



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

November/December 2006

Dear WFWP,

Welcome to the November/December 2006 issue of WFWP, USA's E-Newsletter!

This new year marks a change for our E- Newsletter. We are welcoming Laura Hornbeck, Chairwoman of the WFWP Texas Regional Chapter, as the new editor of the E-Newsletter. Some of you may remember that Laura was the editor for the E- News before, in 2004. We are sure that she will bring welcome changes and improvements to our newsletter.

The articles in this issue of the E-Newsletter cover a variety of events, from the Seventh WFWP International Leaders Workshop in Thailand, to benefits held locally to support The Schools of Africa Project, to a Woman of Faith event discussing the position of women in Islam.

We hope that you enjoy this issue as much as we did. Best wishes for a wonderful new year!

Jennifer Ang, Assistant Editor

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Massachusetts Women of Faith Program on the Position of Women in Islam

Women Leaders Gather in Bangkok



By Donna Howell, Chair, WFWP NY Metro Chapter

WFWP leaders from across the globe gathered in Bangkok, Thailand in mid-October 2006 for more than three days of reporting, sharing and sightseeing at the Seventh Annual WFWP International Leaders Workshop.

Women's Federation for World Peace leaders came together in the Thai capital from October 15- 18 to report on programs in their regions during the past year. Delegates represented countries in all parts of the world, including Nepal, Afghanistan,

Singapore, India, Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, the United States, England, Austria, France, Russia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Taiwan, Australia, Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, and of course, Thailand.

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United Nations Day in Chicago

Margaret Figueroa, Chairwoman, WFWP Illinois Regional Chapter

Women's Federation for World Peace, International (WFWPI) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in general consultative status with the United Nations. As such, WFWP chapters around the world participate in many UN-sponsored events. United Nations Day is celebrated each year on October 24 to commemorate the date in 1945 when the UN Charter – the constitution of the United Nations – entered into force. Since Harry Truman, each president of the United States has issued an annual proclamation on United Nations Day.



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Fashion Benefit for the Schools of Africa Project



By Susan Fefferman, National Board Member, WFWP, USA and Vicki Phelps

While planning this year's benefit for the schools of Africa, members of the Washington-Metro DC chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace asked themselves, "What do fashion and world peace have in common?" They agreed on this answer: "WFWP lifts up the beauty of women within, and fashion lifts up the

beauty without." Both types of beauty are needed by women who want to take their rightful place in leading the world toward peace.

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Third Annual Benefit for the Kizinda Vocational High School in Uganda

By Debby Gullery, Chairwoman, WFWP New York Chapter

The Westchester Chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace



held its third annual benefit for the Kizinda Vocational High School in Uganda on Sunday, December 3rd. The luncheon was held at the Greentree Country Club in New Rochelle, and included various lively entertainers and a silent auction.



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Massachusetts Women of Faith Program on the Position of Women in Islam



By Margaret Brewster, Chairwoman,
WFWP Massachusetts Regional Chapter

In the summer of 2001, WFWP, USA began a program called Women of Faith, for the purpose of bringing women together from different religious backgrounds. Even before the terrorist attacks of September 11, WFWP members felt the need to create bridges among the women of diverse religious communities in this country.

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While planning this year's benefit for the schools of Africa, members of the Washington-Metro DC chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace asked themselves, "What do fashion and world peace have in common?" They agreed on this answer: "WFWP lifts up the beauty of women within, and fashion lifts up the beauty without." Both types of beauty are needed by women who want to take their rightful place in leading the world toward peace.

Thus, on Sunday, December 3rd, *Fashion for World Peace: A Benefit for the Schools of Africa* held its first annual fashion show, featuring the creations of young, trendy African and African-American designers at the Arbor Ballroom of *The Washington Times* building in DC. More than 200 people cheered and applauded as models showing casual and evening wear walked down the runway to the beat of lively music.



