

College experience, international travel, and what it means to be a global citizen

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Tell us more about your college experience.

College was daunting especially in the beginning where many times, I found myself being the only foreign face in a classroom full of Korean students. It challenged me to see myself in a new way and to open up to a new culture and way of living. I had thought that Korean students were only interested in academics and that they were almost robotic in their studying but I discovered students with passions, dreams and a drive to use their talents to make their nation proud.

Throughout my time in college, I found that the conversations I had with my friends outside of the classroom were as insightful as those within the walls of the classroom. My three closest friends on campus were non-Unificationists and that allowed me the space to learn to articulate my beliefs and thoughts on various social aspects. They respectfully listened and I gladly listened to their thoughts. Our conversations would go on for hours, and we would sometimes agree and many times disagree on certain things, but because of the trust and respect, these conversations broadened our minds and allowed us to see from a different point of view.

What was your involvement with CARP before your current role and what was your experience?

My first two years of college, I stayed at a local CARP center where students from various colleges lived together. Being away from home in a foreign country, CARP helped me feel grounded and connected.

On campus, we met up once or twice a semester. The seniors or grad students would take us out to dinner and share many stories about what CARP was like in the past.

During my college years, CARP Korea also hosted annual World CARP conventions and I would help emcee the events thanks to my knowledge of Korean, Japanese, and English. It was at one of those CARP conventions in 2013 that I first met Naokimi and Teresa from CARP America.

In 2015, I attended the Global Top Gun Workshop in Korea where I got to meet amazing people from all over the world. We made so many global connections through the workshop, it would have been a pity not to keep them going. That is why I was hired by CARP America to develop those relationships and keep the network growing.

What do you do as International Liaison? Share with us some of your work and achievements since you started.

I connect CARP America to other CARP chapters around the world. With my knowledge of several languages, I am also able to facilitate communication between CARP leaders of various nations and help to organize and host international events/workshops such as the Global Top Gun

Youth.

Since I started in 2015, I have connected with 86 countries around the world and have traveled to Europe and Asia to introduce and share our programs as well as understand how we can support each other in tangible ways.

I've also been able to support CARP Los Angeles on their [annual Japan trip](#) where we organize and host a CARP conference for students from America, Japan and Korea to share best practices and get to know each other better. It's always very rewarding to see students gain new perspectives and understandings through these experiences and connections.

I also want people to know that they are not alone. So I try to connect communities and people as much as possible. Sometimes, starting out a CARP chapter alone might be daunting but there are other people out there who have gone through the same thing from whom we can learn. And most importantly, I want people to know that there are people all around the world who have the same vision and working towards the same goals.



What do you think it means to be a global citizen?

I think a global citizen is someone who has a big heart and mind, who can embrace the world. One who uses their talents to make a contribution to the world.

True Father said, "Think of the world as your stage in setting your goal."

Start with your family, your school and your community but don't stop there.

We're lucky in America, we have the opportunity to meet many international friends without travelling very far. Get to know someone from another culture, cook them one of your favorite meals and invite them over or go out to their favorite ethnic restaurant. Experiences with people who grew up from a different background than us help us to see things in new ways. And it makes for very interesting conversations!

As a global citizen, we should be able to put our feet into the shoes of everyone around the world and try to feel and understand their perspectives.

How many countries have you been to? What is your favorite thing about traveling to new places?

17 countries so far. One of my favorite things to do is exploring local places like the market and observing the different things being sold and the way of life of the people. It's fascinating to me when I discover things that might seem very strange to us but is considered normal in those countries. It really helps to push me beyond my small thoughts.

I also like to explore and admire the various landscapes; landscape in Austria is so different from that of Indonesia. I love trying out fruits and local delicacies that I've never seen before!

I've been lucky to have local friends in most of the countries I've travelled to. They have been very patient with my curiosity and told me many stories upon request.

Traveling can also help you to feel grateful for what you have back home. I visited several places last year where I stayed at very humble homes. Some houses had only cold showers, no AC despite the sweltering heat, some rooms had cockroaches crawling up and down the walls and some places used no toilet paper. Living in America, it's easy to take things for granted. These humbling experiences helped me to be more grateful.



What advice would you give to students thinking about studying or traveling abroad?

I would highly recommend doing a home-stay (preferably with a family you know or have some connection with) even if it's just for a few days. It will help you to learn the cultures and manners of the country in a very natural way. The family can also let you know when you do something that may be seen negatively in that culture and save you from embarrassing yourself or worse, offending others.

I've seen foreign students who come to Korea to study and only hang out with other foreign friends who speak English. They end up going home without really experiencing the culture or language! One way that I made some Korean friends in the beginning was by joining a table tennis club on campus. There is nothing better than sweating it out together and having fun to make new friends. So if you get the chance, join a club on campus.

If you're going just to travel abroad, try to find out the stories behind certain landmarks or lifestyles, preferably from locals. They usually have many fun stories to share.