

WFWP Elizabeth NJ's Table Talk: How Women Are Portrayed By the Media

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Hollywood movies, television shows and advertisement campaigns all have something in common: their misrepresentation of women. This may have something to do with the fact that the majority of them are written, directed and produced by men. As a powerful tool of influence in society, media is a relevant topic that needs to be addressed.

To tackle this current issue, the Elizabeth chapter of the Women's Federation for World Peace in New Jersey hosted a forum where people shared their thoughts and perspectives on the topic "How The Media is Portraying Women." Around 35 people attended the lively program, held on January 19th in the main hall of the Elizabeth Family Church.



Mrs. Christine Rapada, the WFWP Elizabeth chairwoman, opened the forum by introducing the organization, its purpose, goals and objectives as well as the projects and advocacy work that it has consistently delivered since the inception of the organization in 1992. She then showed a brief video clip from the documentary 'Miss Representation,' which was written and directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsom (you can watch the whole film on Netflix [here](#)). The clip exposes how mainstream media and culture

contribute to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America. In the video, Katie Couric, Rachel Maddow, Condoleezza Rice, Gloria Steinem and other notable media personalities discuss sexism in American society and the media.

The members of the WFWP Girls, a project initiated by the same chapter, entertained the guests with their powerful song entitled "The Power in Me."

Then the group was divided into three tables for a 30-minute discussion. Several questions were prepared for the group to reflect and share, such as "How do you think media is affecting your life as a woman?", "Have your view and perspective changed after watching the video?" and "What do you think about the mantra 'if you can't see it, you can't be it?'". Afterwards, each table chose a representative to report what their group discussed on the issue.



Here are some reflections and sharings:

"I do not agree how media portrays women as an object and not as a human being. Women have intrinsic and equal value with men and should be respected the same way. However, sometimes, respect has to start from women themselves. If they do not respect their body, then how would men respect them in return?"

"This discussion is so on point and more conversations need to be done in order to protect women and get them the respect that they so deserve. We know how media is misrepresenting women due to wrong reasons and motivations and we should do something to change that."

"I like how the forum is short and sweet. The topic is so relevant and we need to be educated to empower ourselves in order to effect some change in the culture."

"Women are strong and truly the bedrock of the family. Men are nothing without women and vice versa. We need each other to create a better future for our families and our communities."

After the sharing, Mrs. Claire Haider, the chairwoman of WFWP Paterson, was called up to give the "Toast for Peace" and "Call to Action." She thanked all the ladies for coming and in particular the members of the Nation of Islam for spending their time with the group and sharing their thoughts as Muslim women. She encouraged everyone to sign up as "Friends of WFWP" and to continue to engage and participate in future events.

Afterwards, the WFWP Girls came out for a closing song followed by warm fellowship. An early dinner was served to all.

WFWP NJ also scheduled another program dubbed "Leadership of the Heart" on January 26th in Newark, NJ. Look forward to reading more about it in an upcoming edition of the Logic of Love Newsletter.