

Sustainable Peace in the Making

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December 30, 2015



My experience at the WFWP event was informative, interesting and inspiring. The richness of the experience began with the car ride from University of Bridgeport to Washington, DC with Mrs. Nora Spurgin, the first president of WFWP in America, and Mrs. Lena Yasutake, Chairwoman of the Bridgeport WFWP Chapter. They drove with the five of us who were generously sponsored by the wonderful Colorado chapter. We had good conversations on the way there and I learned more about WFWP, its history and current activity, and the nature of the environment I was about to enter.

Mrs. Lena Yasutake turned out to be a very valuable person to be with. I felt she maximized what we would get out of the event by introducing it as an opportunity to step into the world of professionalism and diplomacy. She took us shopping to get new professional outfits as soon as we got there, sponsored in part by the Bridgeport chapter of WFWP, and offered countless invaluable tips on professionalism and how to get the most out of the networking opportunity of the first night.

The event itself, which began Friday night and lasted through Saturday night, was impressive and inspiring. Many important, influential women who had accomplished incredible things were there, including the former first lady of Mali and women in legislature, business, acting, modeling, health, activism, diplomacy, and many other occupations. It was an honor to be in their presence.

Saturday was full of inspiring presentations, including a panel on topics from "Yes, I Can - Ingredients to Become a Peace Leader," to "Mothers as Guardians of the Hearth." I recognized the unique potential of women in power, non-exclusive to men, to impact peace in the world. There was a wonderful keynote speaker, an incredible woman named Nia Lyte from Colombia, who spoke on "Sustainable Peace for a New Generation." From her I learned that it is important to keep peace on small levels first, to internally work on maintaining inner beauty, and to heal and unite the brokenness in your own family. I learned from her demeanor the importance of remaining humble and genuine even after reaching a place of power and influence.

After a delicious lunch, there were breakout sessions. We participants could choose to attend two of them. The first one I attended was entitled "Why Maturity Matters: Preparing for Marriage and Family." From this I came to contemplate maturity and the importance of selflessness, intentionality, and integrity, as well as the struggle the family is facing today. I then attended "Energy Healing for Peace and Prosperity," and learned more about the chakras and alternative healing techniques.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the first bridge ceremony, a ceremony that inspires symbolic reconciliation between divided groups. A beautiful bridge ceremony was performed, including bridge crossings in commemoration of the 20th anniversary, the unification of North and South Korea, Democrats and Republicans, America's First People and Protestant and Catholics, Blacks and Whites, and International/Interracial marriages. That was beautiful and quite moving.

There were then beautiful dance and choir performances. This concluded with an African drumming performance that soon became a group dancing event! It began with one beautiful sister standing up and African dancing and then people joined in, soon forming a circle to dance together. This was a wonderful, unifying, celebratory way to end the event.

Overall, it was a very valuable experience as a window into the world of professionalism, a networking opportunity, and inspiration as to the work that is being done and can be done to bring about a more sustainable peace in the world. The heart, the work, and the results of these women were all remarkable to behold. I am grateful to have been there.