



# *Women's Federation for World Peace, USA*

An NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

## Women's Federation for World Peace, USA E-Newsletter

Becoming Women of Peace

May/June 2006

Dear WFWP,

Welcome to the May/June 2006 issues of WFWP, USA's E-Newsletter! I hope you are all having a pleasant, and hopefully somewhat restful, summer.

In this issue, we cover a panel discussion on the role of women as peacemakers in the 21st century in Northern California; the 10th Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East held in Geneva, Switzerland; and the moving testimony of a visit to the WFWP school in Mozambique.

Our wish is that the E-News can be a tool to connect women across the nation in support of strengthening the family, sponsoring international service projects, and promoting peace and reconciliation activities. Enjoy!

Jennifer Ang, Editor

### *WFWP, Northern California: The Role of Women as Peacemakers*

by Poppy Richie, WFWP Member,  
Northern California Chapter

Flowers are blooming, spreading their colors and scents throughout northern California neighborhoods. Their blossoms announce the new season of spring, a time of renewal and hope. Recently, in one of those neighborhoods, around one hundred women gathered to celebrate a new season of womanhood.

The purpose of the meeting on May 21st was to discuss the Role of Women as Peacemakers in the 21st Century. After it was all over, attendees went back home smiling, energized, and equipped with ideas and new friendships, as sisters of peace!



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### *WFWP, Seattle Hosts PARSA Founder*

by Bonnie Berry, UN Representative, WFWP International



PARSA (Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation)



Support for Afghanistan) was founded in 1996 by Mary MacMakin, an American who has lived and worked in Afghanistan for over 30 years. PARSA is dedicated to helping widows and members of poor families to get an education, develop the skills necessary for earning a living, and obtain rehabilitation and professional physical therapy services. Mary and PARSA's projects weathered the

difficult times of the Taliban and continues to engender new projects that help large numbers of women and girls improve their lives.

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### *10th Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East*

Speech given by Dr. Lan Young Moon,  
President, WFWP, International

A heartfelt welcome and thank you to all of you! I am delighted to see our wonderful friends and new participants, and so many observers from Japan. I understand that the Human Rights Council is convening here in this UN building at this minute. Today, on June 20th also, the UN International Day for Refugees is being commemorated.



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### *Mozambique Study Tour Report: A Visitor's Experience*



by Tomiko Nojima, Vice President, WFWP,  
USA

Mozambique is a beautiful country situated by the Indian Ocean. When I arrived in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, the rainy season was almost over. The sky was still gray and the waves of the ocean were high and rough. People lived in desolate and dark houses scattered along the greenery of the uncultivated plain.

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**10<sup>th</sup> Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East  
Building a Culture of Peace in the Family; Educating for Peace in the World**

Opening Session, June 20, 2006  
United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

***Speech given by Dr. Lan Young Moon, President, WFWP, International***

Her Excellency Senator Inam Al-Mufti, conference chairperson, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A heartfelt welcome and thank you to all of you! I am delighted to see our wonderful friends and new participants, and so many observers from Japan. I understand that the Human Rights Council is convening here in this UN building at this minute. Today, on June 20<sup>th</sup> also, the UN International Day for Refugees is being commemorated.

At such a busy time, we owe it to Mrs. Carolyn Handschin and Mrs. Hisae Kobayashi, that we are able to hold this meaningful 10<sup>th</sup> conference at the Geneva UN Headquarters during this period! We feel very blessed to have this opportunity.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we saw a definite rise in the number of women in leadership roles around the world. Last year, during this conference, we received the wonderful news that women were now allowed to vote in Kuwait. Not only in the Middle East, but in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia also, more women are becoming active decision-makers. This trend gives us a sense of hope and pride.

Starting with the newly-elected woman president of Chile, throughout the world, there are 14 women heads-of-state. There are women presidents in 5 countries: Finland, Ireland, Liberia, Philippines. Sri Lanka has had a woman president for 12 years. There are 3 women prime ministers, in Germany, New Zealand and now South Korea. We see a woman vice president in Taiwan, and Secretary Condoleezza Rice in the US, as well as a growing number of women in parliament.

