

High School Association for the Research of Principles at a Public High School

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First one day HARP retreat in Los Angeles, May 14, 2016.

When I got to college, I was pretty sure about who I was and where I wanted to go. Of course, I expanded upon those ideas throughout my college years but I had a basic foundation.

However, I realized that that was not the case for most of my fellow classmates and peers who I grew up with in school. My peers and I had similar experiences growing up so at the time I didn't understand why they were struggling so much with their identity.

I started working with CARP LA in the fall of 2015. Throughout my time in CARP, I watched college students, with only a vague understanding of who they were and what they stood for, become re-assured of their value and committed in faith, and I thought to myself, *"Does this process have to begin in college?"*



High School participants bond through sports during the retreat.

A Strong Foundation

High schools have an increasing number of teenagers reporting symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as a rising incidence of teenage pregnancy and drug use. This is the environment that is supposed to prepare them for adulthood?...uh oh.

In high school, I mostly kept to myself and took it upon myself to study and apply the Unification Principles my parents shared with me. It helped me stay grounded and connected to my parents' love.

Counter to what high school culture provided, these Principles are what gave me a strong foundation for college and sense of self. When reflecting on the status of my peers, I realized these Principles could have made a difference for them, too.



Sharing Unification Principles to high school participants

So, I started staffing a series of retreats for high schoolers in May of 2016, as a project under CARP, to raise high school students to become global leaders. One theme for this age group was abstinence as a way to develop ourselves and maintain the purity of our youth. This was a way to strengthen our personal relationships with God, our parents, ourselves, and build healthy relationships.

The series was later named HARP, the High School Association for the Research of Principles, and was to become the precursor to CARP.



HARP AHS members (L to R): E. Tengan, M. Kotani, K. Hiraki, J. Fu, N. Kotani, M. Shigeta, Y. Takagi, H. Shigeta

Campus-Bound

As of Thursday, September 14, 2017, HARP has been officially established at Alhambra High School

(AHS) as part of the Los Angeles regional CARP hub.

The two students who are spearheading this club, N. Kotani (aged 17) and K. Hiraki (aged 14), went through the HARP retreat series.

“Seeing CARP, they invest a lot, but I was wondering what I could offer [as a high school student].” – K. Hiraki

Both N. and K. are motivated to reach out to their peers about the Unification Principle. They want to prepare students to start reflecting on these important matters so they are better prepared for college and CARP.



(L to R) K. Hiraki and N. Kotani learning from CARP members at Pasadena City College (PCC)

Creating a Culture of Heart in High School

Along with collaborating with CARP, HARP AHS plans to host their own weekly meetings and become a positive influence on campus by being a part of the campus culture and events, like open house.

*“HARP is about the **research** of principles; we want to know the reason behind it. During meetings, we are going to focus on discussion.” – N. Kotani*

Finding an advisor and the required ten students proved to be a challenge for the club’s forerunners. Naomi and Kayun gathered seven others to become the school’s first HARP members.

The nine of them went out to look both for an advisor and the final required member. They pitched their club as a faith-based club focused on the idea of purity. However, they were rejected by many teachers before finally finding one.



(L to R) N. Kotani and K. Hiraki learn how to share Unification Principles

Where There is a Will, There is a Way

Despite the struggle, the HARP members weren't shaken.

“Since everyone's a child of God, by keeping our purity and properly learning God's principles, that's the best way for God to claim us as His children. Keeping purity is the process. People get caught in false relationships. It's not real. If you don't feel value within yourself, it will affect all of your other relationships.” – K. Hiraki

They held their first meeting on Friday, September 15 during their lunch hour.

As pioneers in uncharted waters, they're going to come against many challenges. With support and guidance from their big brothers and sisters in CARP, HARP members will be able to learn and grow from their experiences and get a jump start on making a difference around them.