



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

September/October 2005

Dear WFWP,

This issue of WFWP, USA's E-Newsletter includes articles about an interfaith Bridge of Peace ceremony on Long Island, the Women's Interfaith Circle of Service in northern California, a report on the United Nations 60th Anniversary Celebration in Los Angeles, California, and an overview of the Sixth Annual WFWP International Leaders Workshop held in Moscow in October. A more in-depth look at the Sixth Annual WFWPI Leaders Workshop will be offered in our next issue.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our E-Newsletter, and wish you all a wonderful, and hopefully somewhat peaceful, beginning to the holiday season.

Jennifer Ang, Editor

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by Donna Howell, New York Metro Chapter Chairperson

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Creating a "Women's Interfaith Circle of Service (WICS)"

by Tomiko Nojima, Vice President, WFWP, USA

One of the goals WFWP, USA committed to over the past two years was to go "one step higher" in the area of networking. Many members of WFWP, USA have been vigorously participating in the events of other NGOs. One such event was a 3-day interfaith workshop in Northern California, entitled "Healing the World", which was held in June of 2003.

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WFWP, USA and United Nations Day 2005

by Norma Foster, National Advisor, WFWP, USA

On October 23rd, the UN 60th Anniversary Public



Celebration was hosted by the Pacific-Los Angeles Chapter of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) at the Los Angeles Friendship Center. The celebration was held in recognition of the UNA-USA 2005 60th Anniversary theme, "Child Health and Survival: The Millennium Development Goals and the Most Vulnerable".

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Sixth Annual WFWP International Leaders Workshop in Moscow



by Alexa Ward, President, WFWP, USA and Jennifer Ang, Administrative Director, WFWP, USA

Women from around the world gathered for the Sixth Annual WFWP, International Leaders Workshop, hosted by WFWP, Russia in Moscow, from October 10 - 13, 2005. The workshop was held at the Planeroe retreat center, located in the countryside just outside of Moscow. The theme for the workshop was "Embracing the World with a Mother's Heart".

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Interfaith Sisterhood Ceremony

September 24, 2005

Holtsville, NY

By Donna Howell, New York Metro Chapter Chairperson

After experiencing the WFWP Interracial Sisterhood Event at the United Nations, in March of 2005, the members of the NY Metro Chapter of the WFWP decided to tackle the inter-religious divide by holding a Bridge of Peace ceremony between women of the three Abrahamic faiths - Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Since the tension between the three brother religions has been creating havoc throughout the world, the WFWP members felt that a mother's heart was needed to promote healing and reconciliation between those groups.

On September 24, 2005 at the Radisson Hotel in Holtsville, New York (Suffolk County, Long Island) the NY Metro Chapter held a Sisterhood Ceremony between Christian, Muslim and Jewish women. Close to 100 women attended from throughout the New York area. While the Bridge of Peace was the highlight of the day, the program included welcoming remarks by Alexa Fish Ward, President, WFWP, USA, speakers from each of the three religions, as well as select footage of the documentary of WFWP's "Women of Peace" program in Israel in 2004. Guests also learned of WFWP's Women's Middle East Declaration for Peace Signature Campaign, and had an opportunity to sign on as supporters.

The speakers included Sanaa Nadim, the Muslim Chaplain at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a member of the Long Island Multi-Faith Forum. Although she is a frequent speaker on Muslim issues, she was excited to be part of a project that touched people's hearts, rather than just their heads. She spoke of what a lonely path it was when she began her interfaith work many years ago, and how different the climate is today, especially after 9/11. Since then, she has been overwhelmed by requests from people of other faiths to learn about Islam, and is now training younger people to continue her work.

The Jewish speaker was Marcia Kannry, the founder of The Dialogue Project. The Dialogue Project creates discussion groups in Manhattan and the boroughs which meet once a month to help the various parties in the Middle East listen to each other's concerns. Ms. Kannry is a Jewish-American woman who had lived in Israel for six years, and whose fiancée was killed in that conflict. Rather than nurse resentment toward the Palestinians, she sought to understand their pain, and has spent most of her adult life trying to bring about reconciliation and understanding between the parties in the conflict.