In the nation of Rwanda in Africa, women comprise an amazing 49% of the Parliament. After that country suffered so horribly during its civil war, the people came to realize that the qualities of women's love, endurance and giving were needed to overcome their trauma.

Today, in some 20 countries around the world, 30% of the parliaments are composed of women. The world average of women in parliament is about 16.8%. However, our founders believe that we need to bring this average up to 50%! We still have a long way to go.

This April, WFWP held a conference in Montevideo, Uruguay, centered on women leaders, primarily from South America as well as Central and North America. The aim was to bring together women leaders and educators to discuss how to work more closely to realize peace. Some 120 women from 18 countries took part.

Starting with the current and former First Ladies of Uruguay, 1200 citizens attended a joint Rally for Peace which followed the conference, with much enthusiasm. We were able to confirm that the potential and passion of women to work for peace is tremendous in Latin America as well.

Having been exposed to dictators for a long time, Latin America also carries wounds that run very deep. It takes time for these wounds to heal, and for reconciliation and forgiveness to be instilled.

Throughout history, we have seen that oppression leads to a vicious cycle. Women are now being encouraged to reflect their innate qualities in decision-making positions.

On March 8 of this year, commemorating the International Women's Day, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke about the progress of the Millennium Development Goals. Most of these Goals are in fact related to improving the state of women and children. He stated to the effect that, because women are not in decision-making leadership positions throughout the world, the progress of these goals is very slow. At this rate, it would be impossible to realize these goals by 2015.

The time we live in requires the leadership of women. Until today, the masculine power of logic has ruled. We women must take the initiative, to spread the logic of tolerance, forgiveness and true love. All things begin when I, myself, can set the example for our children and others.

We know that education for peace begins with myself, in the family, when I can set the example for our children and others. In Asia, we used to say that "education is a scheme measured in units of 100 years." Although things have sped up considerably in modern times, education is still a long-term investment. It takes time to build a culture of peace, but gradually and steadily, it can be done.

I would like to tell you something about Korean women. Many times I have been asked how Korea could advance so rapidly, following the devastating years of the Japanese occupation and the Korean War. It is my understanding that education is the driving force behind this development, because Korean mothers were first and foremost committed to the education of their children.

You may have heard of one famous American football player, who became the Most Valuable Player (MVP) this year, in the US. His name is Hines Ward, and he is especially well-known in Korea, because he was born of a Korean mother and an African American soldier father, who served in Korea.

When Hines Ward's family returned to the US, his father left them. Because the mother had nothing and could not speak English, the father took Hines to his American grandparents, who raised him for some years. But this Korean mother could not give up her son. She worked hard, at three or four jobs, day and night, for seven years, to have him come to live with her.

At first Hines did not like his mother, who was a small Asian woman. Every morning she took him to school, but he was ashamed to let his friends see her, until one day he saw his mother's tears, which moved him. She taught him to be honest, do his best, love and care for others, think of others from their point of view. These words touched him deeply. He did his best to follow his mother's guidance. He was a good student with good character, and grew to become a top football player. Even after he achieved success and wealth, his mother continued her simple, hardworking life. This is the heart of a true mother.

I also respected my mother so much. She firmly believed that if women also did not receive education, there would be no future for them.

When I was growing up as a refugee, it was difficult to feed the family; however, my mother was determined to send us to university. I always wore the same clothes. As a young girl, I was ashamed of this. My friends felt pity for me. But I could live with this, because I understood that I could not live without education.

To be a leader is to know how to serve the people. Women have been trained in this area for a long time. Family values are naturally learned in a healthy family, as a training ground for future leaders of integrity. The role of parents and the mother in nurturing capable leaders cannot be over-emphasized.

We all know instinctively that basic human rights must be upheld, and are upset when they are ignored. There seem to be so many violations of rights throughout the world today that we wonder what we can do, and where to begin.

It starts with the training you receive in a family, then at school, then at the workplace. An altruistic mindset is not developed overnight. The parents must have that mindset, and must be educated. When going beyond one's self leads to fulfillment and joy in accomplishing good, it can be reinforced. This is one of the major elements leading to a Culture of Peace, which can also be called a "Culture of Heart."

With that thought, I close my remarks. May this 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East be a turning point, to further our actions for genuine peace!





