

Growing up I was exposed to many youth events, one of them being the TYE, Tikanga Youth Exchange in which young people across the Anglican Church all over the South Pacific Islands gather in any nominated island biennially. This event give youths whom are Maori, Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, Tuvaluan, Solomon etc, a cultural experience, perform youth ministry and most importantly praising and worshipping together. EYE 2014 was the very same, and we the youth of Hawaii were exposed to other youths from diocese all over the United States.



Figure 1, L-R: Simo, Saimon, Mounika, Nunia and Fane Lino

Nunia Ikavuka, Mounika Langi, Joshua Lino, Simo Singueo and Saimon Singueo were the representatives from St. Elizabeth who joined the Diocese of Hawaii youth, the largest number of youth members from any diocese in the nation. There was a total of 35 Dioceses that were present approximately 1,200+ youth members!! The experience was definitely grand and I had wished that my sister and I had attended it as youth members during our high school years when our father Rev. Saimone Lino had mentioned it to us back in 2010. As the Pacific Island Ministry Missioner it was his vision that Pacific Islanders be exposed to National Events, programs that

could take us places our own families may not be able to and most importantly to broaden our experiences.

As a chaperone I was blessed to be able to see my youth members experience this opportunity. Neither one of my youth members had been to Philly but neither of them were as excited as Simo and Saimon.S. whom were flying to the mainland for the very first time. The flight from Hawaii was blue however the flight from San Francisco to Pennsylvania was interesting because it was above land the whole flight through.



Figure 2: Touring Villanova University....so big!

. Upon arrival we finally reached Villanova University a private catholic university that according to Joshua.L. “...was huge, I was lost so many times in between workshops which was all over campus.”

There were many workshops that we could attend individually and with our youth, some which included the Music and a favorite the workshop about Forgiveness, that taught learning to forgive and the steps to do so especially in the most unforgiveable situation. We were very fortunate to have amazing speakers of whom were pastors from the different dioceses, they

would encourage the youth to grasp any opportunity to make a change and that they all had the potential to be a leader and a great one at that!

EYE as a whole was a great experience, Pacific Islander youth were able to develop better socializing skills, each diocese would bring souvenirs from where they were from and so our Hawaii group had aloha (hapa haole) shirts which were a popular item, macadamia chocolate etc. This act of sharing diocese/state souvenirs was fun because each youth member would have a bag full of different and interesting things! We were very well taken care of and being Pacific Islanders one of that was being well fed! Villanova University had a big cafeteria with a variety of food which was almost overwhelming for our eyes and tummy.



Figure 3: Group photo of 1,200+ Episcopal Youth at EYE '14

The whole 1,200 group were then seated in big buses that took us sightseeing in Philadelphia. Nunia .I. was amongst the most excited to see the historical sites such as the Independence Hall where she sat on Abraham Lincolns chair , ringing the Liberty Bell and passing the first bank there ever was in the whole United States. We also were able to run up the “Rocky Stairs,” that famous actor Sylvester Stallone, whom may I add is my father’s favorite actor, ran as Rocky Balboa.

Figure 4: Mounika Langi & Nunia Ikavuka with Liberty Bell.



Figure 5: Saimon Singueo & Viliami Lino posing next to Rocky Balboa's statue, posing his signature pose as Rocky Balboa

Our youth having travelled so far to Philadelphia, decided to also stay for the urban mission experience, we participated in a lot of youth ministry which included packaging food boxes for homeless families, approximately 866 boxes weighing at 30lbs each. Also we helped restore a church cemetery that was over 100 years old, lifting and fixing heavy tombstones that had collapsed over the years as well as doing yard work around the church compound as well as a senior home. The members of the church were mostly seniors and so we the youth having more energy and strength did as much we could to help the parish! Although the work was hard, we all felt a sense of pride to have helped a community.

After all our hard work was more sightseeing and an interesting one at that because we visited the Lancaster to meet and mingle with Amish Families whose lifestyle, Saimon.S. said was similar to their lifestyle back home in Chuuk, that is cooking outside in an outside kitchen and working hard manual labor with hands and skills



The experience, Saimon.S. talked about is the same lifestyle in Tonga, walking around with no shoes having a separate house for a kitchen because of the open fire.

Figure 6: Amish woman mowing lawn

It was good to see that the lifestyle we lived back at home was possible here in the United States and most importantly it was appreciated and acknowledged. As a Pacific Islander myself this brewed a sense of pride of how we used to live and continue to live in our island homes!! This lifestyle is hard and requires some major skill while not harming the environment in which we live.



Figure 7: Amish home made bread spread etc.

This trip, EYE and Urban Mission as a whole was a great experience and without a doubt my youth members loved it. Simo.S. “we enjoyed meeting people and seeing things we never see before.” They likewise our household was bustling with story after story about the experience as we were all excited to talk about the trip.

Insert picture of carwashes and fundraisers here*

On behalf of the youth members from St Elizabeth and myself I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who helped throughout the whole process. To the families and congregation members who donated recyclables to the fundraisers as well as those who attended our Saturday car washes....MAHALO!! I hope that you all understand that this led an unforgettable experience of both growth in spirit and a whole new perspective, these are the things we can't repay but will forever be grateful for.



