

UPF Australia: Australian Citizens Awarded for Exemplary Community Service

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Sydney, Australia - Outstanding citizens who have made substantial contributions to their communities were honored with the Living for Others Award on December 2, 2023, at the Peace Embassy in Sydney. In his keynote address, Mr. John Adamedes, president of UPF-Australia, praised the recipients for their public-minded lifestyles. He added that a spiritual perspective and reverence for the family are necessary attitudes in striving to create one human family, in which people live for one another.



The Living for Others Award was presented to six representatives of different ethnic communities:

Mr. Abulla Agwa, who came to Australia as an Ethiopian refugee, has dedicated himself to serving the Ethiopian community. He is chairperson of Ethiopian Multicultural Action for Human Rights, which serves to educate and protect vulnerable people. He has also served on numerous other boards and committees that serve the community.

Mr. Gharib Al-Salehi is active in supporting Arab members of the Mandaean faith community in Australia. He has helped many refugees and immigrants adapt to life here, while retaining their traditions and customs. This includes starting a soccer team for young people, to teach discipline, teamwork and loyalty.

Mr. Safet Alispahic is known to every member of the Bosnian community in New South Wales. He has helped provide humanitarian services, especially for the young and the elderly. He has held various

positions with the Australian United Bosnian Herzegovina Association, and has represented his community on many occasions, contributing to a better understanding of cultural diversity.

Ms. Sainju Sarina belongs to the Nepalese community. She is well-known as a dancer and performer, often at charity events. She teaches Nepalese dancing to young children, and is currently leader of the Young Volunteers Team at Sydney's renowned multicultural Children's Festival.



Mr. Syed Asim Raza has lived in Sydney since 1990. He started a community-based charity to assist new migrants from Pakistan, India and the Philippines, helping them to settle in their new country. He also serves free food for homeless people in the Harris Park area. To enhance community spirit, he organizes popular cricket tournaments for Indian and Pakistani youth.



Dr. Thi Tuong Phan is a specialist in community psychiatry, who has contributed greatly to the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness in underprivileged groups. Having come to Australia by boat as a refugee from Vietnam in the 1980s, she has a deep understanding of the refugee experience, as well as of mental illness. She has helped to rescue refugees from Cambodia, and to assist the mentally ill in Vietnam and Thailand. She is currently director of Schools for the Future, an Australian charity that provides scholarships for children living in poverty.

The awards presentation was followed by congratulatory messages from Mr. Yutaka Yamada, chairman of UPF-Oceania, and Mr. Sandhya Reddy, deputy mayor of Strathfield Council. The audience was then treated to the performance of an Iraqi song by Ms. Suha Gharib, and a Nepali dance by Ms. Sarina Sainju.



Finally, the six awardees, along with four other community members, were appointed as UPF Ambassadors for Peace, as part of an ever-expanding global community of peacemakers. Closing remarks were offered by Mr. Santosh Neupane, vice president of UPF-Australia.

