

## UPF Holds the Parents' Day Banquet for the Greater Washington DC Area

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Washington, D.C. – The Parents' Day banquet for the Greater Washington DC area was held Saturday, July 14, from 7-9:30 PM in the Beech Room, The Washington Times Building. The room was packed with approximately 120 guests, representing couples from the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Unificationist communities.

The program began promptly at 7 pm. Larry Moffitt, Vice President of The Washington Times Foundation, one of the sponsoring organizations, welcomed the guests warmly as the emcee for the evening. He introduced the background of Parents' Day; officially observed every year on the fourth Sunday of July, a perennial day of commemoration similar to Mother's Day and Father's Day.

In 1994 President Bill Clinton signed into law the resolution unanimously adopted by the U.S. Congress establishing Parents' Day. The establishment of Parents' Day affords a wonderful opportunity for communities, organizations, churches, mosques, synagogues and temples to honor exemplary parents and to encourage families everywhere to invest in our most precious resource – our children.

Bishop Keith Allen offered an invocation and invited God to join the event and bless the proceedings, as Parents' Day commemorates God's vision for humankind.

Thomas McDevitt, Chairman of The Washington Times and Universal Peace Federation USA, reminded us that the family is "the first and best school of love," and is the most important institution, and the starting point of our life. Parents' Day provides an opportunity to recognize and promote parenting as an essential for building good character in the individual, as well as healthy families, communities and nations.

The special guest speaker, Mrs. Aisha Khan, was elected to the Democratic Central Committee in Baltimore County Maryland. She invoked the works of Bob Keeshan, the legendary American television producer and actor who created and portrayed the role of Captain Kangaroo for generations of children. Keeshan said, "Parents are the ultimate role models for children. Every word, movement, and action have an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parents." Mrs. Khan also expressed her gratitude to her own parents for the role models they were for her. She said, "Whenever I failed they never once made me feel like a failure. They have always encouraged me and motivated me to do better. It takes a genuine love to do this. I am who I am today because of my parents' involvement in my life."

Ms. Jennifer Gray, Director, Interfaith Outreach Governor's Office of Community Initiatives presented a special Proclamation from The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor of the State of Maryland.

Larry Moffitt announced the eight "Excellence In Parenting" awardees from the Greater Washington, DC Area who will now be considered by the National Parents' Day Committee for Parents of the Year. They are the following:

Christopher and Rashida Allen-Teague

Tokunbo and Yinka Shomide

Farooq Ahmad Khan and Razia Farooq

Syed and Urooba Sami Furqan

Sardar and Jamie Aziz

Stanley and Deana Odujole

Alemayehu Atnafu and Yematawork Asfaw

Medgar L .and Stephanie E. Reid

A delicious dinner was provided by Mrs. Keiko Patton, wife of Region Two Director Rev. Earnest Patton. The meal included salmon and chicken marinated with traditional Pakistani spices, vegetables, fresh salad with homemade dressing, and cheese cake topped with strawberries.



The second part of the program commemorated the first anniversary of Mother Moon's "Peace Starts With Me" event held at Madison Square Garden on July 15, 2017. Two choirs offered excellent songs: Children's choir, Washington, DC Family Church Children's Choir; and choir members from the Rehoboth Church of God in Christ Jesus Apostolic Church. A video clip from the Madison Square Garden event was shown, and very well received.

For their outstanding contributions in mobilizing many guests to attend Madison Square Garden, special appreciation plaques were given to Dr. Zulfiqar Kazmi, Founder and Executive Director, The Commonground USA; Zulfia Qahar and Imam Said Abdul Wali, Mustafa Islamic Center and Bishop Keith Allen, Rehoboth Church of God in Christ Jesus Apostolic Church.

To conclude the National Parents' Day dinner program, all parents received a flower bouquet. Then together everyone sang, "Let there be Peace On the Earth" led by Nanae Goto.