The Christian speaker was a Catholic nun, Sr. Phyllis Esposito, who co-founded an interfaith program in the town of Bohemia in Suffolk County. Her project, the Oakdale-Bohemia Anti-Bias Task Force, conducts regular faith education programs between her Catholic church, a Jewish temple, and a mosque. The task force has been having interfaith discussions and education forums for several years. Sr. Phyllis spoke of her disappointment that so few churches were interested in conducting similar programs. She encouraged the participants to motivate their houses of worship to engage in this work of interfaith understanding.

The Sisterhood Ceremony itself was very moving. The Muslims and Jews lined up on one side of

the bridge with the Christians on the other. Each woman was given a pink carnation to exchange with her new “sister.” The women crossed the bridge while a CD played “You Raise Me Up,” a moving and uplifting song. The effect was magic. Many tears flowed as the women embraced. Several women reported that they were matched to a “sister” who lived in their neighborhood. Others mentioned that their “sister” reminded them of their own relatives.

One Jewish woman reported that she used to have to frisk Muslim women at the Israeli checkpoints, and that she was so happy to finally embrace a Muslim woman in friendship rather than suspicion. One Christian woman, who is married to a Turkish Muslim, received an inspiration after the Ceremony to start a coffee house to encourage young people from different faiths to get to know each other. Two Muslim women leaders, who have organized many interfaith events in their own mosque, said that they were so moved by the spirit of the event, they wanted to become WFWP members.

Towards the end of the program Gon Kafri, a young Israeli woman who is the Parent’s Circle representative in the US, gave a brief synopsis of the work of that organization. The Parent’s Circle is a bereavement organization composed of Israelis and Palestinians who have lost family members in the conflict. People who join the Parent’s Circle overcome their resentment toward the “other” and work for peace in Israel and the Palestinian territories. She said that if those with the most reason to be resentful can overcome their resentment then it is possible for everyone to do so.

This Interfaith Sisterhood Ceremony accomplished its goal of touching people’s hearts, not just their heads. In that simple embrace of one woman to another, new friends were made and new hope for peace realized. It was a reminder to all of us of the power of women working together to reach a level of heart that can break through barriers.



Sixth Annual WFWPI Leaders Workshop: Overview

October 2005

Moscow, Russia

By Alexa Ward, President, WFWP, USA
and Jennifer Ang, Administrative Director, WFWP, USA

Women from around the world gathered for the Sixth Annual WFWP, International Leaders Workshop, hosted by WFWP, Russia in Moscow, from October 10 - 13, 2005. The workshop was held at the Planeroe retreat center, located in the countryside just outside of Moscow. The theme for the workshop was “Embracing the World with a Mother’s Heart”. The first day was characterized by warm greetings and reunions among WFWP leaders from around the world. The Sixth Workshop began with an Opening Banquet on the evening of October 10. Mr. Jack Corley, Secretary General of IIFWP, welcomed the participants. Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, Director of the Northeast Continent, greeted the participants. The participants were introduced by region.

The Opening Session was moderated by Ms. Nina Izaak, WFWP, International Vice President for CIS. An official of the Moscow City Duma (Council), Ms. Natalia Oblitsova, greeted the participants graciously, and said that WFWP had more energy and warmth than other women’s organizations. Kind welcoming remarks were also given Ms. Moon Hye Seuk, Vice Director of the Northeast Continent for FFWPU and by Dr. Lan Young Moon, President of WFWP, International.



President Moon shared about developments within WFWPI, including the recent renewal of WFWP, International's general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This renewal marks the beginning of WFWPI's third four-year term with this status. She encouraged the women to continue investing in others, while keeping a sincere and altruistic heart. She shared, "There is a Korean saying "To move the heart of one person is more difficult than moving a mountain." She invited all the participants to share their personal experiences and insights during the workshop, "not only for our personal development, but also the overall advancement of WFWP."

Ms. Alexa Ward, President of WFWP, USA, spoke about the WMEPI Signature Campaign, which was initiated the year before at the workshop in Austria. She acknowledged each of the regions' efforts

and surprised all of the participants by announcing that WFWPI had collected over 10 million signatures worldwide. She shared, “I think the very language of the declaration so beautifully represents the depth and authority of the mother’s heart.”

