

UPF Vienna, Austria Speakers Depict Strong Families, Happy Children

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Vienna, Austria – The United Nations’ motto for the International Day of Families 2026 is "Families, Inequalities and Child Well-being." UPF-Austria, the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) and the Austrian Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) addressed this theme on May 30, 2026, in Vienna with a conference entitled "Family – School of Love: Strong Families, Happy Children."



The event brought together an international audience of 120 people and speakers from a variety of backgrounds.

In his welcoming address **Mr. Peter Haider**, president of UPF-Austria, referred to the UN motto in emphasizing that family-oriented measures should promote healthy child development, as families are central to the development of society, nations, and ultimately, the human family.

Mr. David Wurzer, president of FFWPU-Austria, spoke on “The Family as the Nucleus of Society.” Drawing on memories of his childhood breakfast table, Mr. Wurzer emphasized that the family

is the place where people first learn trust, patience and selfless love. As a father in an intercultural marriage, he experiences daily how differences and conflicts can be learning opportunities; coping methods learned in the family can be applied later in society. His conclusion: Peace begins not in conference rooms, but at the breakfast table.



Ms. Ulli Ehrgott, chairperson of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family, said that family gives people identity and security and forms the foundation for social cohesion. In her presentation, she highlighted key challenges facing modern families: managing rising performance pressure, bearing heavy financial burdens, balancing career with childcare. She also addressed the issue of domestic violence, primarily affecting women and children, in addition to care of the elderly. Her central plea: When young and old treat each other with respect and understand differences as complementary, they can form a bond that holds families and society together.



As a cultural interlude, a medley of three songs from the musicals “Oliver Twist,” “The Secret Garden” and “Annie” were sung by **Ms. Kirsten Wendeborn** and two children. It addressed movingly the topic of children becoming orphans as victims of war. A short message by author and filmmaker **Mr. Joshua Sinclair** provided a backdrop to this serious topic.

Mr. Christian Ebner, representative of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) spoke on “Rethinking Family Policy.” He explained his political commitment to family policy based on three pillars: better recognition of the family’s social and economic contributions; less government intervention; and an end to the economic disadvantages faced by parents. Specifically, he advocated for automatic pension splitting and lower taxes for parents. Transferable tax allowances within the family should also provide relief for young people, so their desire to have children need not be postponed too long.

Ms. Marinela Stefanc, secretary general of UPF-Austria, discussed the value of family in an increasingly complex world. She described the family as the first place where people experience love and learn fundamental values, such as patience and compassion. Children who grow up in trust carry these values

into society and thus contribute to peace. The speaker described intercultural marriages as vibrant bridges between nations: harmony can arise from differences, and love proves stronger than historical conflicts, she said.



A Vietnamese dance, performed by **Ms. Mai Cuc Moine**, depicted the spirit leading to reunification of her home country after two decades of civil war.



The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the True Family Award to couples who, through their long-term partnerships, embody the value of marriage and family. This year's recipients were couples from the Philippines, Malaysia and Syria. The award medal, whose ribbon encircles both spouses, symbolizes the couple's unbreakable bond.

Following the conclusion of the program, a buffet offered an opportunity for conversation and communication and a chance to make new acquaintances and rekindle old friendships.

