

# WFWP, USA E-Newsletter

Becoming Women of Peace

May/June 2005

Dear WFWP,

We hope you take a moment to look at our latest E-Newsletter, which covers a range of topics from our UN Forum last March, to a Bridge of Peace ceremony on Capitol Hill, to our current Women's Middle East Peace Initiative Signature Campaign. Enjoy!

Jennifer Ang, Editor

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## *God's Day Family Celebration*



by David Eaton,  
Director of the  
New York City Symphony

The Women's Federation for World Peace, USA and the New York City Symphony presented a special True God's Day Family Celebration held in the Grand Ballroom of the Manhattan Center on January 1, 2005. The concept of renewing the tradition of celebrating our church's high holy days in a grand manner was

the heart of the motivation for producing the event.

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## *Celebrating International Women's Day in DC*

by Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA

In commemoration of International Women's Day, WFWP, USA and IIFWP co-hosted an afternoon tea, entitled "Women Creating Lasting Peace", on March 8, 2005, at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, DC. Keynote speakers included Dr. Katrin Michael, an Iraqi woman leader who met with President Bush last April, and Ms. Carole Brookins, Former US Executive Director to the World Bank, who was appointed to that position by President Bush.



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## *Global Perspectives to End Racial Discrimination, a UN forum*



by Carrie Shuckerow, WFWP, USA Intern

In the true spirit of the United Nations, women-and men-diverse in their religion, race and politics came together on March 21 to attend Global Perspectives to End



Racial Discrimination. Colorful in both garb and opinion, the hundreds of forum participants rose together to cross the "Bridge of Peace" and declare...

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### *International Year of Microcredit: New Strategic Partnerships*

by Jennifer Ang, Administrative Director of WFWP, USA

On January 27, 2005, the Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations (DPI/NGO) Section held their weekly briefing and panel discussion entitled International Year of Microcredit: New Strategic Partnerships. The Panel consisted of Peter Kooi, Director of the Special Unit for Microfinance, United Nations Capital...



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### *Declaration for Peace Signature Campaign*

by Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA



The WFWPI campaign to collect one million signatures for the Women's Middle East Peace Initiative's Declaration for Peace, is gaining momentum, having recently completed a fifty-day period of focus, from May 1 - June 20, 2005. WFWP members and friends from around the world worked hard to advance this campaign.

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**True God's Day Family Celebration  
Manhattan Center, New York, NY  
January 1, 2005**

By David Eaton, Director of the New York City Symphony

The Women's Federation for World Peace, USA (WFWP) and the New York City Symphony presented a special True God's Day Family Celebration\* held in the Grand Ballroom of the Manhattan Center on January 1, 2005. The concept of renewing the tradition of celebrating the first day of the year with God as the center of our festivities was the heart of the motivation for producing the event.

The program, organized as a benefit for both WFWP and the New York City Symphony, highlighted several talented young men and women performers including Jena Eisenberg (CA), Kia Victoria (DC), The United Family of Strings (GA), Misako Sato (NJ), Chris Alan and Aurelia Derflinger (NJ) as well as Culture Machine producer Diego Costa and newly commissioned Ambassador for Peace, Laleh.





Music on the program included Chris Alan and Laleh performing “On Common Ground” which was the featured song at the Washington Times Foundation Breakfast Summit on December 13, 2004 and Jena Eisenberg’s “In God’s Eyes,” an award-winning song in the 2004 IIFWP Peace Song Writing Contest CD.

The finale of the program was the WFWP Bridge of Peace Ceremony in which dozens of pairs and families crossed the bridge in the spirit of love and peace.

Door prizes included an Xbox, a Mini Ipod and a home theater sound system.

The sponsoring organizations donated a part of the ticket proceeds and the concession receipts to the Tsunami disaster relief effort.

WFWP is producing a DVD of the event and it is the hope of WFWP and the NYC Symphony to continue the tradition of presenting cultural events on special holidays with an emphasis on young adult performers.

\* True God's Day denotes the tradition of beginning the first day of the year as a time of renewal and dedication of the coming year as one where we are grateful towards and uplift God as our center.

