

## UPF West Orange, NJ hosts Annual Parents Day 2019 Celebration

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On July 11th, West Orange, in New Jersey, an affluent and close-knit community which shares borders, beyond its beautiful natural background and famous Turtleback zoo and environmental center, with several other towns, was the host city for Universal Peace Federation's annual Parents Day celebration. The West Orange event was the first of many events to be held throughout the state during July and August.

Against the background of a stormy night, our celebration of Parents Day brought an undeniable and indescribable calm and peace amidst the storms of life these parents have gone through. More than sixty participants joined us on this memorable night. Many parents even brought their children to attend.

Among our nominees were university department chair, city commissioner, businessmen and community leaders among others. In addition to the Mayor, honorable Robert D. Parisi, who presented all the nominees with their awards, we were also honored to have two deputy mayors in attendance. The Mayor addressed the audience and spoke eloquently about the need for strong family values and the necessity for the community to join hands together because good family is the key component for a good community.

Dr. Jeffery Lipitz spoke on behalf of all the awardees. He was very grateful for the work UPF is doing by promoting and encouraging parents to be a good role model in the community throughout New Jersey and around the country. He was grateful to his wife for helping him raise wonderful children. He was also grateful to the city and the mayor for opening their door and welcoming all the parents who came to the event. He pledged to join hands with all the awardees to continue to help us promote this vision which is critical for the betterment of the community.

Dr. Robert Beebe spoke about the crucial role of parents in raising good children because family is essentially the school of love. He stressed the importance of understanding the four realms of love. Rev. Oppenheimer shared a PowerPoint presentation on the historical background of Parents Day.

Dr. Velez, in his congratulatory remarks, gave a powerful testimony about Rev. and Mrs. Moon as the champions of peace. He reminded the audience that it is because of them that we are celebrating this moment and this nation of America should be grateful to Rev. Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. He went even further to testify of their efforts in the Middle East, Africa, Europe and Asia. He also stressed that it is because of God's love and their faith and commitment to serve mankind that we can all gather here for an event such as this.

His wife, Dr. Josie Velez who is also Chairwoman for the City Commission on Public Relations concluded all the speeches with a Call to Action. She called on everyone to get involved in their community and to also join our effort so that by working together as parents, we can build a better community.

As I sat there, I was wondering how many among these parents have encountered "rainy days" in their lives? Those times of financial struggles, the emotional storms, poor health, or relationship difficulties? How many turbulent times in life have they gone through? At the same time, it reminded me that, although we will always face challenges in life, not all our days as parents will always be rosy or sweet, we should not focus too much on the problems so that we lose sight of the opportunities. We should always find the optimistic viewpoint. It also reminded me of a quote by Gilbert K. Chesterton: "And when it rains on your parade, look up rather than down. Without the rain, there would be no rainbow."

Indeed, we were truly blessed by Heaven and we are grateful that, with the leadership of UPF here in New Jersey and throughout the country, we can make a difference and bring our modest contribution in order to strengthen families and solidify the foundation of our communities.