Susan Fefferman



A number of male and female models sported designs made from the same cloth. A tall male model clad in a turquoise Chinese silk jacket walked alongside a woman in a flowing evening gown of the same material, causing gasps of delight from the audience. Intermingled with the professional models were local WFWP members sporting native and international costumes, as well as several children who charmed the audience with their poise.



The show's producer was Natasha Bryson, director of *RedGemini PR*, a highly successful production company. She and the models donated their time and efforts to help the *Schools of Africa Project*. Washington, D.C. radio personality Alice Watts was master of ceremonies for the event, and she offered enthusiastic support for the program. Contributions included a unique website (www.fashionforworldpeace.org) where patrons could purchase both regular and "runway front row" tickets for the benefit; printing and distribution of several thousand flyers for the event; and sending out email invitation "blasts" to several large organizations' contact lists.

A silent auction was held during the event, as well. Seventy items were offered, including original works of art, international handicrafts, pottery and porcelain, jewelry, skin care products, designer handbags, gift certificates to local restaurants, and a professional photo shoot for aspiring models, all donated by WFWP members, supporters, and local patrons.



The Washington-Metro DC chapter of WFWP also sent out sponsorship packages to local businesses seeking donations at different levels in return for promoting the name of their company on the website and in the program.

One photographer who frequents fashion shows said, "This is the best fashion show I have ever seen, the spirit was amazing!"

Caroline Betancourt, Regional Chairwoman and National Vice President of WFWP, chaired the organizing committee, supported by Susan Fefferman, WFWP National Board member, and other local members. All the WFWP members worked together to obtain donations of food and drinks and silent auction items from area merchants and restaurants.

Plans have already begun for next year's bigger and better show.

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Third Annual Benefit for the Kizinda Vocational High School in Uganda WFWP, New York

By Debby Gullery, Chairwoman, WFWP New York Chapter

The Westchester Chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace held its third annual benefit for the Kizinda Vocational High School in Uganda on Sunday, December 3rd. The luncheon was held at the Greentree Country Club in New Rochelle, and included various lively entertainers and a silent auction.



Debby Gullery

The Honorary Chairman was Mr. Francis Butagira, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations. He has supported the efforts of the WFWP New York regional chapter since it began its fundraising efforts for the Kizinda School. Several previous benefits have been held at the Ugandan Embassy in Manhattan. Ambassador Butagira is originally from the District of Bushenyi, where the Kizinda School is situated, and therefore feels a deep, personal connection to WFWP's work there.

The event was well attended and began with lunch and an invitation to browse the silent auction, with items ranging from jewelry and handbags, to restaurant meals and hotel stays. There were also some genuine Ugandan carvings and large, colorful batiks. They were big sellers!

After lunch, entertainment was provided by "Akosua - The Living Legend", an African drum and dance troupe.

NY Regional Chairwoman, Debby Gullery, gave a PowerPoint presentation about WFWP activities and introduced the Kizinda School. Ten of the students currently attending were profiled, with names, ages and information about their background. Nine out of the ten are orphans, and all are good students with plans and dreams for the future. Directly following this presentation, one of the audience members approached and offered to sponsor the school tuition for all ten of the young people. What a wonderful moment that was!

After a break for dessert, coffee and more "shopping," entertainment was provided by the Westchester Youth Singers, led by a WFWP member and graduate of Juilliard Music School. These all-girl singers ranged in age from six to fifteen years. Then the audience was inspired to hear from a renowned singer of international reputation, Mr. Raoul Joseph.

The highlight of the program came when the keynote speaker, Ms. Rachel Mayanja took the podium. Ms. Mayanja is a Ugandan native and currently serves as Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. In this capacity, she has dedicated herself to peace-building and peacekeeping, and she has a deep sensitivity to the suffering and struggles of women around the world. She spoke from her heart and was clearly impressed with the work of WFP, especially “The Schools of Africa Project”.

With the support of many volunteers, donations from local individuals and businesses, great performances and speakers, the benefit for the Kizinda School was successful! Ten deserving students will have their educations paid for, a good amount of money was raised for the continued development of the school, and minds and hearts were opened to the stark reality of what women and children experience daily in Uganda and other parts of Africa.

