

UPF-Michigan honored the United Nations International Day of Peace in Lansing

David Kasbow and Teresa Ledesma

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Lansing, MI – The Universal Peace Federation of Michigan honored the United Nations International Day of Peace on Wednesday, September 21, at the state capitol. Staff members from state senators and state representatives' offices gathered at the Lansing Center, a beautiful convention, and banquet center within walking distance of the state capitol, for the morning program.

Ms. Teresa Ledesma, UPF Executive Director in Michigan, gave welcoming remarks and shared her story as a former Foreign Service Officer with the State Department, working in many countries for more than 20 years. She presented the background of the UN International Day of Peace and its motto this year, "Building Blocks of Peace." She then introduced Rev. David Kasbow, State Pastor of the Michigan Family Church, who presented an introductory video and brief presentation on the history of UPF, its vision, and activities.

"In our visits to the state senators and representatives offices to prepare for the event, we met Terri Barker, Legislative Assistant to Representative Wendell Byrd (D), a young woman who has had extensive experience in conflict resolution both in the political and business worlds," Ledesma said. One of UPF's initiatives is a program called Ambassadors for Peace where people from civil society are appointed and honored for their contributions to peace. *"We knew she would be the right person to receive a certificate as one of these ambassadors,"* Kasbow concluded. After showing a video on the UPF five principles of peace, Ms. Ledesma presented her the appointment as Ambassador for Peace. She exemplified her commitment to peace activities in that she came to the event even though she was not feeling her best that day.

The program concluded with a presentation on the philosophy of UPF's founder, Reverend Sun Myung Moon, called "Headwing Thought." It is a worldview capable of creating peace by enabling people to embrace people on both sides of any conflict. Rev. Moon called it "Headwing" to stress that it is a philosophy that can digest both the left and right wing views of the political spectrum. We concluded the program with lunch and a gift of an origami "

After the program, everybody enjoyed a sumptuous lunch and a gift of an origami "flower ball" was given to each of the state senators' offices including Joe Fedewa, Legislative Assistant to Representative Tom Cochran (R).

A follow-up conversation in the weeks ahead was decided with invitations to the state legislators on the upcoming International Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. in late November 2016.