## Mozambique Study Tour: A Visitor's Experience

March 25-April 4, 2006

*By Tomiko Nojima, Vice President, WFWP, USA*

Mozambique is a beautiful country situated by the Indian Ocean. When I arrived in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, the rainy season was almost over. The sky was still gray and the waves of the ocean were high and rough. People lived in desolate and dark houses scattered along the greenery of the uncultivated plain.

In this Mozambique Study Tour, I planned to accomplish the following:

In Beira -

1. To visit the Sun of Mozambique School.

In Maputo -

2. To have a dinner meeting with seventeen WFWP scholarship recipient students.
3. To visit Eduardo Mondlane University, where the students study.
4. To meet with two NGO leaders and observe their service project. They were Mr. and Mrs. Sabapathy Alagiah, who are members of the United Religions Initiative (URI) Global Council representing southern Africa and Mozambique, who built an elementary school; and Pastor Olivia Magaia, the first Ambassador for Peace in Mozambique, who runs an orphanage.

Project director Akiko Hozan was in Japan during my trip. Her colleague, Ms. Akiko Fukushima, welcomed me at the Maputo Airport with another Japanese volunteer. Akiko is one of the original project pioneers since 1995. She speaks fluent Portuguese. In 2006, she was stationed in Beira to supervise the Sun of Mozambique Secondary School for six months. She told me with a gentle smile that

she had left her 10-month-old baby in the care of her husband's parents, who were expecting her immediate return. She cannot go back to Japan until Akiko Hozan returns to Beira.

My first impression of Maputo was unfortunately not so good. An immigration officer asked me if he could buy some goods from America. Two custom officers took two sets of color ballpoint pens that I had brought as gifts for scholarship students. Later, I found my jewelry had been stolen from my suitcase. At a market where we bought mangos, the specialty of Mozambique, Akiko warned me to carry my handbag tightly. The package of donation books had been lost at the Johannesburg Airport, and it was delivered after I returned to America. Through this experience, I saw firsthand the effects of the tragic history of the Mozambique people, which included the 400-year colonization by Portugal, the sixteen years of civil wars after independence, and the fifteen-year communist regime. If I were a simple tourist, I would have hated Mozambique. However, during my short stay with Akiko, I learned from her that the virtue of patience was the key to surviving in Mozambique. I realized that I should not judge the Mozambique people from my own personal viewpoint and experiences.

On the morning of March 28, we visited Eduardo Mondlane University where the seventeen WFWP scholarship recipients study. At the department of technology, Deputy Dean Isabel Guiamba welcomed us. She is an exceptional career woman in her thirties. With her parents' and husband's support, she is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemical engineering in South Africa. She kindly showed us around the classrooms and the library. The library was small and had many empty bookcases, even though the Eduardo Mondlane University is the best university in Mozambique.

Suddenly, Acacia Mavenda, WFWP-San Francisco's scholarship recipient, appeared with a big smile. He is now a sophomore majoring in electric engineering. At the medical school, another scholarship student welcomed us. Both of them were handsome, humble, and stout. Akiko talked with them with a motherly care. I felt closer to them through Akiko and proud of them. I thought that, by supporting those excellent students, we were nurturing the future of Mozambique.



WFWP scholarship recipient, Acacia Mavenda



Tomiko Nojima with another WFWP scholarship recipient and Akiko Fukushima

In the afternoon, Mr. Sabo was waiting for us at the hotel. His warm smile and gentle words made me feel as if he were my old friend. He took us to his project site on the outskirts of Maputo. He built an elementary school two years ago for children who had been left no education. I only met the teachers, since the school day was over and the children had already left school. The teachers were young and teaching as volunteers. The school had four classrooms, a teacher's room, and a small playground. During our tour, Mr. Sabo told me about his future plans.

I came to know Mr. Sabo through the URI network. I had sent him an e-mail, and he had kindly responded to me. He is a member of the URI Global Council representing Mozambique and Africa. Being a devoted Baha'i follower, he moved from India to Mozambique thirty years ago to start a Baha'i faith group in Mozambique. Although he is Indian, he became an eminent leader of interfaith movements in Maputo. His wife practices homeostatic medicine. She regularly goes to the villages in the countryside to give free medical examinations. I was deeply moved by this Baha'i family. They proved the power of faith through their lifelong devotion to humanity. I expect to meet Mr. Sabo again in May. He is coming to San Francisco to attend the URI Global Council meeting.

