

## 13th Annual Benefit for the Schools of Africa Project

Renate Sato and Lynn Walsh  
January 1, 2017



*Madame Kani Diop Keynote Speaker*

For the third year the Westchester Chapter of WFWP was again blessed to hold our annual Schools of Africa Fundraiser right beside the beautiful Hudson River, in the lovely Eileen Fisher Hall in Irvington, NY. We are grateful for the generosity of Eileen Fisher, a very distinguished fashion designer, and her Fortune 500 company for allowing us the use of her venue.

Our warm and welcoming emcee, Ms. Grace Ross, opened the program by introducing the Belvedere Family Church Choir. Accompanied by pianist, Dr. Rumiko Isaacson, the choir performed "Silent Night" in perfect harmony, followed by a lively version of "Go Tell it on the Mountain."

Mrs. Renate Sato, WFWP Westchester Chairwomen, described the many facets of WFWP and showed a video of WFWP in action. The film showed the impressive service work and other activities of WFWP worldwide. Included in the video were many images of WFWP's Co-Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, whose worldwide leadership and investment for over 24 years has resulted in WFWP International flourishing.



Lunch was a delectable array of California rolls, shrimp cocktail, sandwiches, chicken, vegetables, cheese and crackers, fruit, tempting desserts, to name but some of what was there to choose from. Our talented and hardworking chefs were Kanae Holt, and her sister, Chiharu Kellar. Everything was deliciously and

professionally prepared and displayed. Adding to the beautiful atmosphere was the flower centerpiece made by Natsue Erstling .It was truly a work of art.

After lunch, Ms. Hannah Joseph presented a pictorial report of the successes of the School of Africa project. With the many photos of happy African children at our schools, it began to seep into our hearts that this work and our dollars really can change the lives of young and deserving children in faraway lands.

Next we heard Hiroko Nitro give her testimony of her four years volunteering in the Republic of Guinea to support the WFP established school there. This was the first time we had an actual volunteer from one of the schools in Africa speak at our event. Hiroko gave many details of the work in Guinea, and of the situation that faced the volunteers 22 years ago when it all started. It was very moving and educational. We truly appreciate all the WFP Japanese volunteers for their continuing sacrifice and dedication in Africa.



For entertainment, we were treated to the polished and powerful voice of Steven Honey who sang Sibelius's "This is My Song." The song's deep message of God's universal love expressed in our love of our fellow man resonated with our reason for being there at that moment, our communal longing to help others all around the world, no matter how far away they may be.

The keynote speaker from Senegal, Madame Kani Diop, shared her message, "Educate a Child Today: Build a Brighter World Tomorrow." Dressed in her stunning African dress, Kani started her talk expressing the hopeless situation of so many of today's refugees. Many are just young children, who lose their lives tragically and senselessly. She was moved to tears thinking of the beauty of the innocent children that have no hope. She gave many details on how the education of children dramatically turns their futures around. With a smile on her face, she reminded us that it can be done. She is an example. Kanie ended her talk expressing her appreciation for the efforts of WFP.



The event not only raised funds to promote the education of African youth but raised all the participants' hope and determination as women dedicated to peace and the well-being of those we don't even know.

Thank you all who attended and helped to make the Westchester benefit a memorable event. We had so much support from the surrounding Belvedere community, and came very close to realizing our goal of raising \$4000 for the WFWP schools in Africa.

