

WFWP USA: Sharing Cross-Cultural Stories: Schools of Africa

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WFWP hosted **"Sharing Cross-Cultural Stories: Schools of Africa"** at the Natrona County Library in the Barbara Bush Study Room from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The event welcomed community members for an engaging morning of cultural exchange, storytelling, and dialogue. Special guests included Irene B., who shared personal experiences growing up in Ghana, and Stacey M., who delivered the featured presentation.

As guests arrived, they were welcomed into a warm and friendly atmosphere. The program began with an introduction to the Women's Federation for World Peace, its founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han, and the organization's vision, goals, and peacebuilding initiatives. Participants were inspired by a personal testimony recalling involvement in the Bridge of Peace event in 1995, setting the tone for a morning focused on building understanding across cultures.

Stacey M. then shared her experiences supporting educational initiatives in Benin, Africa, through the Peace Corps. Her presentation offered insights into the country's culture, food, educational system, and the challenges faced by local communities. Irene B. complemented the presentation by providing an in-depth and personal perspective on growing up in Ghana, enriching participants' understanding of

everyday life in West Africa.

During the break, guests enjoyed refreshments while listening to "We Are the World" by U.S.A. for Africa. Participants also admired the vibrant colors and designs of traditional African clothing, with each person having the opportunity to select and try on an African dress, creating a memorable and interactive cultural experience.

The second half of the program centered on sharing personal stories of intercultural encounters that demonstrated the power of kindness, respect, and understanding. One memorable story described villagers in Fiji presenting a handcrafted bowl to a newlywed couple after the couple made sincere efforts to learn about and appreciate the local culture. Another recounted the emotional response of an African woman who shed tears of joy when a North American woman surprised her with a birthday cake because no one had ever celebrated her birthday before. Additional stories highlighted moments of reconciliation, cross-cultural friendship, and heartfelt apologies between people from countries with histories of conflict, illustrating how genuine human connection can overcome longstanding divisions.

The event concluded with a brainstorming session about future gatherings and potential venues, reflecting participants' enthusiasm for continuing opportunities to learn from one another and strengthen community relationships.

Participants expressed their appreciation through written reflections, including:

"I feel that this organization is going to bring a lot of people together. It is very educational and I know we will love it." - Irene B.

"This meeting reminded me how while all of us are from different countries, we are all living in the same world. It reminded me of being grateful for what we have, no matter how small."

"There must be a way through understanding to make this world better for all. What a wonderful idea to bring women together to support peace."