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Peace Quote:



"We frail humans are at one time capable of the greatest good and, at the same time, capable of the greatest evil. Change will only come about when each of us takes up the daily struggle ourselves to be more forgiving, compassionate, loving, and above all joyful in the knowledge that, by some miracle of grace, we can change as those around us can change too."

Maíread Maguire



WFWP, USA Co-Sponsors 3rd International Women's Peace Conference in Dallas

Reported by Laura Hornbeck, Editor, WFWP, USA ENewsletter

WFWP, USA was among several dozen co-sponsors of the 3rd International Women's Peace Conference in Dallas, Texas, from July 10-15, 2007. The theme was "Empowering Peacemakers," and more than 1,000 conference delegates, mostly women, attended this ambitious event at the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas.

Attendees came from forty-three countries, including Russia, Kenya, Rwanda, and other African nations, as well as Brazil, Canada, and thirty-two US states. Speakers included three Nobel Peace laureates, a Hollywood actress, United Nations representatives, academicians, elected officials and diplomats.

[Read on...](#)

WFWP International Selected to Participate in United Nations "Innovation Fair" in Geneva (Part 1)

Reported by Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, Director of UN Offices, WFWPI



Women's Federation for World Peace, International was one of twenty-seven nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) chosen to participate in a special United Nations-sponsored event in Geneva, Switzerland, from July 2-5, 2007, dubbed the first annual "Innovation Fair" for the UN ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council).

Selected organizations were asked to set up displays profiling their success stories in alleviating world poverty and hunger.

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WFWP International Selected to Participate in United Nations "Innovation Fair" in Geneva (Part 2)

Reported by Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, Director of UN Offices, WFWPI

The International Service Projects (ISPs) started in 1994 with fact-finding trips by women volunteers from developed nations, mostly Japan. These women saw first-hand the terrible consequences of

war, disease, and poverty. Seeing how women and children suffered disproportionately, they became impassioned to help change the situation.

The determination and compassion of those early volunteers were the impetus for grassroots efforts that are now showing real and positive results. Currently WFWPI is operating twelve kinds of service projects in 50 countries.

[Read on...](#)

Upper Midwest Chapter of WFWP Supports Schools in Guinea Bissau

Reported by Margaret Figueroa, Chairwoman, Midwest District

Guinea Bissau is one of the ten poorest countries in the world, located on the west coast of Africa, just south of Senegal. In 2003, WFWP volunteers opened the Sunac Elementary School there, and now it is serving approximately 210 children.



Members of the WFWP chapter from the Upper Midwest - Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan -- have supported two visits to this WFWP school in recent years.

[Read on...](#)



US-Canada Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony Brings New Beginning to WFWP Chapters

Reported by Patricia Couweleers, Washington State Chapter

On Saturday, June 16, 2007, approximately fifty people met in

Richmond, British Columbia, for the purpose of linking women of peace in Canada and the USA.

The beautiful seaside location of the Steveston Community Centre was the location of a moving Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony in which women from around the world were linked. In this relatively small group, there were women of African descent, as well as Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Iranian, Indian, German, Austrian and Romanian backgrounds. It was truly a melting pot right there in the room...

[Read on...](#)

Coming in Next Issue

A Report on WFWP Interns' Week of Service in Kenya

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Upper Midwest Chapter of WFPW Supports Schools in Guinea Bissau

Reported by Margaret Figueroa, Chairwoman, Midwest District

Guinea Bissau is one of the ten poorest countries in the world, located on the west coast of Africa, just south of Senegal. In 2003, WFPW volunteers opened the Sunac Elementary School there, and now it is serving approximately 210 children. Members of the WFPW chapter from the Upper Midwest – Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan -- have supported two visits to this WFPW school in recent years.

Because of poverty and government instability, only about 25% of the children of Guinea Bissau attend school, and because of the low social status of women, girls are most frequently deprived of educational opportunity. In 2004, the Sunac School received a commendation from the local UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) office because they have more girls than boys as students.



Guinea Bissau (outlined in red)

Mrs. Baba, one of the first WFPW volunteers to go to Guinea Bissau, had visited the Upper Midwest WFPW chapter on two separate occasions, asking for American volunteers to come to Guinea Bissau. She had worked for more than ten years as a volunteer in that country, helping many Guineans build the Sunac Elementary School. The struggles were intense. Japanese volunteers left their own husbands and children behind to spend most of every year in Guinea Bissau. No words can describe the kind of courage and commitment that those women embodied.



