

WFWP USA Peace Road Southeast: People are hard to hate close up. Move in!

Natascha Phillips and Myrna Lapres
August 5, 2020



Visitors to the Lincoln Memorial were met with an unusual sight on a bright and sunny Monday morning in early August. More than 100 people, many of them in identical blue t-shirts and caps, were waving flags and joyfully proclaiming "Peace Starts with Me!" at the foot of the memorial steps, facing the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. This was the opening program of the Peace Road event in Washington, DC on August 3, 2020.



After a [kick-off event](#) in Jamestown, Virginia on July 28 and several days on the road in the Northeast, the Peace Road national tour was back in the Southeast region to spread a message of hope and reconciliation in the nation's capital. Participants, including those who came on their bikes, made sure to wear masks and follow social distancing guidelines as they listened to the inspiring messages in the three-part program.

"We are here today to repent and forgive, and to heal ourselves and this nation," said Women's

Federation for World Peace (WFWP) USA President Angelika Selle. "As [WFWP Founder] Mother Moon has said many times, history is calling for reconciliation, compassion, service, love, and sacrifice."

President Selle saluted all women, Black and White, Native American, Asian American and Hispanic, mothers of America, for their great contributions to this nation, which was met with resounding applause and cheers from the audience. She called on women now to make a difference by uniting with Mother Moon "to create a new paradigm, a new America, with all races coming together as one."



President Selle then welcomed WFWP Maryland Coordinator Dottie Chicquelo to the stage, to speak on behalf of Native Americans as a member of the Cherokee nation. "Everybody did not come over on the boat," said Ms. Chicquelo. "Some of us were already here."

Referring to the statue of President Abraham Lincoln behind her, Ms. Chicquelo recalled the damaging policies of a president that caused Native Americans to "lose their culture, their land, resources and language" and forced them to relocate on reservations. Lincoln's fear and hatred stemmed from his grandfather being shot by Natives, Ms. Chicquelo noted, and "learned hatred" is difficult to erase. Nevertheless, we cannot continue with old hatreds, and today "we are spreading love and forgiveness to all people that

can hear us." She ended on a hopeful note with a call for peace and unity.

After a moving prayer by Archbishop George Augustus Stallings, all Peace Road participants moved to the Korean War Veterans Memorial for the second portion of the program, which was guided by emcee Natascha Phillips, the WFWP USA Newsletter Editor. The focus here was on the peaceful reunification

of North and South Korea, and guest speakers included the South Korean Army Defense Attache General SeWoo Pyo and the Consul General of the South Korean Embassy in DC, Mr. Sejung Kwon.

To honor the veterans who had given their life during the Korean War, WFWP and five other organizations presented flower wreaths at the memorial in a solemn ceremony. President Selle and Mrs. Chicquelo offered the flowers on behalf of WFWP, as the audience held a moment of silence and offered prayers in their hearts. Then with one voice, everyone sang the Korean song of "Unity", called Tongil in Korean.



Following this event, President Selle shared her brief reflections in a recorded interview ([click here for the PEACE ROAD interview clip](#)). The Peace Road bike riders then made their way around the reflecting pool and joined those who walked to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial for a powerful concluding prayer of the day's events.

Another major Peace Road event in the southeast took place in Atlanta, Georgia on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, with the support of the Georgia chapter of WFWP. It began with a press conference at the Georgia State Capitol Building followed by a ceremony, "Reconciliation of All People", at the

Liberty Plaza across the street from the Capitol, and concluded with a youth symposium. The events were a collaboration of WFWP Georgia Chapter, American Clergy Leadership Conference, national Peace Road representatives and the Young Ambassadors for Peace.

The Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) is a newly formed organization that seeks to solve racial and cultural discord through peaceful dialogue and service projects. They took the lead for the day's events. The inspiration behind YAP came from several high school students who connected with Rockdale County Sheriff's Deputy and pastor Dexter Kilgore. The students were concerned about the racial tension and violence in their schools. Deputy Kilgore connected with Senator Donzella James who, as a former teacher, is passionate about supporting children, youth, family and community. YAP was born with WFWP member Ms. Miambi Mutandwa as one of the founding members. YAP held their second symposium, "Ending Racism Starts With Me" on that Wednesday afternoon.



The press conference was organized together with Georgia Senator Donzella James, who is a long time WFWP member and supporter. After various speakers, Senator James and Myrna Lapres, WFWP director of the southeast region participated in a peace candle exchange in front of the portrait of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the main floor of the capitol. Senator James told the audience that when she was in high school, her all-black school was not allowed to tour the capitol building. She was part of a ten-year effort to get the painting of

Dr. King hung there which she now gets to look at regularly as a senator.

Ms. Lapres quoted WFWP co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: "History is calling for reconciliation, compassion, love, service and sacrifice. Today's problems cannot be solved by the logic of power. Our present problems can only be solved by the Logic of Love."

Ms. Lapres went on to explain that the logic of love means to learn to live for the sake of others, considering their needs and caring for them even when it is uncomfortable. She quoted Dr. Brene Brown, "People are hard to hate close up. Move in." And she stated that to end misunderstanding, pain, violence and to eradicate racism, we need to be close enough to see the wounds, heal the pain, seek forgiveness and understanding, and recognize that we are all part of the family of God.

Then Myrna Lapres and Senator James invited up all WFWP members present including House of Representatives member Sharon Beasley-Teague, WFWP member since 1992, and Minister Reiko Jenkins, ACLC Women In Ministry. Representing women from all races and cultures, the peace candles were lit and exchanged. As an action step Myrna Lapres and Senator James committed to praying for each other and all women for forty days that they may bring reconciliation and understanding in their daily lives.