

## I Left My Heart Behind in Midwest CARP

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### Road trip!

From October 29th to November 4th, Jinil Fleischman and myself took a tour to four different CARP chapters in the Midwest. Our intention was to see the chapters and campuses firsthand, join activities, meet members and faculty advisors, and provide any support needed.

We started in Columbus, Ohio, and then drove to Indianapolis, Indiana, then to Grand Rapids, Michigan with a brief stop in Benton Harbor, and finally ended in Chicago, Illinois.

The trip was a deep experience. We gained new insights into what CARP is doing really well in the Midwest and how better to support them. We also started drafting new ideas for new programs and resources to create to fit those needs.

### Columbus



We started in Columbus and met up with National CARP President, Teresa Rischl. After a day of connecting and strategizing with our amazing President, we enjoyed dinner with several local Ohio State University (OSU) students on October 28th.

CARP as a national organization aims to support all college students whether or not they are officially

CARP members. One of CARP's missions is to develop students into global citizens and to provide the tools necessary to be successful both during and after college.

We had a very productive talk with the OSU students. We asked in what areas they would like support in and got great feedback about how CARP can support students who are not CARP members.

As students isolated from an active chapter, they wanted to feel that they are supported in their internal growth, that they were a part of a greater purpose, and that what they were doing on campus was also fulfilling larger goals.

Before parting, the staff brainstormed some concrete programs together with them to address those points.

Indianapolis

After leaving Columbus on October 29th, Jinil and I traveled to Indianapolis to visit the Indiana University, Purdue University in Indiana (IUPUI) CARP chapter.



*Y. Iwamoto (front) takes a selfie during discussion.*

CARP IUPUI has their meetings on Tuesdays from 6PM to 7PM. Jinil and I arrived on campus around 4:30PM, so we joined CARP IUPUI President, Y. Iwamoto, and Vice President, A. Callahan, in reaching out to people on campus to invite them to the CARP meeting before it started.



*CARP IUPUI talks begins their meetings with snacks and an icebreaker.*

While in the process of becoming registered, CARP IUPUI meets weekly in their cafeteria. That week,



they talked about the conscience and discussed if people are intrinsically good. Referencing scriptures from different faiths and their own experiences, the group had a very meaningful discussion.



*Smile! Group photo at the end. Myself (middle) and Jinil (back right) enjoyed being a part of their meeting.*

After an awesome meeting, we enjoyed dinner with the core team at a local Japanese restaurant where two of them work. Over delicious sushi rolls and tempura ice cream, we talked about what's next for CARP IUPUI and how we can support and stay in contact.



*Yum sushi!*



More than what we could offer, Jinil and I felt that the Indy team and Indiana have such a warm heart and spirit. We could not be happier travelling through and brainstorming what's next for CARP IUPUI.

### Grand Rapids



*CARP Grand Rapids is fully decked out with the National CARP gear.*

We arrived on Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) campus on October 31st. On GRCC campus, they have screens advertising their upcoming events and club activities. The first thing we noticed was that CARP was on those screens!



*Jinil and I meet the GRCC members before the meeting.*

We joined CARP GRCC President, J. Kisile, outside the cafeteria to help him table. Also joining us were his sisters, B. and F. Kisile. With a fully decked out CARP table right outside the cafeteria and next to the

elevators, students had to stop and say hi.



*Dr. Barton (left) and Core Member, S. (right), have a great time at CARP meetings.*

CARP GRCC Advisor, Dr. Stephen Barton, also joined the table. It became clear immediately that the Kisile family and Uncle Steve (as he prefers to be called) are the source of CARP GRCC's love and energy. They yelled out hi to students and talked to them like family, taking a genuine interest in their hobbies and majors, and inviting them to the CARP meeting after.

According to Josue, he tables twice a week every week and gets to know his campus very well. He takes time to get to know the students and faculty around campus between classes. It was amazing to see how many friends he makes just by getting from one building to another. He reaches out to anyone he sees, including the custodians and various staff members on campus.



*Jinil gives a presentation on the vision of CARP to CARP GRCC core members.*

Before that week's meeting at 5 PM, Jinil and I had an opportunity to meet with the core team and talk about the vision of CARP. We shared some best practices around the nation and about what kind of things CARP GRCC would like to see happen on their campus.





*J. (front) leads the weekly meeting.*

The club meeting started at 5PM. That week's topic was about materialism and a purpose filled life. Everyone shared their perspective, including Uncle Steve, and reflected about what would make their life the most fulfilling. Afterwards, we all went to dinner and talked more about the future of CARP Grand Rapids.



*Dinner with the GRCC crew!*

One incredible trait about Grand Rapids CARP is its family atmosphere. In discussion, they had created a space where anyone was free to share their opinions without fear or hesitation. Even when differing opinions were presented, no one felt attacked or judged. It was a sharing of love. This familial atmosphere



was shared freely on campus and testified to the power of CARP.

### **Benton Harbor**



The campsite overlooks a little lake where ducks play.

After going from place to place, we took a day off on November 1st at a campsite in Benton Harbor. Jinil took time to catch up on work, and I spent time with the resident ducks and cat.

### **Chicago**

Although our original plan was to meet with CARP Chicago on November 2nd, we ended up meeting them November 4th for dinner for classic Chicago deep dish pizza.



*The CARP Chicago crew smiles before the pizza arrives.*

Among their core members were supporters and CARP mentor, Helena Morena. Teresa also re-joined us in Chicago. We spent time getting to know the CARP team and hearing what has been going on in Chicago.

Their chapter is located at Harper Community College and has weekly meeting on campus on Tuesdays as well as an off-campus evening program on Fridays.

For CARP Chicago as well, we talked about the larger vision and mission of CARP and how CARP Chicago can uniquely fulfill that mission.

We were happy to share a filling meal with inspired individuals. All of them openly asked questions and shared their experience. We were happy to be there and support them. We promised to come back to experience their activities in the future.

### Next Steps



Going to different chapters and experiencing what they experience was eye-opening. It might be the nature of America, but each CARP chapter has a slightly unique flavor on their campuses. As a staff, we had a unique opportunity to taste every chapter and get a better feel for what kind of stew we're making.

As CARP matures another year, the National team hopes to make more effort to create unity among the various efforts from different campuses so that it is clear who we are and what we do.



The Midwest chapters all had very strong practices that could support the activities of other chapters. As a National staff, we also want to share more of these best practices and encourage our leaders to learn from the best of each other.

We are so proud of each one of these unique chapters and students. Their passion, their love, and their heart all contribute to the movement of CARP. Above all, our goal and hope is to continue developing and fostering our students and support them in their future endeavors.