Mrs. Baba, left, Vicky Sometani giving gift to student, 2007

Former WFP regional chairwoman Kathleen Sometani and her teenage daughter Vicky were inspired by Mrs. Baba's visit to Chicago. They both felt called to visit the Sunac School, and now they have been there twice. The first time was in November 2005, and the second was in mid-June of this summer.



Vicky Sometani speaking with school students, June 2007

The first time Kathleen and Vicky, then 16 years old, went to Africa was in November of 2005, and they had no idea what to expect. Just a few days before they were to board the plane, headlines told of a coup d'etat in Guinea Bissau. Fortunately, it was quickly resolved without any gunfire and Kathleen and Vicky could proceed with their trip.



Sunac Elementary School students displaying recent gift of shoes

They found the people of Guinea Bissau to be so hungry for education that the Sunac School included a large number of eighteen- to twenty-year-olds studying at a fourth grade level. Since there are not enough schools for the population, especially in the rural areas, this school is a God-send for the people.

While poverty prevails throughout the country, Guinea Bissau is rich in heart. The Sometanis were welcomed wholeheartedly wherever they went. In a country torn by war, there were no homeless people to be seen. The people customarily take in the most needy among them. Every family they visited, from the wealthiest to the poorest, had some unrelated refugee of war living with them.

When Vicky graduated from high school this past spring, she asked for only one thing: to be allowed to return to Guinea Bissau to work. She had held a part-time job throughout her senior year, and the family had also worked together to raise funds. Along with the family's earnings, the district WFWP members and supporters offered donations to make Vicky's second trip a possibility. She and her mother arrived in mid-June on the weekly airplane from Portugal.



Kathleen Sometani teaching tatting at weekly women's sewing class

Deplaning into 100-degree heat, the act of just breathing can be exhausting, especially for people used to the Chicago climate. While Kathleen would stay for one week, Vicky stayed on for one month. During their time in Guinea Bissau, they visited governmental offices, UN officials and families of the students and teachers. Kathleen gave interviews to WFWP contacts and even taught the tatting technique of lace-making to the weekly women's sewing class.

They found new supporters of WFWP on their second trip, and many people who are committed to helping WFWP's work. Also, the government has been able to improve the nation's electrical power capacity, so it is much more reliable. The school is now able to use the classrooms for longer hours and is able to teach more students. Plans are in the works for adding a second floor to house a middle school.

It is the hope of the WFWP Upper Midwest district leadership to continue and even broaden this project in the future by sending more volunteers and by helping financially in the construction of a high school and college.



Sunac Elementary School



A traditional cooking class at Sunac School



Kathleen and Vicky visiting a local Sunday School class

WFWP International Selected to Participate in United Nations “Innovation Fair” in Geneva

Reported by Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, Director of UN Offices, WFWPI

Part One of Report

Women’s Federation for World Peace, International was one of twenty-seven non-governmental organizations (NGOs) chosen to participate in a special United Nations-sponsored event in Geneva, Switzerland, from July 2-5, 2007, dubbed the first annual “Innovation Fair” for the UN ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council). Selected organizations were asked to set up displays profiling their success stories in alleviating world poverty and hunger.

This Fair was held at the same time as a regular annual meeting of ECOSOC in the beautiful Palais des Nations, the historic home of the United Nations in Geneva. Called the “city of peace,” Geneva was the birthplace of the Red Cross Movement and the location of the forging of the Geneva Conventions (the “rules of war”). Originally built to house the failed League of Nations, the Palais des Nations was transferred to the United Nations in 1946.



Entry to the Palais de Naciones, Geneva, Switzerland

The theme of this year’s ECOSOC meeting was, “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development.” The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, visited the Civil Society Pavilion where WFWPI and other groups had set up their information booths and personally spoke to representatives of each group. When he came to the WFWPI booth, a Swiss woman who happens to speak Korean was manning the booth. He was quite

surprised to hear her address him in his native language, and they engaged in an enthusiastic conversation about WFWPI activities.

A video of their encounter is on the web at www.amrif.blogspot.com. The website video showing all the encounters with the Secretary-General is over 30 minutes long, but the WFWPI encounter is at the 6:00 minute mark and goes to approximately the 6:55 mark.

Three WFWPI programs were profiled with literature and graphic displays at this fair:

- WFWP International Service Projects
- WFWP Kenya project eliminating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- WFWP UK support of Indian orphans.



