

## WFWP and UPF South London, UK Christmas Afternoon Tea

Lance Gardiner  
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South London Christmas Afternoon Tea - December 17th, 2022, Organised by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP).

A deep hope and yearning for peace was the central theme that emerged from the Christmas Afternoon Tea organized by the South London chapters of the Universal Peace Federation and the Women's Federation for World Peace.



Making their way through the freezing weather and contending with the train strike, a gathering of over 70 people assembled at the Peace Embassy, Haslemere Hall, in Thornton Heath, on 17th December, to celebrate the festive season with a rich and varied programme including some sublime musical entertainment. The Master of Ceremonies for the first part of the programme, Dr Lance Gardiner, opened the proceedings with a reflection on the challenging year that we have all endured as we experienced one global or national crisis after another.

The video presentations introducing the hosting organisations, as well as the slide presentation by Ashley Crosthwaite, Director of IRFF-UK, and the short talks by award recipients all demonstrated that there are many pathways to peace-building. These range from improving educational opportunities and enhancing the status of women to holding rallies for peace and creating local initiatives to develop communities and

help the less fortunate.



Several individuals were recognised as Ambassadors for Peace for their dedicated efforts in serving various communities. The awards were presented by Lance Gardiner (UPF South London coordinator) and Dolores Read (WFWP South London chairperson). First, Shelly Wiczorek was acknowledged by UPF for her amazing "free-cycling" community efforts and fundraising appeals. Martina Coombs (former UK President of the Women's Federation) then took the reins as MC to coordinate the WFWP awards and the remainder of the programme. Sherifa Carr, a community activist and Christian minister, deservedly received her award for helping young women and families to stay safe and avoid criminal activities and sexual exploitation. Another awardee, Shadia Azizuddin, has assisted the Alzheimer Society and carried out tremendous work aiding the homeless, as well as supporting a Mission in Hyderabad, India. Finally, a Ukrainian couple, Mark and Nelina Kolpatchki, received a joint award for their activities in helping the settlement of Ukrainian refugees and collecting much-needed humanitarian supplies and generators for dispatching to Ukraine.



The programme was wonderfully adorned by musical offerings, including a beautiful piano recital by Rev Professor June Boyce-Tillman, soulful Christmas melodies sung by Rhiannon Davies, and an array of moving vocal and instrumental performances on guitar, piano, and accordion by talented Ukrainian artists. In particular, the young Ukrainians in

colourful and graceful traditional costumes stole the show with their pure uplifting voices and engaging piano pieces.

In the final part of the formal proceedings, a charity raffle was held to raise funds to aid both IRFF's Destiny Junior School in Uganda as well as ongoing efforts to support Ukrainian communities, with a bountiful Christmas hamper as first prize. After the programme concluded, the participants heartily enjoyed sandwiches and festive snacks and celebrated this special time of year in warm fellowship together.

Report by Lance Gardiner