(Photos by Graeme Carmichael)



**Women Creating Lasting Peace**  
**in commemoration of International Women's Day 2005**  
**March 8, 2005**

By Alexa F. Ward, President of WFWP, USA

In commemoration of International Women's Day, WFWP, USA and IIFWP co-hosted an afternoon tea, entitled "Women Creating Lasting Peace", on March 8, 2005, at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, DC. Keynote speakers included Dr. Katrin Michael, an Iraqi woman leader who met with President Bush last April, and Ms. Carole Brookins, Former US Executive Director to the World Bank, who was appointed to that position by President Bush.



Alexa Fish Ward, WFWP, USA President, and WFWPI, Vice President, and Karen Judd Smith, IIFWP Vice President, made some remarks. Caroline Betancourt, WFWP, USA Vice President, served as the master of ceremonies. Tomiko Duggan, Director of Foreign Aid and Development for the Washington, DC Region of WFWP, USA, and Susan Fefferman, Member of the Board of Directors of WFWP, USA, officiated over the Bridge of Peace Ceremony.



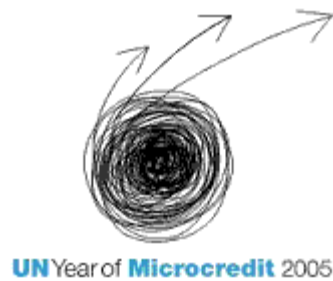


Fifty guests attended the program, including representatives from the World Bank, the Federally Employed Women, the National Education Association, the Islamic Information Center, the academic community; as well as distinguished members of the diplomatic community, including the lady ambassador of Uganda, a representative of the Iraqi embassy, wives of ambassadors from Qatar, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Chad, Malaysia, and women diplomats from Egypt, the Philippines, Mauritius, Yemen and Jordan.





The highlight of the afternoon was the Bridge of Peace Ceremony. With ongoing tensions in the Middle East, another stepping stone toward reconciliation and peace was laid through this event.



### **International Year of Microcredit: New Strategic Partnerships**

United Nations Department of Public Information - NGO Briefing - January 27, 2005

<http://www.yearofmicrocredit.org/>

by Jennifer Ang, Administrative Director of WFP, USA

"The great challenge before us is to address the constraints that exclude people from full participation in the financial sector. The International Year of Microcredit offers a pivotal opportunity for the international community to engage in a shared commitment to meet this challenge. Together, we can and must build inclusive financial sectors that help people improve their lives."

- Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General

On January 27, 2005, the Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations (DPI/NGO) Section held their weekly briefing and panel discussion entitled *International Year of Microcredit: New Strategic Partnerships*.

The Panel consisted of **Peter Kooi**, Director of the Special Unit for Microfinance, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), **Fatimata Lonfo**, Client and Recipient of a Global Microentrepreneurship Award, and **Paul Hoefffel**, Chief of the NGO Section of the UN Department of Public Information and the panel moderator.

Fatimata Lonfo fled Cote d'Ivoire in October 2001. Now the proud owner of Windyla's Boutique and Hair Braiding Salon in Staten Island, Fatimata credits her success to God, to perseverance, and to ACCION New York, a non-profit microfinance organization that provided her with her first small business loan. Her business supports her and her three children, the oldest of whom started community college this past fall. She was chosen as the winner of the New York contest of the Global Microentrepreneur Awards due



to the great economic and social impact of her business on her family and community.

According to the International Year of Microcredit's website, microcredit is "a small amount of money loaned to a client by a bank or other institution. Microcredit can be offered, often without collateral, to an individual or through group lending." This form of credit is a growing trend in financing low-income individuals in their small-scale and local enterprises, particularly women, who tend to be the poorest in developing countries.

Before the panel discussion, a video was played, showing how microcredit was helping women all over the world, particularly in underdeveloped areas such as in Africa and southeast Asia. Women used the small loans to expand their small businesses, which were usually located in a local market, and once they expanded successfully, they would use the extra revenue to pay back their loans.

Women are considered excellent targets for microcredit, because they are much more likely than men to invest the money they make from self-employment back into their families and community, by sending their children to school, and by managing their household budgets more effectively.

However, the rationale behind microcredit is very different from that of charitable income going to poor families. As Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of the UNDP, states: "Microfinance is much more than simply an income generation tool. By directly empowering poor people, particularly women, it has become one of the key driving mechanisms towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, specifically the overarching target of halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015."

