

UPF and WFWP South London commemorate the International Day of Families

Lance Gardiner
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London, United Kingdom -- Nearly 50 participants gathered in South London to commemorate the United Nations' International Day of Families.

The meeting, held on May 2, 2023, at the Peace Embassy in the Thornton Heath neighborhood, was co-hosted by the South London chapters of UPF and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization.

The two featured speakers offered deep insights on key values that enable families to thrive and prosper amid the modern challenges of materialism and all-pervasive technology.



Dr. Nicola Bailey, a former school assistant principal who has served on the UPF-UK Board of Trustees, stated that our jobs as parents are about providing opportunities for our children to grow and learn so that they become confident, well-rounded, sociable individuals making healthy, happy relationships with others.

To achieve that, she said, they need connectedness, empathy and self-confidence. Face-to-face and physical contact -- which is needed for children to develop these qualities -- largely has been replaced by the vast amount of time that many young people spend on-screen.

Dr. Bailey posed a series of questions related to the degrees of on-screen time, face-to-face interaction with friends, engagement with other hobbies, and time spent with family. These questions can be used to evaluate whether this balance should be adjusted for individual families.



Dr. Zohra Zaidi, a dermatologist who has provided treatment at charity clinics for skin disorders, perfectly articulated why the family should be celebrated: "The family is a union woven together through love, companionship, kindness, compassion and support."

The foundation for family life should be respect, love and care between husband and wife, she said, and married couples should navigate the ups and downs as if riding the waves of the sea. Patience, compromise and self-sacrifice are vital in achieving harmony and setting a good example for children.



Dr. Zaidi warned against the prevalence of materialistic values, saying that such a way of life will "not take you to heaven." She asserted that the nuclear family should be the central institution that can bring all nations together in peace.

The participants then broke into small discussion groups and reflected on the themes of the two presentations. The discussion topics included bridging the divide between the older and younger generations, and managing the impact of technology on communication within the family.

The group leaders briefly summarized the contributions from their members, especially highlighting the importance of celebrating special occasions together, open and honest communication within a framework of mutual respect, making each family member feel valued, and passing wisdom down through the generations.

Several awards were presented to individuals for their dedicated and selfless efforts in various fields. **Lance Gardiner**, the UPF South London coordinator, presented Ambassador for Peace awards to **Sally Becker**, the CEO of Save a Child, for her humanitarian work in helping to save the lives of children in numerous conflicts, and to **Tony Rucinski** for his active efforts with the Coalition for Marriage.



Dolores Read, the chair of WFPW for South London, recognized **Frederick Clarke** for his work with Mighty Men of Valor with a special Appreciation Award in commemoration of the 31st anniversary of the Women's Federation's founding.

The program was very ably coordinated by master of ceremonies **Adrian Lee**, who introduced the background behind International Day of Families, whose official 2023 theme is "Family Demographic Trends." An architect by profession, he noted that multi-generational living is a positive trend that provides significant opportunities for UK housebuilders.

He closed the proceedings by dedicating a toast in celebration of the family as the school of love and cornerstone of peace in our communities, nations and world. After the formal program concluded, the participants heartily enjoyed each other's company with sandwiches and refreshments.