Leaders from the WFWP regions around the world presented their reports for 2004/2005, their plans for the future, as well as analyses related to the development of their chapters in three workshop sessions. Workshop Session One was chaired by Ms. Jennifer Ang, Administrative Director of WFWP, USA. In the first presentation of Workshop Session One, Ms. Young Sun Choi, Secretary General for WFWP, ROK (Republic of Korea) reported that South Korea is focusing on a few main areas: the True Family movement, North-South unification, service, and the publication of a monthly newsletter. WFWP, ROK sponsors an ongoing forum for 21st century leaders to study the philosophy of peace. Activities within the area of Unification of North and South Korea include: the 1% Love Sharing Project; trips for women and children; support for refugees in the South; exchange visits to North Korea; and more).

Ms. Kyoko Kuramoto, WFWPI Coordinator for the Latin American Region, said that WFWP, Latin America would like to create an environment of inspiration and good communication. Through this, the Latin American region will be able to develop more. The Caribbean countries have a small membership base, but also have many capable people.



According to Ms. Jynene Helland, WFWP, International Vice President for Oceania, there is a steady increase of activities in the Pacific Island nations. In August, WFWP held the first annual

'Women's Friendship Conference for Reconciliation and Peace in the Pacific' in Koror, Palau with the support of The First Lady of Palau, Ms. Debbie Remengesau. A new chapter, WFWP, Palau, was inaugurated during the conference. Ms. Helland said there is a lot of potential for development of character education and HIV/AIDS education programs in that region, and that this will be a focus for WFWP, Oceania in 2006.

The WFWPI Secretary General for Europe, Ms. Elisabeth Riedl, chaired the session on WFWPI's work in the United Nations and was supported by a panel of fellow WFWPI UN Representatives, Ms. Delia Javanasundara from Thailand, and Ms. Mirjana Abourahal from Lebanon. Ms. Riedl concluded the first Workshop Session with a presentation entitled, "How to Work with the United Nations." She stressed that, because the UN is a huge organization, it is essential to identify a specific area in which to work. She emphasized ways in which the UN could be engaged on the grassroots level by WFWPI, such as focusing on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs cover eight specific goals-- including those related to poverty, education and gender equality. Ms. Riedl provided valuable information concerning sponsoring conferences focused on UN themes and observances. She reported that WFWP, Europe supported UNESCO's initiative "The Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of our World"; and that WFWP, Austria recently celebrated the UN's International Day of Peace.

Workshop Session Two was chaired by Ms. Susan Fefferman, Member, WFWP, USA Board of Directors. Ms. Tetsuko Kuboki, WFWP, International Vice President for Japan, reported that membership development, as well as promotion of the "Ideal Family" magazine, are the focus of WFWP activities in Japan. WFWP, Japan organizes three campaigns annually to increase membership as well as increase subscriptions to "Ideal Family." Mrs. Kuboki emphasized that, "Without action, there will be no experience and no change. Now is the time for us as women to take action." She shared her belief that now is the time for women leaders to rise up. The presentation on WFWP, Japan concluded with a video presentation that documented their many programs and service projects.





Ms. Zoe Bennett, WFPW, International Vice President for the Middle East reported that, due to the diligent work of Japanese volunteers in that region over many years, there exists a network of highly-positioned women, who come together on an annual basis for the International Conference for Peace in the Middle East. They meet and exchange ideas with women from other countries, sometimes even those from traditionally “enemy” nations. The region’s goal is for these conferences to become a forum for international grassroots projects inspired by the founder, but organized by governments and NGOs.

Concluding the second Workshop Session, Ms. Ingrid Lindemann from Germany spoke on the topic of “Feminine Qualities of Leadership”. As she announced that Germany recently elected a woman chancellor, spirited applause broke out from the audience. Her presentation illustrated women’s roles from a historical perspective, then delved into what men expected from leadership and, finally, compiled a definition of ‘feminine’, based on religious, academic, and other sources. She then facilitated group discussions on this topic, yielding thoughtful discussions among the women leaders.





