

WFPW Stuttgart, Germany celebrates UN International Women's Day

Ute Lemme
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Ute Lemme, leader of the local WFPW branch, opened the event by welcoming the guests and explaining that 8 March was first declared as International Women's Day as official UN Day of celebration in 1977. WFPW Int'l, which was established in South Korea in 1992 by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, holds special consultative status with the UN.

The program was focused on four women who have contributed to society in special ways:

Ilham Mandalawy, raised in a Muslim family in Iraq, introduced herself, she was encouraged to study by her father and became a teacher. After her husband had been taken political prisoner, she fled in 2000 in order that she and her three children could live in safety. We were moved by her struggle to establish a new life for herself and the children. She was unable to find work in Germany and so founded a language school where she gave lessons to Muslim women and taught refugee children their native Arabic language.

Rosemarie Tijsterman told us that from very early on in her life, she was confronted with illness both in herself and her family. She trained as a nurse and worked for many years in a normal hospital. It became clear to her that many illnesses were not caused by physical factors and she prayed to find a way to help people to heal or prevent illness at the root. She found out about of a method from the USA, the 'Emotion Code' and learnt how to use it. She is now able to help people in a special way where doctors and psychologists are often powerless.

The third woman to be introduced was Irmgard Ingwersen. Although she was not able to personally be present, her photo was projected onto the screen and her report read out. Even as a small child she loved art and drawing but was not able to make it her profession. She especially enjoyed portrait painting and

through this she was able to earn money while she was in Uganda and thus support the work of local artists. When her husband became ill, she became acquainted with and trained in therapeutic painting, developing the ability to paint 'soul pictures'. An important discovery for her was the new trend of „Urban Sketching“. She meets regularly with others in Regensburg, in order to paint chosen motives-just as it pleased them. Examples of her artwork were projected on the screen.



Then Ursula Simminger told us about her work. She was raised in a small family and was often lonely, but felt very connected to nature. From an early age, she, and later her children were plagued by severe allergies. She was thus unable to train for specific employment and so worked in various areas. It became very obvious to her that the traditional family structure is collapsing in contemporary society; old people are shunned and isolated and children given to strangers to be raised. Traditions are lost. She is currently working on different ways to revive valuable classical family structures by educating young parents.

Following their presentations, the four women were called up to the stage (with a representative for Irmgard Ingwersen) and presented with a certificate naming them as an Ambassador of Peace. One of the guests, a woman from Kashmir, came forward from the audience and gave Ute Lemme a special sample of handcraft from Kashmir, a gift for WFWP Stuttgart.

The official part of the event came to a close after a group photo; then we exchanged ideas over coffee and cake.

Reported by Ute Lemme
WFWP Stuttgart/Germany