

Day of Service Thriving in Washington, DC

Elizabeth Aihe
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On Thursday, October 22, 2015 over 70 people participated in WFWP National Day of Service that was held for the third consecutive year at the 4th District Metro Police Department, 6001 Georgia Ave. NW, in Washington, DC. This project was initiated in 2013 by WFWP USA Vice-President Rev. Juanita Pierre-Louis, who made a proposal to add a service component to kick-off the National Assembly by sponsoring a National Service Project in the DC Area. The theme in 2013 was "Learn to Lead through Service." Min. Chi Mauuso, a well-known community organizer in DC, suggested that we tackle some of the problems in the community, so we decided to clean the streets in one of the communities in Washington, DC.



In this year's Day of Service project, three schools participated; New Hope Academy from Maryland led by Mrs. Beverly Berndt; the Center City Public Charter School in Washington, DC, led by Ms. Abigail Thompson; and Pro-Mo Love Home School Academy led by Ms. Meauvell Tate. Also a student came with the Chicago Chapter WFWP delegation to participate in the service project and attend the Assembly.

The program started at 10 AM. The emcee, Min. Fannie Smith, Director of the Schools of Africa Project, welcomed everybody and introduced the Service Project committee. Ms. Elizabeth Aihe, DC chapter chairwoman and Mrs. Wasana Catalan said a few words, and Minister Chi Mauuso recited her "Thank You" poem. Rev. Juanita Pierre-Louis, WFWP USA Vice President, then explained the purpose of the service project and gave an Introduction to Character Education.

Part of the national theme this year addressed how to sustain and maintain peace. If our youth learn the lessons that service teaches, we will and can raise a generation who will become responsible compassionate leaders who can empathize with the people of the world. They will be the makers of a history of peace and not let a history of violence and misunderstanding create their character or determine the path their lives take.



We at WFWP, USA realize that as well as gaining insight on how to address human needs, there is also a moral and ethical dimension that opens up as we learn to serve others. As our founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, says "by living for the sake of others" an individual sustains and maintains certain values, only by reciprocity and reflection can peace begin. We are also aware that as our young people "learn to serve" they will learn to lead through service as well as develop their character and build self-esteem. The committee also looked at the fact that this can be a positive character education model to be used in other chapters around the country.

Madam Traore Mintou Doucoure, the former first lady of Mali also gave remarks to encourage students to serve their communities in order to become better future leaders.

Then, as we moved on to more practical matters, Ms. Nandi Morton, the youth leader explained the cleaning procedure. We were ready to get our cleaning supplies and go out to clean Georgia Avenue (from Missouri Ave NW to Sheridan St. NW), Emory Park, outside the Fire Station, and shop windows in the area. When the students got back from cleaning, they were invited to enjoy many kinds of food that had been donated by ten small business owners in the area.

After lunch, Min. Fannie Smith asked for feedback from the students. One question she asked was, "What do you want to see done differently?" The answer the students gave was that they needed more time to clean. This year, Ms. Elizabeth Aihe, the chairwoman of WFWP D.C. Chapter gave certificates of appreciation to the students for serving their community. The students felt so much love that they want to come again next year as well as to other service projects that WFWP is planning. We can see how much people enjoy being part of WFWP National Day of service. In 2013, the Mayor of Washington, D.C Mr. Vincent Grey proclaimed, October as a Service month for the area.

One school counselor, whose school could not participate in this year's Day of Service project owing to a school emergency, said the students there were upset and disappointed that they could not participate. As a result, this school is arranging a community service activity that their students can do in the name of WFWP. After completing that project, the students can receive their certificates from the WFWP DC chapter.

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To conclude the program, WFWP USA President Angelika Selle applauded the students for having taken their first step toward true leadership through serving, and implored them to become leaders of the heart by creating harmony wherever they go. Mrs. Barbara Mosley-Marks, District representative of UPF (Universal Peace Federation), gave out two Ambassador for Peace (AFP) awards; one was given to the representative in attendance of Ward 4 Councilmember.

As everybody was leaving the conference room, Mrs. Misako Connery gave gifts that she had bought including shampoo, bath gel, organic coffee, Halloween bags with goodies, among other things, to everyone including the police. Everyone was very grateful that they had participated in this outstanding community service project.