The dinner meeting began at 6 pm, and the seventeen WFWP scholarship recipient students were invited. When we arrived at the restaurant, to my surprise, the students were already there. Akiko told me that they were very happy to have a good dinner with us, since they ate only poor food. I presented each of them a set of colored ballpoint pens as a gift from America. Over dinner, I asked them about the greatest difficulty for them in their academics. They answered unanimously, "a shortage of books." They had to make copies of books of the subjects they studied. All allowance was used to make copies, which were very expensive. Surprising enough, Akiko knew every student's name and family background. She looked very beautiful when she talked with them with a bright smile. All of them are the graduates of the Sun of Mozambique High School. It was clear that Project Director Akiko Hozan carefully chose those students who possessed excellent grades as well as good character to be the WFWP scholarship recipients. In addition, she interviewed each family to determine whether the parents of each scholarship recipient would use the money for their child's educational expenses. Due to extreme poverty, some ignorant parents tended to use the scholarship fund for their living expenses.

The next morning, March 29, Pastor Olivia picked us up at the hotel to take us to her orphanage. She is the first Ambassador for Peace in Mozambique. She is a vigorous activist working for the women's agenda. She built the orphanage on an uncultivated plain outside of Maputo. When we visited the site, a



woman was cooking bean soup with a huge pan. Every morning they feed a bowl of soup to the children who usually come to school with an empty stomach. She runs a beauty salon and uses the income to operate the orphanage.



Pastor Olivia with orphans

According to Pastor Olivia, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Sabapathy Alagiah, the number of orphans from parents with AIDS has been rapidly increasing. An estimated 16-35 % of the people of Mozambique are infected with the AIDS virus. Due to ignorance, poverty, and a loose sense of morality, it seems impossible for African people to stop or reduce the pandemic. In addition, the government has been incapable of handling this serious social problem.

On the afternoon of March 29, we flew to Beira where the Sun of Mozambique School is situated. Big red flowers of hibiscus welcomed me in front of the school. The school is surrounded by a lot of trees and flowers like a garden in the midst of a desolate plain. The school is meticulously clean and cared for by good hands. I immediately felt at home and came to understand how dearly the volunteers of WFWP-Japan had been nurturing the school for the past eleven years. At the bookstore, corn bread was sold at a cheap price so that it could fill the stomachs of hungry students who came to school without breakfast. Some of students walk for one and a half hours to get to school every morning, in order to save the money it would take to ride a bus. Many wooden benches are situated in the shade of trees, where students take breaks between classes.

An English teacher invited me to observe his high school class. He explained the content of the textbook with vivid gestures like an actor. The class was filled with laughter. On the page of the textbook, a sport commentator talked about the African Nations Soccer final game in 1996. He impressively described President Nelson Mandela who started an African dance on a platform of dignitaries out of his joy for the victory of his South African team. All the spectators danced with him. I almost burst into tears thinking of the South African people who finally won independence.



Class of students

During the class, every textbook was shared by two students, and at the end of class, the teacher collected them. Students wrote down the content that they learned in their notebooks, as much as possible. Many studied at the library until the school closed. Middle school students study from 7 am to 12 pm and high school students use the classrooms from 12 pm to 6 pm.

I conducted a short interview with the principal, who had been working there for 10 years. He told me that there was no school as beautiful as this school except for Catholic schools. He also said that the teachers worked hard, and many students studied well to pass the unified graduation examination.

Currently, the Sun of Mozambique Secondary School has a total 39 young teachers, 636 students and 14 workers. Since the teachers receive payment based on how many hours they teach, most of them, as well as the principal, have teaching jobs at two to three different schools.

Through the Mozambique Study Tour, I became convinced more firmly than ever that education for young Africans is the most important and most crucial key to rebuilding the nation. They definitely need our support in order to overcome poverty and ignorance. Above of all, the pandemic of AIDS has been destroying families and the society. One of every three adults is infected with HIV. Only educated young people will survive and be able to build a healthy family and community.

