

WFWP Norway's Pre-Christmas Cafe - Refugees at Christmas Time

Marea Toresen
December 7, 2019



At Christmas time, we remember the story of Mary and Joseph as they escaped from their home as refugees and gave birth to baby Jesus in a foreign place. More recently, the founder of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, was also a refugee as a child when she and her family fled from North Korea to South Korea. In collaboration with Culture Without Borders, WFWP Norway co-hosted a Pre-Christmas cafe with the theme: Refugees at Christmas Time.

The event was held in the local library as part of the library's day long program of Christmas related activities. Johanna Toresen, President of WFWP Norway, co-MC'd the event along with the President of Culture Without Borders. She also shared with the audience about WFWP International's work in Cuba and Afghanistan. Throughout the evening, we were drawn in by emotional and moving songs from Latin America and the Caribbean, captivated by the personal stories shared by refugees from a group called UPOLERT, and inspired to reach out a hand and be open to new friendships by the Peace Bridge at the end. On the Peace Bridge, the pairs exchanged handmade bracelets made by an organization called the Middle East Group.

There was a wonderful and moving atmosphere that touched everyone there. Members of the audience clapped and sang along to the songs and one man was inspired to share his own story spontaneously at the end. The stories shared were a perfect blend of tragic and hopeful. We also provided cakes and snacks during the break to encourage communication and connection. About 60 people attended the event, including 7 WFWP members.

Reported by Marea Toresen
WFWP Norway Secretary

Photos by Ola Klafstad and Marea Toresen