The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger is one of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which the United Nations is putting special focus on until the year 2015. Another one of the goals is to promote gender equality and empower women.

Microcredit helps empower poor women by providing independent sources of income outside the home, which tends to reduce the economic dependency of the women on their husbands and thus helps enhance autonomy. It also exposes them to new sets of ideas, values and social support which should make these women more assertive of their rights.

Women's Federation for World Peace, International runs microcredit programs, including one in Bangladesh, and one in Jordan.



**Bangladesh:** 59 women, between 18 and 46 years old, received loans and started businesses such as selling sari (traditional dress), growing stock, small retail shop and tailor shop. The repayment rate is 100%. Since 1997 a total of 240 women living in slum districts received loans, applying the "Grameen Bank" system.



**Jordan:** Currently 94 women, 22 - 75 years old, have received loans from US\$150-US\$500 to establish small businesses at home such as rearing poultry, candy stores, thrift shops, grocery stores, tailor shops, accessory shops, beauty salons, etc. The repayment rate is almost 100%. While we collect the monthly repayment, we also provide management guidance.



## **Women's Federation for World Peace International**

### **Women's Middle East Peace Initiative**

### **Declaration for Peace**

by Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA

The WFWPI campaign to collect one million signatures for the Women's Middle East Peace Initiative's Declaration for Peace, is gaining momentum, having recently completed a fifty-day period of focus, from May 1 - June 20, 2005. WFWP members and friends from around the world worked hard to advance this campaign.

WFWPI's Declaration for Peace was written by a select group of WFWP leaders in the US in the winter of 2004. The Declaration was formerly introduced in Los Angeles during a program entitled, "Women as Peacemakers: Building Bridges of Peace in the Middle East". The Declaration was then carried "around the world in 28 days" by Norma Foster, National Advisor to WFWP, USA, and Ambassador for Peace, when she traveled to Switzerland for the Eighth Women's Conference on Peace in the Middle East, as well as to Israel for the Women of Peace program, attended by 526 women from 41 nations, in the spring of 2004. The campaign to collect one million signatures worldwide was launched in Vienna, Austria, during the Fifth Annual WFWPI Leaders Workshop.

As of June 20, 371,000 signatures were collected worldwide, with efforts ongoing in Asia, Europe, Middle East, North America, Oceania and South America. Participating nations include: Argentina, Albania, Australia, Austria, Canada, England, France, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, United States, and Uruguay.

In the United States, more than 63,000 signatures have been collected toward a pledge of 100,000. This declaration has touched individuals as well as organizations. Thousands of American women were pleased to join women from around the world in support of peace in the Middle East as well as in support of a greater voice for women in the peace process.

In the US, campaign strategies range from door-to-door grass roots efforts; support from entire churches and religious organizations; as well as support from within the not-for-profit community. The Pacific Los Angeles Chapter of the United Nations Association endorsed the campaign in the form of a resolution passed by the Board of Directors.

WFWP, USA members and leaders have worked tirelessly to collect signatures around the country. University campuses, public transportation, supermarkets, street fairs and festivals, businesses, churches and prayer breakfasts, friends and neighbors, the internet and mailings, have all provided opportunities and venues for advancing the campaign.

One example of this is Dora Fuhrer, a 94-year old woman living in Denver, Colorado, who took the signature campaign to heart and went around approaching women in her church and neighbors from her area, collecting signatures, despite the fact that she has difficulty walking. When she proudly handed in those signatures she collected, she took some extra sheets to collect more, saying she wasn't done yet.

WFWP, USA set a goal to collect 5,000 signatures in each of her twenty-two regions. As of June 20, four regions completed this goal: New York, North Carolina, Northern California and Southern California. Southern California has collected more than 20,000 signatures and Northern California has collected more than 10,000 signatures. On Saturday, June 26, during the "Now is God's Time" Rally at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City, more than 3,500 signatures were collected by WFWP leaders of the New York regional chapter.

This campaign aims to turn the minds and hearts of women throughout the world to focus their support on the Middle East. This campaign highlights the need for women to be more involved in all levels of the peace making process throughout the world. This declaration encourages women to use their God-given nature to advance peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.