Mrs. Sugiyama, center, with UN Deputy Chief of NGO Section (arm in sling), and three WFWPI representatives.



Mrs. Sugiyama and Carolyn Handschin, Director of WFWPI UN Office in Switzerland

Accredited by the UN ECOSOC in 1997, WFWPI is committed to being a good partner to the United Nations by focusing on peace-building worldwide. In 2000, the United Nations adopted eight Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, with target achievements by 2015.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has stated that the Millennium Development Goals are a framework for worldwide development and a means for poorer countries to work together with partners in pursuit of a shared future for all people of the world.

Following are the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals, along with some of the targets to be achieved by 2015:

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.
 - Currently 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 a day; 70% of them are female.
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
 - More than 850 million people are living in starvation conditions, every seventh person alive today.

MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
 - More than 12.1 million children of primary-school age are not in school; the majority of them are girls.

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
 - 800 million adults cannot read; two-thirds are women.

MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

- Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
 - Thirty-thousand children under five die every DAY.

MDG 5: Improve maternal health

- Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality rate

MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
 - 93% of people who need anti-retroviral therapy do not have access to it.
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
 - One billion people do not have access to safe drinking water.

- Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication.

Since the Millennium Development Goals were introduced in 2000, the primary focus of WFWPI has been the achievement of Goal 1. The International Service Projects (ISPs) are also impacting the achievement of Goals 2, 3, 6, and 7.

(Please see next article in this newsletter about WFWPI and its activities.)

WFWP International Selected to Participate in United Nations “Innovation Fair” in Geneva

Reported by Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama, Director of UN Offices, WFWPI

Part Two

The International Service Projects (ISPs) started in 1994 with fact-finding trips by women volunteers from developed nations, mostly Japan. These women saw first-hand the terrible consequences of war, disease, and poverty. Seeing how women and children suffered disproportionately, they became impassioned to help change the situation. The determination and compassion of those early volunteers were the impetus for grassroots efforts that are now showing real and positive results. Currently WFWPI is operating twelve kinds of service projects in 50 countries.

(For more information on these activities, please go to www.wfwp.org.)

Two excellent programs are carried out annually to involve people from developed nations in the WFWPI service projects:

The first program involves **study tours** by project supporters (donors) to ten WFWPI service projects each year. They go to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as Belarus in the CIS. Tour participants are able to witness the difference their donations have made in the lives of other people, and to see first-hand how much they are appreciated.



Photos of the Study Tours

Secondly, a **Youth Volunteer** program operates in two developing countries each year. This short-term service project (usually about two weeks) gives young people the chance to pitch in to renovate or repair school buildings, help in agricultural activities, and so forth.



Youth volunteer photos

The second successful program profiled by WFPWI at the Innovation Fair was from the **Kenya** chapter and included two programs. In the Bomet district of Kenya in the Eastern Rift Province bordering Uganda, WFP is sponsoring and supporting thirty orphans. These orphans receive school uniforms, blankets, and food. The guardian families, usually relatives of the orphans, also receive support on an annual basis.



Supporting orphans

Also in the Bomet district, volunteers have achieved success in eradicating the widespread practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), also called female circumcision or “cutting.” This procedure involves the removal of all or part of a girl’s external genitalia and is usually performed by an older woman who receives payment for her “surgery.” Unfortunately, many of the tools used in the procedure are unclean, and there are frequently life-threatening complications, as well as psychological damage.

To read the success story by Women’s Federation for World Peace in Kenya, by Helen T. Rotich, UN Representative of WFWPI for Africa, which includes the work of combating FGM, please click [here](#).

FGM is part of the tradition of early marriage of girls (13 to 15 years old), which means that girls discontinue their education, affecting many other aspects of their lives. WFWP Kenya offers training classes for young girls so they can be informed of alternatives to FGM. Since it is a rite of passage, WFWP has created alternative rites of passage, such as a weeklong workshop to help the girls understand the value and meaning of life. This program has helped girls stay in school. The workshops are held during school holidays, three times a year.



Workshop for Anti-Feminine Genital Mutilation (FGM) Program

WFWP Kenya also began conducting educational programs in March of 2004 to teach the traditional “surgeons” who perform FGM about the dangers of the practice. Since then, twenty-four women have stopped performing FGM and the numbers are growing. Those who surrender the practice are given the opportunity to work with WFWP, using a machine that manufactures building blocks. The elder women can then sell the building blocks to make money to support themselves, making up for the income they relinquished from FGM activities.