On the morning of October 12, Workshop Session Three was chaired by Ms. Sunnie Kirkley van der Stok, Treasurer for WFWP, Holland. The first presentation was given by Ms. Alexa Ward, WFWP, International Vice President for North America. WFWP, USA has two main focuses: outreach to women leaders and raising up women leaders within the Unification movement. Outreach to women leaders is achieved primarily through involving women in ongoing programs: Women of Faith; Women's Middle East Peace Initiative; Benefits for the Schools of Africa; United Nations activities and NGO networking. Raising up women leaders is achieved through retreats, regional leadership teams, and an internship program. WFWP, USA is expanding its financial foundation through membership drives, national raffles, and fundraising events. She made some closing comments, including her belief that “the national chapter is most limited by the maturity and mindset of the leader. So, if I were to give you a list of the limitations of our national chapter, it is really the list of limitations and immaturity within myself.” She shared that, in order to lead a national chapter, “I have to recognize where my weaknesses are and face them and move forward in development myself, because then the chapter will naturally develop.” At the end of the presentation, Ms. Jennifer Ang, Administrative Director for WFWP, USA, shared some comments on how to involve young women in WFWP.

Ms. Nina Izaak, WFWP, International President for CIS, reported that many of the WFWP members from CIS have received the designation of "Ambassador for Peace" and have participated in international conferences in the US, Korea and Israel. WFWP, Russia has a Consultative Board, which determines the theme and direction of their monthly programs. Their programs introduce the participants to other cultures and traditions. WFWP, Russia sponsors lecture series, programs and roundtable discussions, where attention is devoted to the role of women as wives and mothers. Other initiatives include working with education professionals, especially those working with teenagers. WFWP, Russia also focuses on social projects. In March WFWP, Ekaterinburg won a third place award entitled, “Women in the Year 2005.”

Ms. Martina Coombs, WFWP, International Vice President for Europe, reported that WFWP activities in Europe are focused on the WMEPI Signature Campaign, Ambassadors for Peace, Bridge of Peace ceremonies, Interfaith Peace Meetings, Partnerships for Peace, Educational Seminars, Membership Care and funding events. WFWP contacts have been designated, "Ambassadors for Peace" in at least seven European countries. Bridge of Peace ceremonies have been held between nations with strained relations, as well as among women of different religions. Educational seminars have been sponsored on topics concerning relationships, family, and women's issues. WFWP in Europe will continue to focus on

peace education through their service projects and reconciliation activities.

Ms. Irina Shushkevich, the former First Lady of the Republic of Belarus, said a few words about the conference. She spoke briefly, "I believe that this conference is a key conference among others. Why? In Russia, we have a joke. Man is the head, but woman is the neck. So, when the neck turns, the head also turns. In fact, I think this idea is not yet correct because the wife is the heart. The name of this conference reflects this idea. Women can influence every area of society, and every level of relationship: husband, children, etc. I hope all the decisions that you make in this conference will reflect all levels of relationship and society. It is an honor for me to participate in this conference."



Ms. Delia Javanasundara, WFP, International Secretary General for Asia, reported that the WFP foundation in Asia has been developed through a scholarship program, training centers, microcredit, seminars, service programs and UN activities. Among their many projects, they have a scholarship program for needy children and women, a self-help program for students, which provides training on how to raise money for their education, a Microcredit Program, and training in the areas of computers, food processing and knitting, as well as providing many other community services to the region.

The Closing Session was chaired by Ms. Sheri Rueter, Vice President, WFP, USA. It began with discussions about possible locations for the next international workshop. WFP, Australia and WFP, Thailand offered to host the Seventh Workshop in their regions. President Moon made closing remarks. She shared that she felt so many wonderful things are happening at this time in history. "Those who are

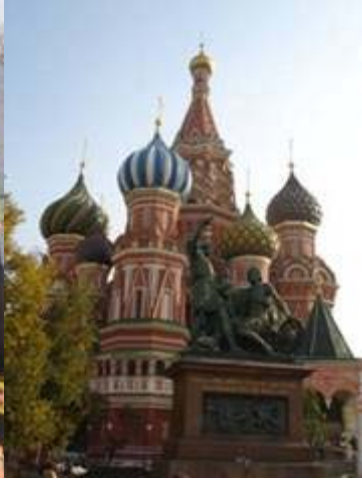
much younger than me are in a position to plan many more projects and to do much more for the providence. As we witnessed in the exchanges during our workshop, women are overflowing with love and inspiration. This can move mountains and move people. I am grateful to heaven for the opportunity to learn a lot from all of you.” She thanked Dr. and Mrs. Seuk for their gracious and generous sponsorship of the Sixth Workshop, as well as members of the workshop organizing committee, including Jack Corley, Nina Izaak, Alexa Ward, and Isa Brazil. She went on to thank staff, representatives, and even WFWP members who were not present, for their hard work. “My sincere thanks also go to all the national chapter representatives, caring for their countries as a mother would. To all members sacrificing for WFWP activities in every corner of the world, I am deeply grateful for all of your dedication and devotion. That is what moves the WFWP activities to new heights.” She urged those present to “always continue to better ourselves, our families and our communities” and also to “challenge ourselves while creating harmony among others in our unique way.”