**Global Perspectives to End Racial Discrimination**  
**Forum at the United Nations, New York City**  
**March 21, 2005**

by Carrie Shuckerow, WFWP, USA Intern

In the true spirit of the United Nations, women—and men—diverse in their religion, race and politics came together on March 21 to attend *Global Perspectives to End Racial Discrimination*. Colorful in both garb and opinion, the hundreds of forum participants rose together to cross the “Bridge of Peace” and declare ownership over a mission to “be a peacemaker and creator of harmony in my family, community and society across our nation and around the world.”

“Today I have been very impressed,” remarked a participant representing the Neo-Afro American Council of Black Republicans. “There were so many things I felt good about.”



Jointly sponsored by the NGO section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN and the Women’s Federation for World Peace (International and United States), *Global Perspectives* commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The UN created this day in 1966 to memorialize the death of 69 people who police killed during a peaceful demonstration against apartheid in Sharpeville, South Africa.

It is a common belief that racism cannot be healed, as “the wounds of racism are too deep, too awful, too painful and in reality there is no healing,” said Sheri Rueter, vice-president of Women’s Federation of World Peace, US. Instead, promoters of this concept believe that the most that can be done is to promote dialogue and the most achieved is tolerance.

“I’ll be honest with you,” said Rueter, “I really don’t like the word tolerance. Inherent in the word ‘tolerance’ is such a limited relationship...[Instead,] we need a paradigm shift and that paradigm shift is love.”

*Global Perspectives* proudly presented Donzaleigh Abernathy as the keynote speaker. Accomplished actress and author, Abernathy is the youngest daughter of Rev. David Abernathy, the famed civil rights leader and close friend to Martin Luther King, Jr. Her keynote address focused on her personal experience as a unique observer to civil rights history, speaking with fervor:

“What is wrong with a world that allows racial hatred and prejudice to persist? The greatest challenge that faces us today is to learn how to live together in peace. My father used to say, ‘We hate each other because we fear each other. We fear each other because we don’t know each other. We don’t know each other because we won’t sit down at the table together.’ When we embrace our differences, when we celebrate our diversity it makes us stronger.”



The Women’s Federation for World Peace brought together an insightful combination of panelists to the forum: Zahra Nuru, Director and Senior Advisor to the Under-Secretary and High Representative of the UN office for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states; Rev. Lonnie McLeod, pastor of the Church of the Living Hope in East Harlem, New York and adjunct professor at the New York Theological Seminary and the Unification Theological Seminary; and Suzanne Mulcahey, school psychologist and co-director of the Northern Californian chapter of the Interracial Sisterhood Project (ISP), which promotes the Bridge of Peace program. Each panelist brought a unique perspective, inspiring forum participants to return to their communities as active peacemakers.



“My first love is the youth and hearing the words of Suzanne Mulcahey was a blessing,” shared Bishop Theodosia Stevens with the Reflections of the Covenant Youth Organization. “I’m going to be working hand in hand with her to bridge the gap... [because] without the young people we don’t have anything and if we can bring peace at the level of the youth, we will have more than half the battle won.”

Bishop Stevens words resonated among the reflections of other forum participants; many of whom also believed that the most effective way to eliminate racial discrimination is through youth outreach.

“I know that the issue of humanity and the issue of people coming together to live together as one family of man and one family in the world is the ultimately important issue in our existence and in the future,” said participant Frankie Sanders. “We also talked about the future of the next generation of people respecting the identities and dignity of other human beings; and having that start when people are younger so that they do not carry on the ugly behavior of past generations.”

Two teachers from New York, who implemented a program with their students to donate funds to Uganda, took away a message: “To forgive and find peace from within.” *Global Perspectives* inspired them to bring the ISP youth forum to their school “to bring down the barriers between our youth.”

Those who attended *Global Perspectives to End Racial Discrimination* came away with many messages. Indeed, some of the most important lessons are the most obvious, such as the one imparted by Abernathy:

“We cannot all be the same. God didn’t choose to make us that way. God made every man, woman, animal, plant and species on the face of the earth different. If you have a problem with that, if you want everybody to be exactly the same, then you need to go back and take it up with God.”