

WFWP's 24th anniversary National Assembly - Women Making an Impact

Angelika Selle
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DAY 1: HONORING OUR VETERANS AND THE BRIDGE OF PEACE

From Friday, November 11 to Sunday, November 13, the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) celebrated its 24th anniversary with a national assembly entitled *Compassionate, Sustainable Leadership: Women Making an Impact*.

"This annual event was unique this year in its unprecedented level of cooperation between our national headquarters and the local WFWP New Jersey chapter, led by Denneze Nelson," said Mrs. Angelika Selle, WFWP USA President. "There was also a high level of involvement by our young people, who helped create an atmosphere which merged professionalism and genuineness."

On Friday evening, over 220 guests gathered inside the exquisite setting of the Crystal Ballroom in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Fairfield, New Jersey, to celebrate the successes of this organization which True Parents founded in 1992 to empower and educate women to lead with "reconciliation, compassion, love, service and sacrifice."

WFWP USA President, Dr. Michael Balcomb, gave a welcome message, and Angelika Selle spoke briefly on the Founders' vision, the theme of creating an "antidote to selfishness", and a call to action to create a forward-moving culture of peace. "Instead of talking about what WFWP is doing, I thought it was more important to focus on the 'why'," said President Selle.

The main program kicked off with a Veteran's Day Tribute to the men and women who have served our country in the armed forces. Seventeen men and women who have served during various times were honored, including a 92-year-old female veteran who served during World War II.

At the banquet dinner that followed, WFWP held a Bridge of Peace Ceremony to encourage reconciliation and unity. Together, men and women, veterans, Republicans and Democrats, and African Americans and Caucasians pledged to heal wounds inflicted upon one another. In a deeply moving moment, a mother whose daughter had been murdered vowed to forgive and love the people who had hurt her. By the end of the ceremony, there was a spontaneous and electrifying moment during which many in attendance felt called to come onto the bridge, and share in this expression of healing.

DAY 2: GLOBAL WOMEN'S PEACE NETWORK PANEL, BREAKOUT SESSIONS, AND THE SCHOOLS OF AFRICA GALA

On Saturday, a panel of speakers and several breakout sessions gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about various topics of interest. Young Unificationist, Clara Brunkhorst, was the emcee, and

FFWPU North America Continental Chairman, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, opened the day with a testimony of the founding of WFWP in 1992, at which he was present, and the heart behind this organization.



The day's sessions included the harms of pornography and human trafficking, a session on women's leadership role in the family, and a session on going from vision to action. "Saturday was the thoughtful, deliberate, thinking cap kind of day," said Mrs. Selle. "Panelists put a finger on society's sore spots such as pornography and how it affects families. By the end of the day, there were so many questions that we had to cut the Q&A off after 40 minutes."

Gerry Servito, who led a breakout session on relationships as described by Unification Thought, was happy to educate people to see the Marriage Blessing from God's viewpoint. After the breakout session ended, Gerry shared his inspiration to focus more on teaching couples the "original ways of living and loving" that True Father stressed during his lifetime.



Later in the evening, WFWP hosted a Schools of Africa Fundraiser to support WFWP in its efforts. Audience members learned more about the non-profit's projects, and heard testimonies from two engineers and a hairdresser who had benefitted from WFWP schools as children. "It's amazing to see how many lives this organization has impacted," reflected one young woman from the audience. Another young woman agreed. It is "inspiring to see all the women who work hard to bring the message of WFWP and True Mother's message to other people," she shared.

During the fundraiser, two musicians wowed the crowd by playing the koto, the beautiful and harp-like national instrument of Japan. Then, a group of African drummers led the audience in a traditional rhythm and dance. Women young and old gathered on the floor to move with the music and celebrate.



DAY 3: MARRIAGE BLESSING CEREMONY IN CLIFTON

The next day, WFWP and the Clifton Family Church held a Marriage Blessing Ceremony, the first of its kind at a WFWP event, during their Sunday Service. Four couples rededicated their marriage vows in what felt like a “holy and beautiful” ceremony, according to Mrs. Selle. Pastor Manoj Jacob hosted the event, which proved to be a natural and exciting way for guests to see what the Blessing is all about. One guest immediately joined WFWP and aims to start learning more about the Blessing.

“The message of the Blessing relates well with WFWP’s vision for peace, our values, and the theme of the logic of love,” said Angelika Selle. She was so inspired by the ceremony that she pledged to hold as many Marriage Blessings as possible at future WFWP events. “We have to get the Blessing Movement going!” she said.

Guests at the event had the opportunity to network and see old friends from different regions of the country. “I’ve been able to make a lot of connections with people that I didn’t know,” shared one young woman from Arizona. Attending the assembly gave her a new sense of hope. “A lot of my prayers have been answered and I know that if we work together, it’s going to be ok,” she said.

“Overall, the assembly was uplifting and transformative,” said Angelika Selle. “We’ve already had so many requests from people asking what they can do to help.”

WFWP USA looks forward to next steps, connecting with like-minded people and organizations around the world, and seeing the vision for peace expand in the coming year. Find out how you can be a part of it all:

GET INVOLVED

Keep the vision strong! There are many ways to spread the word and connect with WFWP’s various initiatives.

Stay In the Loop

Sign up for WFWP’s free newsletter at wfwp.us!

Connect to a Chapter

Connect to your local chapter, or start your own chapter if there isn’t one yet in your area. Contact info@wfwp.us to get started.

Get in Touch

Let us know your interests and how you’d like to contribute!

Get Blessed

For inquiries about future WFWP Marriage Blessing Ceremonies, write to info@wfwp.us today!