air create a truly peaceful environment to commune with God.



Dr. Balcomb introduced the simple yet effective lecture series, Discovering the Divine Principle.

Among our different activities, one of the highlights was our Chiniak Camping Trip. The warm weather and clear skies allowed for many outdoor activities and sports along with exploration and service cleanups. For many, the testimonies around the campfire every evening opened up the floor for people to find comfort in sharing and connecting with others. The special time spent at Chiniak broke down barriers and created a space to think, connect, explore and learn with others, ourselves and our Heavenly Parent.



Trainees learn to read and chart maps, an essential boating skill.

Justin Hughes, 21, from California said of the program: “Ocean Challenge has been a great experience thus far! Not only are you situated on the beautiful island of Kodiak, but you’re surrounded by the loving church community of Kodiak, which embraced all of us with open arms. Ocean Challenge offers a variety of experiences, from camping, service projects, river fishing and ocean fishing. We’ve received useful, practical training in boating and fishing, as well as spiritual food in terms of HDH (informed by the Ocean Church Providence), testimonies by staff, and personal time to reflect on goals and our Unification faith. This program is truly an exciting and unique experience!”

The invaluable opportunity to experience such a program on the beautiful island of Kodiak is unlike any other. The heart and spirit of True Father that can be felt here is part of what makes the overall program so special. Kodiak fishing being one of the central pillars for the Ocean Providence really captures the true spirit of Ocean Church through the unique training of our youth. Being surrounded by the great ocean waters, green Alaskan mountains and crisp, cool air, creates a truly peaceful environment to better feel and understand God and ourselves – free from any distraction and demand from our lives back home.

Through the Ocean Challenge program, many have been able to experience ocean and river fishing for the first time. The majesty of the ocean and all that it can teach you, along with the spiritual aspects of fishing that we have discovered firsthand have unfolded a deeper understanding of why the Ocean Challenge program was created.



Hemmed in by wildflowers and lyrical seascapes, trainees stroll near Chiniak, reflecting on what they have heard and seeking the Divine encounter.

“For me, this program encompasses so much more than just fishing,” said Alexis Brunhofer, 21, from

Colorado. “While it is exciting and exhilarating to pull in a big, struggling fish, those moments when there’s nothing on your line can be just as powerful. Out there on the water, immersed in the creation, it is impossible not to feel God’s presence all around you. Every direction holds meaning and beauty. With the addition of forming close relationships with the other participants and staff, Ocean Challenge marries the physicality of fishing with an internal voyage – bringing us closer to one another and to Heavenly Father.”



Another participant, Hyung Tong Guerra, 19, from New York said, “Ocean Challenge so far has provided a physically, mentally and spiritually challenging environment. Now I know why it is called Ocean Challenge. All three aspects were tested within the first week of arriving in Kodiak... From early prayer to late-night reflection I feel like I’ve grown as a person and as a Blessed Child. The true essence of the program cannot be described in words, only felt through experience.”



Ocean Challenge in Kodiak remains a strong, character-education program for Unificationists with deliberate focus on True Father’s heart and vision for the Ocean Providence, Divine Principle study, guest speakers and time for sharing and reflection. Dr. Michael Balcomb, president of the FFWPU, observed, “Training our youth in this core National Ocean Challenge Program, we hope that it will inspire the creation of similar Ocean Challenge programs internationally which will encompass the same spirit and heart for anyone to partake in.”

“I decided not to be afraid, no matter how strong the waves were. I let the waves carry me. I made myself one with the boat, and we rose with the waves. Once I started doing that, my heart was never shaken, no matter what kind of waves I came up against. The ocean has been such a wonderful teacher for me in my life that I created the Ocean Challenge program to give young people the leadership training the ocean provides.” Rev. Sun Myung Moon

View more photos on the National Ocean Challenge’s Facebook page [on.fb.me/14CkEjf](https://www.facebook.com/14CkEjf).