

# WFWP USA: HerStory In Action- The Feminine Edge - Why Women's Leadership Matters

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On January 25, 2025, the Women's Federation for World Peace held its first-quarter *HerStory in Action* event to honor three remarkable women leaders who not only overcame challenges but also transformed their struggles into opportunities to inspire and serve their communities. In addition to the *HerStory Award* segment, a past awardee was also invited to share the incredible work her organization has been doing.

The event was graciously hosted by Ms. Adia Lancaster, WFWP Marketing Manager, who warmly welcomed attendees and invited WFWP President Kaeleigh Moffitt to share. Who began her remarks by quoting from *Mother of Peace*, the memoir of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: "Women have the capacity to embrace all people. A woman, especially a mother, is like a bowl with the capacity to embrace men, women, children, and the whole. Nobody can change that."

Drawing from this insight, she shared her perspective on embracing challenges rather than resisting them - welcoming them in safe situations, particularly in interpersonal relationships. By acknowledging emotions from both sides and fostering mutual understanding, individuals can move forward together toward meaningful solutions.

In today's divided and polarized world, she emphasized the need for a feminine approach to peacebuilding - one that complements the efforts of male counterparts. This approach, often referred to as *soft power*, encourages an engaging, affirming, and inclusive stance. By fostering an environment where all perspectives are heard and valued, we can cultivate the kind of heart that embraces all sides, ultimately driving meaningful change.

Following this, the awardees' bios were read and their nominators shared briefly and the awardees were then welcomed to share their stories.

The first HerStory Awardee, **Beverley Tidwell, CEO of Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation**, shared how her mission was born from a deeply personal experience. When her son was diagnosed with a brain tumor, she couldn't ignore the support she had received and felt compelled to be there for others facing similar challenges. At the time, the diagnosis was overwhelming, yet she came to accept that some things were beyond her control. Instead of dwelling on what she couldn't change, she chose to focus on being there for her family. In doing so, she made difficult decisions - defying her son's doctors, upsetting the local medical team and system - but she remained steadfast in doing what she felt was right. Upon returning from her son's surgery, rather than holding onto resentment, she brought gift baskets to the very physicians who had opposed her choices.

Through this journey, she realized that the families of patients often suffer silently, unaware of the full scope of what is happening. This insight led her to advocate for affirming and supporting not just the patient but the entire family. She also shared how encouraging it has been to witness young people grow

through their involvement - many of whom started as volunteers in their youth and have since become thriving professionals dedicated to giving back to their communities. She concluded with a heartfelt reflection that, everything that you give with all your heart, always comes back in some way. It is how we deal with our challenges that makes the ultimate difference.

The second HerStory Awardee, **Karen Gaal, Chairwoman and Public Safety Director of the Third District Metropolitan Police Department**, began her remarks by reminiscing about her upbringing. She recalled how her mother instilled in her the belief that even the smallest acts of kindness can create ripples of transformation. This lesson became the foundation of her life's work, reinforcing her conviction that women are the backbone of strong families and communities. In her professional journey, she has learned to collaborate with others, despite the challenges and complexities she faces. In moments of difficulty, she has drawn strength from the community and those around her, enabling her to advocate for others. Through partnerships with civic leaders, faith leaders, and grassroots organizations, Karen has addressed pressing issues, inspiring those she serves to lead with hope.

She shared a profound lesson she has learned along the way: leadership is not measured by titles or accolades, but by the legacy we leave for others. True leadership, she emphasized, is about creating pathways for others to succeed and building bridges that unite communities.

The third HerStory Awardee, **Jainny Tejan-Kella, CEO of Caring Hands Foundation**, shared how her commitment to giving back led her to return to Sierra Leone after graduating from nursing school. While there, she visited schools, engaged with teachers, and identified ways to provide scholarships to students, encouraging them in their educational journeys. When the Ebola outbreak occurred, she worked alongside others to raise awareness, mobilize the community, and secure essential medical supplies to help contain the crisis. Through her organization, she also established microfinance opportunities for those in need, particularly visually impaired adults, empowering them to become independent and less reliant on their school-age children for support.

A visit to a school for the blind gave her a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals, strengthening her resolve to support them even further. She concluded by expressing that witnessing others thrive from the support they received gave true meaning to her work, reinforcing her passion for service and community empowerment.

Following this, **Ms. Elizabeth Lim, CEO of *Scream, Run, Tell***, shared insights on her organization's nationally recognized *SRTell* method for child sex abuse prevention. Ms. Lim has trained law enforcement, medical professionals, childcare providers, and family counselors to strengthen their efforts in combating child sex abuse.

As both a survivor and a parent who prioritized open conversations with her children, she realized that more needed to be done to empower both children and their parents. She acknowledged that while these conversations are necessary, they can be daunting for parents. This is why her organization has simplified the process, making it easier for all parties involved to understand the essential steps. She emphasized that perpetrators thrive in secrecy and would rather remain undiscovered. This is why children must *scream and tell* - informing a parent, responsible adult, or authorities - so that perpetrators can be identified, held accountable, and stopped.

After the impactful presentation, the audience was encouraged to connect with their local WFWP chapters to get involved in community initiatives and stay informed about upcoming virtual events.

We congratulate and thank all the awardees for sharing their stories and using their challenges as stepping stones for impacting their communities