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Women Leaders Gather in Bangkok

By Donna Howell, Chair, WFWP NY Metro Chapter

WFWP leaders from across the globe gathered in Bangkok, Thailand in mid-October 2006 for more than three days of reporting, sharing and sightseeing at the *Seventh Annual WFWP International Leaders Workshop*. Women's Federation for World Peace leaders came together in the Thai capital from October 15-18 to report on programs in their regions during the past year. Delegates represented countries in all parts of the world, including Nepal, Afghanistan, Singapore, India, Bangladesh, Japan, Korea, the United States, England, Austria, France, Russia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Taiwan, Australia, Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, and of course, Thailand.



Several WFWP representatives from different countries performing at the opening banquet

Thai WFWP President Kamoltip Phayakvichien and Secretary General of WFWP Asia, Delia Javanasundara, organized the conference and hosted the delegation, beginning with the opening banquet of Thai food and entertainment by Thai and Filipino singers, and ending with a tour of Bangkok. President Phayakvichien also reported on the poverty eradication programs she started in her hometown in a rural area of Thailand. Her program involves teaching women how to set up small businesses making handicrafts, baked goods and sausages. The delegates were happy to taste the breads, cookies and sausages which were the products of these businesses.

Dr. Lan Young Moon, President of WFWP International, addressed the group during the first day of the conference to clarify the global objectives of WFWP. She lamented that the focus of much of the world was on acquiring external knowledge, whereas the focus should be on education of the heart, which includes reviving spirituality and family values. She stressed that we should develop the concept of a serving leadership of women. She also happily reported that the United Nations had renewed WFWP's status this year with the International Economic & Social

Council (ECOSOC). She expressed gratitude for the efforts of WFWP chapters in fulfilling the UN's Millennium Development Goals, especially with respect to poverty eradication, education, and AIDS prevention in the underdeveloped world. On the second day of the conference, delegates attended a forum and participated in a Bridge of Peace ceremony at the United Nations building in Bangkok. Among the speakers at this forum were WFWP director in Uganda, Erinah Rutangye; director of WFWP Afghanistan, Marilyn Angelucci; and deputy director of the WFWP UN office in Geneva, Switzerland, Carolyn Handschin.



WFWP representatives in their native clothes

Erinah Rutangye, who was recently elected as a member of the Ugandan Parliament, explained the problems facing women in Africa and the changes taking place in African societies. Although lack of health care, wife beating, AIDS, polygamy and poverty take their toll on African women, they are nevertheless becoming more active in government, education and peace-building. In Uganda, the peace treaty between the government and rebels is being negotiated by women. Many groups, including WFWP, have started schools and micro-credit programs which are helping women out of poverty. She reported that in Africa, Women's Federation has created many programs, including a vocational training school in Senegal, a technical school in Rwanda, scholarship programs in Cameroon, an orphanage in Mauritius, and educational programs in Angola.

In Afghanistan, as reported by Marilyn Angelucci, the new constitution gives men and women equal rights, but extreme gender discrimination exists. In Afghan society, a woman needs to be connected to a man in order to associate with the greater society. Because so many men have died in the past decades of conflict, many women have no means to be part of society. Most women have no voice because they cannot join a meeting where there are men. She suggested that women's councils be formed throughout the country to give women a voice.

Carolyn Handschin, from the UN-based WFWP offices in Geneva, asked the delegates to inform her of peace-building efforts by women in various parts of the world. She is compiling this information as part of her work at the United Nations. She gave a report on two projects, the Mano River Project in Africa and the

Colombia, South America, Medellin Women's Group, where women were instrumental in peace-building.



