

Spreading Joy and Gratitude: WFWP Hawai'i's Holiday Gift Initiative for Veterans

Marie-Francoise Mitchell, Donna Shaver and Yuriko Harding
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In the spirit of community and compassion, a collective effort was initiated to bring joy and warmth to veterans during the holiday season, Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), along with its sister organizations FFWPU, Kodan, CARP, YAYAM, and ACLC members, came together with enthusiasm and dedication to contribute to the creation of holiday cards and gifts.

The holiday card-making event unfolded on November 26th and December 3rd where individuals from different organizations collaborated to craft heartfelt cards.

On December 8, 2023, Mrs. Marie-Francoise Mitchell and her husband James, accompanied by Mrs. Yuriko Harding, delivered the carefully crafted holiday cards and gifts to Marine Chaplain Octavia and Mrs. Doris Edwards during the AMVETS Marine Brass Band Christmas Concert. The initiative aimed to reach veterans in hospices, hospitals, care homes, and foster homes.

On December 16, Mrs. Marie-Francoise Mitchell and Ms. Lea Lipowcan and Mrs. Donna Shaver participated in the AMVETS gift bagging activity. Individual Christmas stockings were stuffed for each Veteran who is in hospices, hospitals, and care homes.



AMVETS Marine Brass Band Christmas Concert



The decision to extend this gesture of kindness to veterans stemmed from the involvement of Mrs. Yuriko Harding and her family, who are connected to the Women's Auxiliary organization led by Mrs. Doris Edwards. As members of WFWP Hawai'i sought an end-of-year service project which presented itself at the perfect moment.



Approximately 50 individuals, spanning from ages three to 80, actively participated in the holiday card-making activity. The collaborative effort took place at the Hawaiian Mission Academy Ka Lama Ike in Honolulu, Hawai'i, as well as in the personal spaces of contributors.

Mrs. Marie-Francoise Mitchell encounters with veterans further enriched the experience. Meeting a blind veteran living in foster care left a lasting impression, and she expressed a desire to follow up on the connection. Another encounter with a nearly centenarian WWII veteran at the concert, who advocated living a life of gratitude, added a profound spiritual dimension to the initiative.



The journey of giving unfolded like a snowball, starting small and attracting like-minded groups eager to share the gift of joy and happiness. The culmination of this effort brought additional blessings, as WFWP's involvement was recognized in Hawaii's News Now (HNN) broadcast. The initiative also fostered collaboration with various communities, church organizations, and businesses, including the Women's Auxiliary, Church of Latter-Day Saints, and United Airlines, underlining the power of collective goodwill and unity.