What kind of education do young African people need? They want to learn practical skills so that they can make money. However, I felt that it would be not enough for these young elites. When I questioned Acacio Mavenda about what he wanted to do after graduating from university, he answered with a small voice that he would be an electrician. His answer somehow disappointed me. Acacia seems to me to have little sense of responsibility for his country and people. He did not show any concern about the serious social issues Mozambique faces today. It will be, perhaps, the next task for the Japanese project director to cultivate a big heart for leadership in the scholarship recipients. We truly hope that our scholarship recipient students will become leaders of the nation in the future.



Symbol of Mozambique



## WFWP, Northern California: The Role of Women as Peacemakers

*By Poppy Richie*

Flowers are blooming, spreading their colors and scents throughout northern California neighborhoods. Their blossoms announce the new season of spring, a time of renewal and hope. Recently, in one of those neighborhoods, around one hundred women gathered to celebrate a new season of womanhood. The purpose of the meeting on May 21st was to discuss the Role of Women as Peacemakers in the 21st Century. After it was all over, attendees went back home smiling, energized, and equipped with ideas and new friendships, as sisters of peace!

Women feel the need to do something about the conflicts and suffering in our world, but sometimes do not know what to do, or where to start. Females throughout history have cultivated hearts of compassion and love in the traditional roles as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. The time has come for women to use those talents for a larger purpose. But first, women need to recognize that this is their particular strength, and that these abilities are desperately needed in our world. The purpose of the meeting was to offer stimulation for those who are already doing something, and for those who are looking to find some way to contribute.

A panel of four women, from four different countries and four different religions, was the motivational force of the gathering. These panelists took turns telling their personal stories about how they have used their natural gifts of compassion and love to make significant contributions towards a world of peace. Each panelist spoke for 10 minutes.

The first person to share was Mrs. Eva Konigsberg. Her stated mission is to help women increase their understanding of money, manage their resources, and fulfill their dreams. In her peace work, she has traveled to Israel twice, and supported various organizations doing grassroots interfaith dialogue there. She is also a teacher of Jewish meditation practices, and has served as an interfaith life coach. Mrs.

Konigsberg shared about her participation in a “Peace Tent” in Israel, which is an actual physical tent that Moslem and Jewish women enter to socialize together. She talked about the importance of getting together for a “Peace Day”, a day during which participants do not talk at all, but meditate on peace. Finally, she reminded us of a familiar story about a person who tossed stranded starfish back into the sea, one at a time. Even though an individual’s efforts do not seem to yield a significant result, at least some people’s lives are benefited. The point is that we all make some effort and that is worthwhile.

Mrs. Konigsberg was followed by Dr. Katrin Michael. Dr. Michael was born in Kirkuk, Iraq, and is a Christian. She received her Doctorate in Geology in Baku, Azerbaijan. She joined the Kurdish Army of Northern Iraq, and worked underground there as a freedom fighter. Her family suffered great losses under Saddam’s regime. She has worked in the U.S. to be a voice for women’s issues, especially for women in Iraq. Currently Dr. Michael is busy writing articles in Arabic, covering women’s issues, and is published in twelve newspapers, as well as various websites both inside and outside Iraq. Dr. Michael shared about a village in Northern Iraq where people of four different religions live. She made a point, that nursing babies in that village do not ask what religion the woman is who is providing the milk! The audience was shocked to hear that there are presently eight million widows in Iraq. She emphasized the need to dialogue for peace, to learn to absorb hate and anger, and to find open-minded religious leaders who will work together. Dr. Michael would like to develop a project to sponsor widows and orphans in Iraq. She would also like to support a group of American Jewish doctors who are treating child war victims from Iraq, in the U.S. She feels that there is a great need for cultural exchange organizations between Iraq and the U.S.