In the evening, the participants enjoyed a beautiful and memorable evening with WFWP, as well as FFWPU members from Russia at the new Continental Headquarters and Peace Embassy in Moscow. Participants had an opportunity to watch a brief video presentation, as well as tour several exhibition rooms, that chronicled activities in that region over the past decade. Ms. Irina Shushkevich, the former First Lady of Belarus, also attended the Closing Banquet as a special guest and made remarks to the audience.

With Mr. Jack Corley serving as Master of Ceremonies, the evening was filled with quality entertainment, including traditional Russian songs and dances. WFWP leaders from each region presented a song. The atmosphere of the evening was light and joyful. Russian dancers began a traditional circle dance around the banquet hall. Workshop participants rose from their chairs to join in the dance. Ms. Mirjana Abourahal, from Lebanon, entertained the guests with a presentation of traditional "belly-dancing." At the close of the evening, everyone joined hands to sing the beautiful Russian song, “Moscow nights.”

The annual meeting of the WFWP, International Board of Directors was held on the morning of October 13. The American delegation traveled by overnight train to St. Petersburg to take in some of the history and culture of Russia. Leaders from WFWP, Japan enjoyed an evening of ballet before returning to Japan. Women leaders from South Korea toured St. Petersburg, as well as Moscow, before returning home. As the annual workshop is held in different venues around the world, WFWPI leaders have the precious opportunity to learn about the history, culture, and people of the world. Through these experiences, the goal of building one human family becomes more tangible.

The workshop was a refreshing opportunity to gain renewed determination and inspiration for the year ahead. The women gained many insights and ideas that they can bring back to their respective regions. As President Moon said in her closing remarks, WFWP leaders and members must continue to “renew ourselves” in order to cultivate within ourselves the embracing heart of a mother.





(from left: Mr. Ted Leutzinger; Ms. Norma Foster, Ms. Joan Collins Carey; City Councilmember of the 13th District of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti; Dr. Geraldine Washington, Ms. Kimiyo Anceney)

WFWP, USA and United Nations Day 2005

October 23, 2005

Los Angeles, California

by Norma Foster, National Advisor to WFWP, USA

In commemoration of United Nations Day, the Pacific Los Angeles Chapter of the United Nations Association celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations on Sunday, October 23, 2005 [officially October 24] at the Los Angeles Friendship Center. There were 150 guests in attendance, of which forty were presidents and heads of non-governmental organizations. This celebration was supported by thirty non-governmental organizations, including the Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women; Baha'i Community of Los Angeles; Friends of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program; the American Clergy Leadership Conference; NAACP Los Angeles Chapter; Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization; US Committee for UNIFEM (West Coast); US Committee for UNICEF (West Coast); Service for Peace; and the Women's Federation for World Peace.

Norma Foster, President of the Pacific Los Angeles Chapter of the UNA-USA, Ambassador for Peace, and National Advisor for WFWP, USA, opened the program with welcoming remarks. She welcomed every one to the celebration of a very historic day, the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations. She commented how appropriate it was that they had the International Children's Choir performing during the celebration, because they had been young ambassadors for peace since they were formed in

1957. Ms. Foster introduced Sheri Reuter, Vice President, WFWP, USA, who reported that more than ten million signatures have been collected worldwide for the WFWP, International's Women's Middle East Declaration for Peace. There was great applause. NGOs and attendees continued to sign the Declaration. It was announced that the signature campaign began more than one year ago, in the same venue in the City of Los Angeles, and that this effort will close on Human Rights Day, December 10, 2005. The campaign results will be presented to the United Nations, recognizing the completion, for Human Rights Day 2005. A final count and presentation will be made to the City of Los Angeles, who presented a Resolution to WFWP at the start of this campaign.