After two information-packed days of regional reports and speeches, the delegates were ready for some downtime and were happy to be treated to a tour of Bangkok. Although the Thai army had staged a coup the week before the conference, it had been a peaceful coup, due to the backing of King Bhumibol, who is a beloved monarch. Throughout the country, Thais were celebrating the 60th year of his reign by wearing bright yellow clothes. During the tour of old palaces and temples, delegates witnessed a sea of yellow shirts and jackets brightening the city. The people of Bangkok were warm and hospitable, and the city lived up to its name, "City of Angels."



Although the delegates learned about many programs and projects during this conference, it was the friendships that were made and the sisterhood experienced which will have them returning for the eighth leadership conference, wherever it may be, in the fall of 2007.

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WFWP volunteers at an information table

United Nations Day in Chicago

By Margaret Figueroa, Chairwoman, WFWP Illinois Regional Chapter

Women's Federation for World Peace, International (WFWPI) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in general consultative status with the United Nations. As such, WFWP chapters around the world participate in many UN-sponsored events. **United Nations Day** is celebrated each year on October 24 to commemorate the date in 1945 when the UN Charter – the constitution of the United Nations – entered into force. Since Harry Truman, each president of the United States has issued an annual proclamation on United Nations Day. In 2006, President Bush's proclamation read in part:



Margaret Figueroa

“Today, as we work to combat extremism and terror with justice and dignity, the efforts of the United Nations are as vital as ever. The world needs the members of the United Nations to stand together to help the organization live up to its founding ideals, fulfill its mission, and spread hope and liberty to people around the globe. Together, we can combat terrorism, help empower the voices of moderation, fight disease, and work for a world where all people are free to determine their own destinies.”

The Illinois Department of Human Rights holds its annual United Nations Day in the James R. Thompson Center in downtown Chicago. The purpose of the 2006 event was to highlight “Maternal Health and Wellbeing.” It featured women's health screenings, cultural entertainment and more.



James R. Thompson Center

Members of the Illinois Regional Chapter of WFWP, USA, have participated in these UN Day activities for several years with an information booth about WFWP and its worldwide projects. This year, something extra was offered. Some of the Japanese WFWP members performed a special type of entertainment involving a unique type of musical instrument. Mrs. Hotokawa, (above, center) is affiliated with a group of *koto* performers who help fundraise for many worthy causes. The *koto* is a long stringed instrument resembling the bottom of a canoe -- commonly seen in Western movies depicting geishas.



Mrs. Hotokawa on a *koto*, accompanying the Japanese choir

The women were dressed in colorful kimonos as they sang two numbers, including "Let There Be Peace On Earth," to the accompaniment of the *koto*. As the music rang out, people were peering down from balconies above, intrigued by the sounds and unusual beauty of the women's performance. Many passers-by commented that they were moved by the presentation and that the song was very appropriate for the times we are living in.

Inside the meeting hall, introductory remarks for the UN Day program were given by the Director of the Illinois Department of Human Rights. The President of the Board of the Greater Chicago Chapter of the United Nations Association, Gabrielle M. Buckley, spoke next about the purpose of United Nations Day. She warmly greeted the WFWP women after she spoke and posed for pictures with them. Other

speakers on the program were from the Illinois Department of Labor and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