The next panelist was Mrs. Prabha Duneja. She was born in India, and has led a life of devotion to Lord Krishna. She spends much of her time organizing workshops and discourses on Geeta and Vedic Philosophy. One of her main projects is to financially support an orphanage in India. She is also an author of numerous religious articles and books. The audience learned that India as a nation seeks to give the message of peace, and that it is a country that has never attacked another country. Her message can be summarized in a quote, “The whole society is held together by the peaceful woman.” Mrs. Duneja encouraged all women to attend to self-care, to learn to maintain and nourish a peaceful heart. As mothers bring this element of peace into their families, it spreads through family members into the community. She acknowledged that the solution is as simple as that, and that it is an easy place to start.

The final speaker was Mrs. Fawzia Etemadi, who was born in Kabul, Afghanistan. She has been working tirelessly to inform others of the plight of Afghan women, both there and in the United States. Most remarkably, she has been an official voice for women to the Afghan government, to insure that human rights are defended in Afghanistan. She currently serves in the U.S., as an immigration officer in the Department of Homeland Security, the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the Office of International Affairs. Mrs. Etemadi told us a story to illustrate how families and children in her country are most desperate to get an education. “What do they want most of all, do you think?” she asked us. Then she told us that children in Afghanistan will search everywhere for old cigarette cartons. Why? They do this so they can make notebooks, so they can do schoolwork on the cardboard. The need for education is the biggest area of concern in Afghanistan right now, she feels.

The uniqueness of this panel was their diversity. Because presenters of various backgrounds sat in this panel together, the audience could draw the conclusion that religious and national differences do not really matter when it comes to working for peace. We all have common concerns that are greater than



those differences.

The natural follow-up to such a wonderful panel was the Bridge of Peace Ceremony. As a choir sang “Let There Be Peace on Earth” women crossed the Bridge, bowed to one another, hugged in the middle, and held hands descending from the stage. They proceeded to a table to sign an agreement to become “sisters for peace”, and to exchange personal information so they could network together for peace. Each pair was comprised of women who had differences: different nationalities, religions, or races. The common element was the desire to work together for peace.

The feminine virtues of compassion, forgiveness, and love spoke loudly and clearly on May 21st during the gathering. Those voices will be heard in the future projects which were given birth to at this conference. Plans to follow through on some of the ideas that were presented are already being carried out.

The role of women of faith as peacemakers is crucial in our world today, and thanks to the exemplary work of our panelists, and Women’s Federation for World Peace who sponsored this event and so many other events worldwide, the inspiration is being made available to a critical mass who are determined to make a difference, one starfish at a time!



## **WFWP, Seattle Hosts PARSA Founder, Mary MacMakin**

*By Bonnie Berry, UN Representative, WFWP, International*

PARSA (Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Support for Afghanistan) was founded in 1996 by Mary MacMakin, an American who has lived and worked in Afghanistan for over 30 years. PARSA is dedicated to helping widows and members of poor families to get an education, develop the skills necessary for earning a living, and obtain rehabilitation and professional physical therapy services. Mary and PARSA's projects weathered the difficult times of the Taliban and continues to engender new projects that help large numbers of women and girls improve their lives. Current projects of PARSA include: Literacy and Accelerated Learning in Paghman, an adult literacy program, Handicraft Development and Gift Shop, Widow's Garden, and Physiotherapy Clinic among others.

The WFWP, Northwest chapter came to know Mary MacMakin and her work in late 1997, before the organized program that WFWP, USA now has for U.S. chapters to support WFWP, Japan's overseas projects. Bonnie Berry, who was the WFWP, Northwest Regional Chairwoman at that time, believed strongly and passionately in the importance of American women learning about and supporting women and children in developing nations. She began searching for a project or nongovernmental organization that met the following characteristics: the organization has projects are devoted to economic development of poor women and families in a developing nation, has non-profit status in the US, has low administrative overhead with maximum funds going to benefit the served people, has clear, open communication system with donors, as well as a clear method for channeling resources into the overseas projects. Due to the power of networking, Bonnie soon met Theresa Molyneux, a former aid worker in Central Asia and friend to PARSA who was looking for a way to organize funding support for PARSA. It turned out that PARSA met all the characteristics.

