

WFWP Westchester, NY holds a raffle to fundraise for WFWP's Schools of Africa

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A dedicated team of Women's Federation for World Peace ladies in Westchester, New York, embarked on a month-long campaign in December to sell raffle tickets with exciting prizes to encourage a spirit of giving for the Schools of Africa.

With stacks of raffle ticket books in hand and a clear goal in mind, we reached out to our knitting and dance groups as well as other social circles, not only to raise much-needed funds but also to introduce the Schools of Africa project to a wider network. We used our new Schools of Africa introductory booklet to proudly share about the impact these nine schools in eight African countries had with a broad group of friends and family, some of whom had never heard of WFWP before.

We were delighted to break the ice with our social groups and use this opportunity to talk about WFWP to those who were not familiar with the years of efforts and accomplishments of our organization. The generosity and interest of those in our community was heartwarming. We forged new relationships with like-minded women whom we hope will continue to be engaged with WFWP.

The weeks of effort culminated in the prize drawing event on Sunday, December 30th. Crowds gathered at 723 South Broadway to make last minute donations and to witness the drawings. A total of 13 prizes were drawn, with the assistance of Jennifer Perkins, Pastor Dr. Kone, his wife Seran, and WFWP USA Vice President Katarina Connery.

All of the prizes were donated and included a 50 inch Smart TV, a \$100 Kohl's gift card, a professional Shiatsu massage by Kanae Holt worth \$100, and \$50 gift cards from Target and Amazon. All those who purchased tickets had been given the choice which prize they wanted to take a chance on, and there were several consolation prizes, including platters of beautifully wrapped homemade cookies by French cook extraordinaire, Catherine Nelson, additional gift cards, and sets of placemats.

A buzz of excitement filled the air when it was time to draw the grand prize of the TV. One man waiting to hear the results, tightly clutching his book of tickets, was Koji Sugihara. He had purchased the tickets for the TV drawing because he knew his wife Yi-Ru had been longing to replace their old TV for years and he wanted to make her happy. The night before the drawing, he even had a dream that he won the TV as a gift from God. You can imagine how surprised he was that Sunday morning when Pastor Dr. Kone announced in his sermon that he also had a dream that he won the raffled TV. The audience roared with laughter when he joked that if someone else wins they should know that they weren't supposed to because he had this dream. Meanwhile Koji was thinking "I had the same dream!" Now it was finally time to announce the winner and happily it was Koji's ticket that was called. Perhaps there will be a TV in the future for Dr. Kone as well.

This was WFWP's first raffle experience in our area and we were grateful that we could make well over our financial goal of \$2000 for the Schools of Africa. Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive, with comments of how fun the event was and requests to "do this more often." The joy created by giving to a great cause made us all feel like winners in the end.