The third successful program highlighted at the Innovation Fair in Geneva was the story of the **Interfaith Children’s Home** in South India. It was started in early 1998 by Mrs. Patricia Earle, WFWP representative for the Midlands region of the United Kingdom. Patricia went to Hyderabad in the state of Andhra Pradesh, where she saw the suffering of the **Dalit** (“**untouchable**”) communities. The worst situations seemed to be of orphans whose debt-burdened parents had committed suicide. Those children had no future other than to beg on the streets or work in backbreaking labor. They certainly had no hope for education.

Patricia returned to England and began working with her Women's Peace Group, a project of WFWP. These women are from all faiths, races and ethnic backgrounds and they began to raise money for the Indian Dalit orphans.

Through their concerted efforts, enough funds were raised by December 1998 to begin work on what was to become "**The Interfaith Children's Home of Hyderabad.**" Young people from the Religious Youth Service, aided with volunteers from the International Relief Friendship Foundation, traveled to Hyderabad to begin construction.



Children at the Home

Many other organizations joined in the effort, once it began taking shape. Local Indian builders completed work on the home in 1999, and it formally opened in 2000. Since then, more than thirty Dalit children have been cared for at the home, both girls and boys. They were able to attend a local village school and receive an education which would otherwise have been impossible for them. So far, eight children have graduated from the Home and all are continuing their education at intermediate colleges.



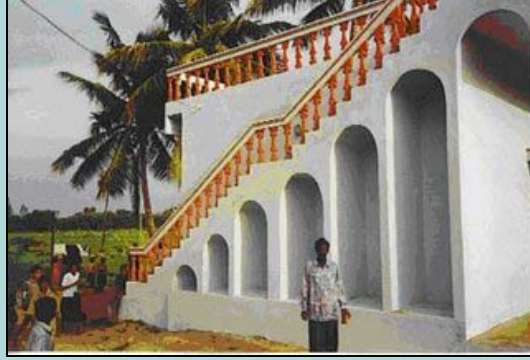
Six graduates of the Home who are currently attending college

The ultimate goal of the Home is to find support within India, but so far the majority of the funding has come from the UK. WFWP has supported the Home through fundraising events, as well as individual child sponsorships. Also, numerous churches, temples, and other places of worship have helped. Other organizations helping include the Mother's Union, Soroptimists

International, the Asian Women's Network, the Hindu Women's Club, and the Indian Consulate. In India, the Children's Home has received several awards, including the Samajj Vikas Peace Award, and the Jewel of India Award of 2003, presented by former president of India, Shri K R Narayan.

The state of Andhra Pradesh is in the process of granting new land for expansion of the project. A new home will be built with better facilities and separate living quarters for boys and girls, along with staff and guest accommodations. There are great things on the horizon!

(For more information on the European WFWP, go to www.womenaspeacemakers.org)



Interfaith Children's Home of Hyderabad

For more information on the ECOSOC "Innovation Fair," go to:
www.un.org/ecosoc/innovfair/innovfair.shtml

WFWP, USA Co-Sponsors 3rd International Women's Peace Conference in Dallas

By Laura Hornbeck

WFWP, USA was among several dozen co-sponsors of the 3rd International Women's Peace Conference in Dallas, Texas, from July 10-15, 2007. The theme was "Empowering Peacemakers," and more than 1,000 conference delegates, mostly women, attended this ambitious event at the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas. Attendees came from forty-three countries, including Russia, Kenya, Rwanda, and other African nations, as well as Brazil, Canada, and thirty-two US states. Speakers included three Nobel Peace laureates, a Hollywood actress, United Nations representatives, academicians, elected officials and diplomats.

Peacemakers, Incorporated, gathered women in Dallas for the first women's peace conference in 1988, then again in 1999. This 3rd conference was a labor of love for the staff, most of whom were volunteers; many contributed great amounts of time and personal resources. The overriding philosophy of the event was that world peace does not come from "on high" but rather starts on the individual level and then spreads outward.

Alexa Ward, WFWP USA President, was one of the invited presenters for the breakout sessions, as was WFWP, USA Vice-President Susan Fefferman. More than ten volunteers from the Dallas-area WFWP helped at the conference.