As you may remember, 1997 was a time when the Taliban reigned in Afghanistan and the economic situation was devastating, particularly for widows as they were not allowed out without a male escort. Women were not allowed to pursue professional life openly. Girls were not allowed to attend schools. Mary was doing her best to provide livelihood to as many people as possible through providing seeds for cottage gardens, providing chickens so families could sell eggs, setting up wool spinning and knitting projects or rug hooking, anything that would give these desperate families at least a small income stream. Mary also set up secret home schools for girls in people's homes so they could continue their

education, as well as provide income for the teachers. Of course everyone had to be very careful to keep the schools from being discovered by the Taliban or those participating would have been punished harshly. It was a privilege for the WFWP, Northwest chapter to work on raising awareness about the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, as well as raise funds for PARSA. Our first event to raise funds for PARSA was in spring of 1998 when we organized a dinner party at the Kabul Restaurant in Seattle. Kabul's owner, Wali Khairzada generously discounted a delicious Afghan meal and all proceeds, approximately \$600, were donated to PARSA. This began the WFWP, Northwest chapter's friendship with PARSA and Mary MacMakin.

Since that time, WFWP, Seattle has had the good fortune to have Mary visit Seattle on a number of occasions. This April, Mary returned once again to Seattle to update the community about the situation in Afghanistan and new developments for PARSA. Bonnie Berry coordinated Mary's schedule during her visit and hosted Mary in her home while she was here. Once again, a dinner party was held at the Kabul Restaurant. An interview with the Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper was held. Mary also met with WFWP friend, humanitarian Betty Tisdale, who has been giving substantial support to PARSA each year through her foundation, HALO, since she met Mary at a WFWP event four years ago. The Washington State Chairwoman of WFWP, Patricia Couweleers agreed to have WFWP sponsor Mary's speaking event at Seattle Pacific University's Otto Miller Hall on April 28, 2006. A crowd of fifty people attended the event.

Mary opened her talk by briefing the audience about recent developments in Afghanistan. She informed us that particularly in Kabul, construction of high-rise office buildings has been rapid and traffic and pollution is quite a challenge but people are enjoying their newly regained freedoms. Mary informed us that a recent Wall Street Journal article about plentiful business opportunities in Kabul was accurate. She expressed concern that in the rush to develop the economy, that civility, quality of life and cultural heritage must still be nurtured and protected. She particularly stressed the importance of the U.S. and NATO presence in Afghanistan as a stabilizing factor. She indicated that if these troops were not present, things would quickly deteriorate into infighting between all the warlords who are still present and jockeying for power. Mary downplayed reports of violence as being much more isolated than one might think because the U.S. press seems to emphasize these crises. Although the situation is relatively stable in Kabul, the rural areas still struggle with severe poverty, illiteracy and the influence of religious conservatism still present among many families and communities, making the predicament of women and girls still very challenging. Mary showed a DVD of a new project founded under the umbrella of PARSA, a school for disabled children. She gave the good news that the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) was committed to taking over the funding of PARSA's physiotherapy clinic. Mary also announced her "retirement" as director of PARSA, as she had been turning over operations in Kabul to Marnie Gustafson. In her "retirement" at 78 years old, Mary will travel to Afghanistan "only" three times a year for extended visits, direct the rug hooking project in Panjao (rural Northern Afghanistan) and act as advisor overall. Following Mary's presentation, everyone had an opportunity to visit with one another, ask questions of Mary and peruse the handicrafts that Mary had brought, including hand-woven silk scarves, hand-embroidered rayon shirts and blouses, handmade purses, cosmetic bags, dolls and hats. WFWP raised \$1200 for PARSA at this event through donations.

Bonnie Berry has also been corresponding with the president of WFWP, Afghanistan, Marilyn Angelucci, who had moved to Kabul last December. Bonnie had been hoping that Marilyn could meet Mary and perhaps partner with PARSA in some way. Marilyn did visit PARSA early this year and had a

very wonderful meeting with PARSA operations director, Marnie Gustafson. In March, Marilyn hosted a group of WFWP, Japan volunteers when they visited Kabul in search of aid projects to fund. Marilyn arranged for the volunteers to meet Marnie and Mary as well as tour PARSA, particularly the widows' garden where vegetables and fruits are grown. The women also can their produce and make chutneys to be sold at market. Bonnie continues to hold on to the vision that WFWP can further collaborate with the good work of PARSA in Afghanistan.