

WFWP USA: August 2023 Virtual National Herstory Awards

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August 12, 2023



Raluca Heim, MS, CADC
Drug And Alcohol Counselor
Virtue Recovery Center



Dr. Pamela Sandico Zapanta
Dentist, Entrepreneur
& Philanthropist

On August 12, 2023, WFWP USA held a virtual, National HerStory Award ceremony emceed by Mrs. Natascha Phillips of WFWP USA. The HerStory awardees represented various cultural and social backgrounds, yet all shared in their dedication to serving their communities, both in the United States and abroad. Through their work, each has brought incredible value to the lives of countless others.

Mrs. Phillips opened the event by greeting all the participants. Mrs. Phillips then proceeded to welcome WFWP USA President, Mrs. Kaeleigh Moffitt. President Moffitt expressed the value of the HerStory award and the need to acknowledge those women who serve their families and communities, even though they often do not even need the acknowledgement for themselves.

Each of the three awardees were introduced with her bio as well as a personal sharing from the WFWP leader who recommended her. President Moffitt virtually presented the award and each awardee was able to share her story with the participants.

The first speaker of the day was Ms. Raluca Heim, a drug and alcohol counselor serving the population at the Virtue Recovery Center in Nevada. Ms. Heim shared lessons she has learned from her journey of coming to the United States from Romania and pursuing her passion for deeper healing. Upon arriving in 2013, she quickly found herself alone and unsure of what to do and where to go, but felt that God was telling her to stay. Her first lesson was to realize the importance of the feminine. In addition, this time helped her to heal her relationship with her mother, which led to her being able to love herself and, in turn, show up as a mother for her own daughter.

On overcoming challenges, Ms. Heim gave the advice that when faced with challenges, the best thing to

do is "be still and learn to connect with that part of you that is your true self or your higher self." Because of this, she shared, she can look back and be grateful for all the challenges she has had to overcome, because they helped to shape the person she is today.



Joan Chanman-Forbes
Executive Director/President
Our Children the Future Inc.

The second speaker was Mrs. Joan Chanman-Forbes, Executive Director and President, Our Children the Future Inc.

For Mrs. Chanman-Forbes, God brought her from her vision of being a businesswoman to serving her family and community. Her love and passion for service began when she would volunteer with her mother. Years later, her brother got sick and Mrs. Chanman-Forbes and her husband took him in, with her leaving her job to become his full-time caretaker. However, "there was a void that I needed to fill" and so she and her husband started their volunteer organization, Our Children the Future Inc. This allowed her to control her time without giving up on her passion for service to the community, and especially their main beneficiaries, the children of Trinidad and Tobago, her home country.

Mrs. Chanman-Forbes concluded with three key points she has come to live by. First, to "keep my faith in the forefront." Second, "I take time for self care." And third, to "live by example and be the solution, not the problem."

The third and final awardee of the day was Dr. Pamela Sandico Zapanta, Dentist, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist.

She spoke first of how as a child she faced the challenge of her own shyness and lack of self-confidence, which was exacerbated by the teasing she would receive from her peers at school, for her provincial accent as well as her English. However, these challenges ignited a fire in her to improve herself. In college, she continued to blossom in the much more open environment and deepened her own Catholic faith and identity during this time, which has played a large part in her work ever since.

Dr. Zapanta next spoke of her appreciation for all those who have inspired her in her humanitarian work over her life, starting with her father. With this example, Dr. Zapanta made offering free dental care on dental missions a cornerstone of her own humanitarian work throughout her career, and has continued this work in her retirement.