*Alexa Ward speaking with Betty Williams,
Nobel Peace Laureate 1976*



L to R: Mike Ghouse (volunteer), Esther Vasquez (WFWP delegate & volunteer), Margaret Culgan (Conference Coordinator), Laura Hornbeck (WFWP delegate & volunteer)



World Peace Flag Ceremony

The first official event of the Peace Conference was the World Peace Flag Ceremony. The national flags of every nation were held aloft by delegates who formed a circle around the large room, then presented each flag with the simple prayer: “Let peace prevail in Albania (or Bahrain, or Zimbabwe, etc.).”

Music, dancing, singing and more prayers were offered for the achievement of world peace. Three of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, women dedicated to “healing the Earth and all Her inhabitants,” offered chants and prayer. (<http://www.grandmotherscouncil.com>)



Indigenous Grandmothers



L to R: The Hon. Leticia R. Shahani, and Vivian Castleberry

Welcoming speeches were given by Dallas resident and writer Vivian Castleberry, founding “mother” of Peacemakers, Incorporated, and the Hon. Leticia Ramos Shahani, former Senator of the Philippines and former United Nations Assistant Secretary-General. Mrs. Castleberry stressed the importance of believing in the possibility of world peace and not buying into pessimist views of human potential. She urged leaders of the world’s religions to step forward and denounce violence and work more closely together for peace.

Senator Shahani quoted opening sentences of the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted in 1945. It reads, “...Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” As she stated, this understanding is so basic it can easily be overlooked, but the path to peace must begin within hearts and minds.

Every day from 6:30 a.m., a prayer and meditation room was open. Yoga instruction was offered every day as well. People could work on quilts and learn to fold origami in the arts and crafts area. The hotel had a movie viewing room, and movies were shown every day, either documentaries about famous peace workers or videos explaining the work of some of the delegates. There was also music and live performances during the lunch hour every day.



Conference registration desk, with Nariko Nogami on the far left and Fumiyo Ito, also a WFWP Dallas member, seated next to her.

Prior to the conference, one of the Dallas WFWP members, Nariko Nogami, worked on folding over 1,000 paper cranes to be used as decorations. She was helped by several other Japanese WFWP members in Dallas.

Delegates to the conference chose among seven or eight breakout sessions each morning and afternoon, for example:

- *Women's Rights are Human Rights*
- *Finding Peace Within*
- *United Nations and Civil Society*
- *Peace through Education*
- *Shalom, Salaam, Peace*



Alexa Ward speaking at the conference

The presenters in these sessions included founders of nonprofit organizations, authors, university professors, and others from around the world. Alexa Fish Ward, WFWP, USA President, was a presenter in the session entitled *Exploring the Link Between Poverty, Education, and Peace*. Alexa gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the activities of WFWP, with special emphasis on the WFWP Schools of Africa. When she was finished, many of the

forty to fifty women in the audience were eager to learn how they could help the schools.

On another day, WFWP Vice-President Susan Fefferman spoke in the session, *Women as Peacemakers: A Look at the world of Women for Peace*. She showed photos of various Bridge of Peace ceremonies, especially in the Middle East. Susan's talk was very well received. Both Alexa and Susan gave credit to the vision of the founders of WFWP, Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon and her husband, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon.



Susan Fefferman

Prior to the conference, organizers put out a request for donations of peace-related artwork on paper to be used to raise funds for Peacemakers, Inc. Gwenn Bair, WFWP Ohio District Coordinator, sent three drawings, all of which were sold.

Below is one:



Artwork entitled "Legacy," by Gwenn Bair

There was also a large display of children's artwork from Dallas-area schools:



In acknowledgement of the spiritual nature of the struggle for peace, both the opening and closing ceremonies of the conference were centered on prayer. On Sunday morning, July 15th, an Interfaith Worship Service was conducted. The finale of the service was a prayer walk, during which people held hands and sang a prayer for peace.



To keep the high spirit alive, follow-up meetings are being planned. To see a slideshow of photos from this colorful gathering, go to www.womenspeaceconference.org.

US-Canada Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony Brings New Beginning to WFWP Chapters

Reported by Patricia Couweleers, Washington State Chapter

On Saturday, June 16, 2007, approximately fifty people met in Richmond, British Columbia, for the purpose of linking women of peace in Canada and the USA.

The beautiful seaside location of the Steveston Community Centre was the location of a moving Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony in which women from around the world were linked. In this relatively small group, there were women of African descent, as well as Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Iranian, Indian, German, Austrian and Romanian backgrounds. It was truly a melting pot right there in the room, even though all participants reside in either Canada or the United States. So bringing women together across the border between Canada and the USA was, at least symbolically, a world-level accomplishment.

The Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony emphasizes the shared humanity of everyone, beyond nationality, religion, and ethnicity. It was created by WFWP leaders in the 1990s, when thousands of Japanese women came to the United States to meet American women. In 1995, fifty years had passed since the end of World War II, but division and resentment still lurked in the hearts of many citizens of the two formerly enemy nations. The Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony was created to help resolve that residual conflict, with the understanding that women have a leadership position in achieving world peace.



In 1995 and 1996, dozens of Japanese-American sisterhood programs were held around the United States. Actual bridge replicas were erected on stages where the dramatic Bridge of Peace™ ceremonies were carried out. In the programs, Japanese and American women would line up for their turn across the bridge. One Japanese woman and one American woman would step onto the bridge from either end, while the music to “Let There Be Peace on Earth” was playing. Each woman would walk toward the center; at the halfway point, they would bow to one another in a symbolic gesture of apology for the historic misdeeds of their respective nations. Then the women would meet in the middle of the bridge and exchange a heartfelt hug, representing reconciliation and friendship, before returning to their seats and exchanging small gifts and personal information.

Implicit in this ceremony is the understanding that before people can overcome the past and become true friends, each must offer an apology and receive forgiveness from the other. This principle is explained every time the Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony is conducted, so participants are mindful of the need for reconciliation based on forgiveness. Without exception, wherever the Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony is conducted, tears flow like water under a bridge.

Since those original programs, thousands of other Bridge of Peace™ events have been conducted by WFWP all around the world. In California, Sheri Rueter, Vice President of WFWP, USA, and other organizers launched an Interracial Sisterhood Project. They brought women and men together from the black, Hispanic and white communities of Los Angeles, earning the designation of a “Promising Practice” for racial harmony from President Clinton in 1997.

Sisterhoods have been created in the Middle East, as well. In 2004, five hundred women from around the world went to Jerusalem to participate in a historic pilgrimage called “Women of Peace,” organized jointly by WFWP and the Universal Peace Federation. Women of all ages and nationalities, including Palestinians and Israelis, embraced one another in the Bridge of Peace™ Ceremony.



Jerusalem Bridge of Peace Ceremony



Women from around the world rally for peace in Jerusalem

In Washington State, Friederike Buczyk took over as state chairwoman for WFWP at the beginning of 2007. She and former state chairwoman Patricia Couweleers decided to hold a Bridge of Peace program between the Washington State chapter and that of the Richmond, British Columbia chapter of western Canada, headed by Kati Brisbois. Kati also recently assumed leadership of her chapter.

“There’s nothing like a Bridge of Peace™ program to break the ice and meet new people,” Patricia advised. So the idea was born, and the work began in early 2007. Many WFWP members had teenaged daughters who pitched in to help create invitations and reach out to new guests. They also participated in the program itself.

The keynote speaker for the program was Mrs. Susan Bradbury of Bellingham, Washington, whose efforts for peacebuilding have been profiled in this ENewsletter previously (January/February 2007). Susan is founder of *The Sound Essence Project*,

a Bellingham, Washington nonprofit corporation. (www.soundessenceproject.org) Her organization brings diverse people together through cross-cultural exchanges. Susan has personally visited Mongolia, Africa and other places where people survive under some of the harshest conditions.

Her talk was entitled “Women and the Fabric of Peace,” and she urged American and Canadian women to be grateful for the multitude of blessings we enjoy. We should be mindful that a large percentage of the world’s population does not have things like indoor plumbing, paved roads, or access to education. We women should never take our blessings for granted, Susan stressed, nor quit trying to help the neediest people.

This event was orchestrated from the Canadian side by Kati Brisbois and Mrs. Tessie Rebello. As usual, there was excitement after the matching of sisters who crossed the Bridge of Peace™ and everyone greatly enjoyed the beautiful and plentiful banquet that followed. Many WFWP members gave their full support to the event, coming from as far away as Seattle and North Bend, Washington, as well as the greater Vancouver metropolitan area.

To become true women of peace, we must show the world that we can embrace, love and forgive others beyond our comfort zone. WFWP’s Bridge of Peace™ ceremonies enable women to affirm the feminine qualities that we must use to bring unity and harmony in our everyday life and beyond.



L to R (in foreground): Adiella Abelseth; Susan Bradbury; Tessie Rebello; Lilly Jones



Susan Bradbury; Patricia Couweleers; Kati Brisbois



US-Canada Bridge of Peace participants and supporters