A Proclamation, acknowledging the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations, and prepared by the Mayor of Los Angeles, the Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa, was presented to Norma Foster, as well as Members of the Board of Directors of the Pacific Los Angeles Chapter of the UNA-USA, on October 25, 2005, in the Los Angeles City Hall. Board members included Ted Leutzinger with the Citizens for Global Solutions; Joan Collins Carey, Ambassador for Peace; Dr. Geraldine Washington, President, NAACP Los Angeles and Ambassador for Peace; and Kimiyo Anceney, Southern California Chapter, Women's Federation for World Peace, USA.

This presentation was broadcast on Los Angeles City Channel 35 LIVE and was replayed three times during the week.

Editor's Note: The United Nations Association and the Women's Federation for World Peace, International, are NGOs in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. The Southern California Chapter of WFWP, USA is a member of the Pacific-Los Angeles Chapter of the UNA-USA. Sheri Reuter, Vice President of WFWP, USA, is a Member of the Board of Directors of the Pacific Los Angeles Chapter of the UNA-USA. Members of WFWP, USA have joined chapters of the UNA-USA in seventeen states.



Creating a “Women’s Interfaith Circle of Service (WICS)”

United Religions Initiative (URI) and WFWP Outreach

By Tomiko Nojima, Vice President, WFWP, USA

One of the goals WFWP, USA committed to over the past two years was to go "one step higher" in the area of networking. Many members of WFWP, USA have been vigorously participating in the events of other NGOs. One such event was a 3-day interfaith workshop in Northern California, entitled "Healing the World", which was held in June of 2003. This workshop was significant in the history of interfaith movements because it was the first interfaith workshop that spanned Northern California. Major interfaith leaders gathered and shared their religious beliefs and practices. This opened up a new area in which WFWP could expand in the area of interfaith. Some religious figures in attendance were Rev. Paul Chaffee, Director of Interfaith Center at the Presidio, Rev. Brian Stein-Webber, Executive Director of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, Rita Semel, Chair of the URI Global Council and Sister Mary of the Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center. Their cooperative effort enriched and broadened the participants’ understanding of these religious traditions.

The most important discovery was a worldwide interfaith organization called the United Religions Initiative (URI), whose World Headquarters is located in San Francisco, California. The URI is a growing global community of over 220 Cooperation Circles (CCs) that are organized by those who are dedicated to interfaith peacebuilding works. Cooperation Circles must consist of more than three different religions, as well as at least seven members. The URI Charter clearly states in the guidelines that members must respect all kinds of religions and spiritual experiences and promote “enduring daily interfaith cooperation” in safe places. URI’s purpose lies in ending religiously-motivated violence and creating cultures of peace.

The Northern California Chapter of WFWP, USA has been bringing women religious and spiritual leaders together for interfaith dialogue over the past few years through WFWP's ongoing national program, entitled "Women of Faith." These Women of Faith gatherings have been attended by Hindu, Greek Orthodox, Protestant, Muslim, Unificationist as well as Native American women. These women are also service project directors, with service projects ongoing in Africa, India, Afghanistan, Palestine, the San Francisco Bay area, and the Napa Valley.

Inspired by URI, the San Francisco Chapter of WFWP, USA decided to apply for a Cooperation Circle based on the vision that the world is a village and that mankind belongs to a human family under one God. The concept for this Cooperation Circle is unique because it calls for real works and common goals, as well as for interfaith dialogue.

In March 2004, with the signatures of the eight co-founders, the "Women's Interfaith Circle of Service" submitted an application to the URI Headquarters for recognition as a new Cooperation Circle. Over the next year and a half WICS persisted through a challenging approval process, receiving approval in August of 2005.

With Ms. Kristina Seher in the position of Chairwoman, WICS members look forward to interacting with the broader interfaith community through Cooperation Circle activities. WICS members understand that involvement in interfaith movements requires a mature character, broad understanding, and a long-term vision.

For more information about the United Religions Initiative, please visit www.uri.org,

For more information about the “Women’s Interfaith Circle of Service”, please email Tomiko Nojima at tomikonojima@comcast.net