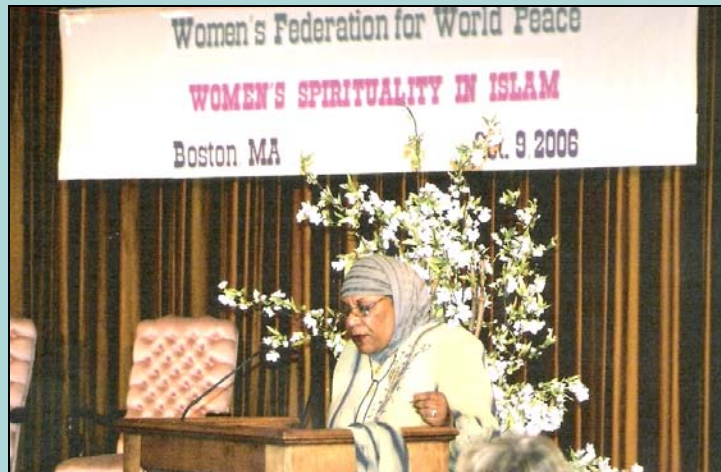


To prepare for this event, WFWP members created colorful posters with information about the WFWP-founded Sunac Elementary School in Guinea Bissau, West Africa. They also displayed information about another of their local projects: a school library in the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. Highlights from the 2005 *Goodwill Exchange for Peace* friendship tour in China were exhibited, and PowerPoint presentations about WFWP activities were shown. Many people stopped at the WFWP table and signed up to receive more information. Some left contact information to donate books for the St. Lucia library.



Among the other organizations with booths at this event were the Illinois Department of Health, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Labor, The McArthur Foundation and the Governor's Office of Women's Affairs.

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Al-Hajja Khalilah Karim-Rushdan, Islamic chaplain at Smith College

Massachusetts *Women of Faith* Program on the Position of Women in Islam

By Margaret Brewster, Chairwoman, WFWP Massachusetts Regional Chapter

In the summer of 2001, WFWP, USA began a program called *Women of Faith*, for the purpose of bringing women together from different religious backgrounds. Even before the terrorist attacks of September 11, WFWP members felt the need to create bridges among the women of diverse religious communities in this country.

It is a tenet of WFWP that women are specially endowed with qualities enabling them to go beyond barriers that have traditionally divided the human family. Because of their empathy and sensitivity, as well as shared experiences of bearing and raising children, women of every culture are uniquely qualified to bridge differences. The *Women of Faith* activities have provided participants an opportunity to explore the faiths of others through testimonies, sharing passages from different sacred texts, and experiencing the moving *Bridge of Peace Ceremony*. (<http://www.wfwp.us/wfwp.html>)



In Boston, Massachusetts on October 9, 2006, forty women of various faiths gathered in the ballroom of a historic building on Beacon Hill to open their hearts and minds to women of the Muslim faith. The purpose of this *Women of Faith* program was to explore the position of women in Islam.



Al-Hajja Khalilah Karim-Rushdan addressing the audience

The first speaker was Al-Hajja Khalilah Karim-Rushdan, the Islamic Chaplain of Smith College, a prestigious women's college in western Massachusetts. Mrs. Rushdan gave historic, cultural and linguistic perspectives on the Islamic faith. The Arabic language plays a big role in Islam, and members are encouraged to read the Koran in Arabic. There are mosques in the Middle East that will not allow anyone to enter unless they can recite certain passages of the Koran in Arabic, by heart. It is a very expressive language that loses something in the translation. Mrs. Rushdan took great delight in explaining some of the intricacies.

Besides being a scholar, Mrs. Rushdan--whose husband is an imam--is a psychologist and family counselor. Her broad range of knowledge was evident in her presentation. Her powerful presence certainly dispelled the Western notion that Muslim women are of little consequence. Mrs. Rushdan also showed a position paper that had been developed concerning the position of women in Islam.



Sister Yevette on the right (in royal blue)

Next, Sister Yevette spoke, representing the Nation of Islam (NOI). WFWP members in Boston have had a long relationship with her and her religious community. Sister Yevette is a religious educator and has quite a dynamic style of presentation. She emphasized that Elijah Mohammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam, stressed respect for women as the mothers and first teachers of children. While the Nation of Islam has a decidedly African-American flavor to it, its foundation and values are deeply embedded in the Koran.



After the speakers, there was a beautiful Bridge of Peace ceremony. A wide range of nationalities were represented in the audience: American, European, African, Filipino, and Japanese women, with ages ranging from 16 to 60 years. As the sisters exchanged flowers and personal information, there was a deep feeling of sisterhood. All acknowledged that women can – and must -- make a difference in the peace process.

Beautiful crafts and handmade jewelry were available to help support WFWP's work in Africa. Plans were also made for the next meeting in November with the Emancipation Network, which is made up of women who work with victims of human trafficking.

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