

Moved To Act: The 2019 Horizon Summit

Angelika Selle and various participants
March 16, 2019

Editor's note: The Horizon Summit was an all-day event co-sponsored by WFWPI and WFWP USA on Saturday, March 16th, in New York, that featured a diverse program with powerful speakers, interactive breakout discussions and other activities. Four ladies were also given special recognition for their work, including Jean Kelly. To give you just a taste of what it was like, enjoy reading the personal thoughts of several young ladies on this experience.



F. Hasegawa speaking at the Horizon Summit

Kiyomi Schmidt, WFWP USA Outreach Coordinator:

I left the 2019 Horizon Summit with a heightened awareness of ways I can change my mindset, intentions, and actions to further build a culture of peace in my own life and community.

Even in the introduction of Horizon Summit awardee Jean Kelly, the Executive Director of the Interfaith Nutrition Network in New York, everyone in the room could feel her high regard for the homeless population describing them as strong, knowledgeable, resilient 'masters of the universe.' As she accepted her award, she further described what we all need to thrive as human beings, and what we can give to make an impact in our communities: unconditional love.

During our discussions, it dawned on me that I needed to change my own mindset about the homeless population in my community. Having recently lived in both New York City and Los Angeles, I have become numb to those sleeping in street corners and annoyed by those hassling me for money. I have grown apathetic to their situation, and have lost sight of their humanity.

As an action step, I came up with a mantra to tell myself when I encounter a homeless person. TREASURE, NOT TRASH. I felt that this is the least I can do on a daily basis to acknowledge each person, and a first step in recognizing the situations of those often abandoned and forgotten in society.



Carolyn Handschin speaking at Horizon Summit

A second presentation that left a mark on me was from Carolyn Handschin, WFWPI Offices for UN Relations Director, who spoke about advocacy. She described the need for global leaders at this time in history, who act not as observers, but as responsible, indispensable global citizens who raise their voices on issues throughout the world.

During the table discussions on this topic, I recognized how the Horizon Summit itself was a utopia of women leaders and global citizens doing just that. But it was also in that moment that I thought of many in my life outside of these walls who have little to no connection to this idea, and instead seek self-sustaining, short term happiness in all forms – love, money, career, and life experiences. I felt the desire for those in my life who seem lost or depressed to experience the long term satisfaction and deep purpose that comes when you start thinking beyond what I can do to make myself happy. And one way for me to act upon this desire is to invite these individuals to thought-provoking programs such as this.

Having been to all four Horizon Summit programs since working with WFWP, I can highly recommend it to women of all ages. There are few opportunities in life to look this deeply into ourselves, and to craft new ways of purpose-building intention and action. The Horizon Summit and UN Commission on the Status of Women happen each year in mid-March, so if you weren't able to make it this time around you can plan ahead for next year!

Sanjana Bhambhani, USA:

Attending the Horizon Summit was such an enriching experience. I had the opportunity to speak with women from around the world and hear their personal stories. This opened me up to some interesting new perspectives on the involvement of women in our international political sphere- which, I think, is key to building sustainable peace in our world today.

Najette Chouchane, England:

During the Horizon Summit, I was really moved by the youth talks, to see two young ladies achieve so much, giving so much to girls and women facing issues by sacrificing their time, effort, and dedicating themselves to do so. As a young person myself, I felt awe and amazement at seeing this.

F. Hasegawa, USA:

I am so inspired by the incredible works of so many empowering women. I'm grateful to have met these individuals who are fostering peace within their communities.



Vanessa Lee, WFWP USA Board Director:

The 2019 Horizon Summit was a precious occasion to reflect on and be empowered to act on a call to expand the capacity of the heart to embrace a culture of peace at an individual level, whether to address poverty, racism, gender inequality, or war. Echoing Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury's remarks, "the culture of peace begins with each and every one of us."

Alexandra Schermer, Netherlands:

I am excited for the WFP Horizon Summit to listen to the speakers and have discussions about the "culture of peace." I want to hear the opinions of others and share best practices together to work for a better world.

Johanna Toresen, President of WFP Norway:

Pedagogical research says that learning means changing, and I have learned and changed a lot through what I have heard, seen, and felt, this week during CSW and the Horizon Summit. I literally felt imprinted.



Jean Kelly, Executive Director of the INN