

WFWP DC Annual Day of Service - Caring for Earth and Each Other

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On Thursday, October 18 on a sunny autumn day, 81 people (58 students and 23 adults) came out to the WFWP DC Annual Day of Service to clean historic Georgia Avenue and learn leadership qualities through serving others and the community. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had said, "Everybody can be great...because anyone can serve." The day's activities started at the 4th District Metro Police Department in Washington, DC.

Students and teachers from two schools participated this year: one veteran and one newcomer. Thirty students from New Hope Academy, which has participated in the Day of Service since it was started, came to learn and clean led by Beverly Berndt and several teachers. School counselor for Coolidge High School, Mrs. Linda James, brought 18 students. Mrs. James was so inspired about WFWP and what it does, she felt that it was a privilege to be part of this project. Mrs. LaRoya Huff, community coordinator from DC Ward 4 Councilmember Brandon Todd's office, was very happy to see her alma mater, Coolridge, participating.

The Day of Service brings together many different people who may not usually interact--students, teachers, parents, police officers, the Mayor's Office, local Council-member representatives, business owners, and WFWP members--with a common purpose to serve the community. This year the Mayor's Office not only sent a representative, Ms. Jasmine Benab, with a proclamation but also gave a generous donation toward the t-shirts; the students stood out in bright orange as they swept the streets, cleaned up trash, and offered to clean the windows of local businesses.



The pre-program started with a moving prayer from Pastor John Davis of Mt. Zion Baptist Church who has been a part of the project from the onset. Before heading out to clean, Rev. Juanita Pierre-Louis, WFWP USA Vice President and founder of the Day of Service project, explained the vision and purpose

of the community service project. She said as our young people "learn to serve" they will learn to lead through service as well as develop their character and build self-esteem. Young people with a strong sense of self-worth and self-esteem can only improve their own lives and the society around them.

During a delicious lunch donated by local businesses inspired by the service of the young people in their neighborhood, a few remarks were given by Mrs. Angelika Selle, WFWP USA President. Commander Randy Griffin, Lieutenant Troy Jessup and officer Derrick Stanton from the 4th District Police Department also spoke to the students, encouraging them not to fear when they see police officers and to count on the police when they are in danger. Through proper communication and building relationships we can dissolve current and perceived tensions between the public and the police.

We had the honor of welcoming officer David Williams from "Helping Hand" who donated the needed tools (brooms, trash bags, gloves, etc.) to do the cleaning project, imparted encouraging words to the students. The Cleaning and Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program, Inspector Nestor Vences not only spoke about the importance of cleaning but also said, "If you don't clean, you could be fined for not cleaning". We also had several visitors to the Police Department who popped into our meeting and enjoyed themselves.



Police officers with students

Reflection from students:

Brian, 6th grade: At the service project with the Women's Federation for World Peace I learned that you don't do good things to get a reward, but to care for Earth and each other. I also learned that you shouldn't just do good deeds for praise. When someone litters you shouldn't act like it's not your problem and leave it. You should clean it up.

Indira, 6th grade: When I was doing community service, people would pull over and congratulate us and thank us. I learned about leadership and how important it is to help the environment. We offered to clean the windows of a few small shops. After cleaning we went back for food and learned about the importance of service. Overall I had a good time and learned a lot.

Yael: I learned and experienced that leaders lead people toward good, not bad.

Xavier: I had a good time in service. It felt good knowing the street was clean.

We are hoping to expand to other communities and give educational programs and character education.

WFWP DC chapter chairwoman Elizabeth Aihe and Co-chairs, Min. Chi Mauuso and Jane Karimi would like to thank WFWP Home Office for sponsoring the Day of service; WAPA, Missouri Market, Little Caesar, J and J restaurant and Wonder Chicken for food donations; Mrs. Misako Connery, WFWP member for gifts for everyone; Coolidge high school, New Hope Academy, Mayor Bowser's office and Councilmember Todd's office; all volunteers and participants including Angelika Selle, Rev. Juanita Pierre-Louis who came from New York, and Myrna Lapres- WFWP Subregion Chairwoman and Ekaette, Atlanta WFWP chairwoman who came to join us from Atlanta. A BIG THANK YOU!