

Washington Officials Applaud WFWP's Street Beautification Project

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Encouraged by officials from the Washington, D.C., mayor's office and a local councilwoman's office, some 55 middle- and high-school students and a half-dozen of their teachers turned out Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013 to sweep the streets and wash shop windows on a historic Washington, D.C., thoroughfare. The service project was organized by Women's Federation for World Peace USA (WFWP) as part of its 21st annual National Assembly.

Prior to the kids' hitting the streets on and around Georgia Avenue Northwest, Keith Holman, a community affairs assistant to Washington Mayor Vincent Gray, exhorted the youth by telling them, "You are leaders of future. Have a big vision for yourself. Develop a broad horizon. Go many places and travel the world to do this." The pre-service gathering was held in a public-meeting room at the District 4 Metropolitan Police station on Georgia Avenue.



Constituent Services Director Brandon Todd, from DC Councilwoman Muriel Bowser's office, told the group, "Believe in yourself. Don't be afraid. You have what it takes to create a better future."

The Rev. Dr. John Davis, the vibrant 91-year-old pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church on 14th Street Northwest, gave the students a lot of grandfatherly wisdom for their lives. He warmly recounted how, back in the 1980s, he had interceded with the federal government on behalf of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the co-founder (with his wife) of WFWP).

Angelika Selle, president of WFWP USA, chimed in with Rev. Davis, telling the youth that, regardless of their personal family situation, they have the potential to become a great leader "if you live for the sake of others by living by the logic of love, which is WFWP's motto. To clarify," she continued, "love does not equal sex; we're referring to agape love, which is selfless, genuine, and real. We need future leaders who are authentic, compassionate, good, and morally strong."

The Rev. Zagery Oliver, pastor of the Washington Family Church, told the youth that service is not just about what they give but also about what they get from it. He cited a study in which a population of teen girls who had given birth out of wedlock was divided into two demographically similar groups. The members of one group were given paid jobs. The others were assigned to unpaid service projects. After

some years, the researchers found that the girls with jobs had far more additional out-of-wedlock children than those who had done the service projects.

“How is it that this happened?” Rev. Oliver asked. “It’s because service builds character. It builds self-esteem. It builds a value system.”



Some comments from some of the participating kids:

- “It felt good to help out the community and be respectable to elders and to show appreciation and how much we care.” Tyler, grade 9
- “I learned that giving back to the community doesn’t just help us but helps other as well. I also learned that women are leaders as well and don’t just have to follow men.” Isabel, grade 9
- “It was a good learning experience, and people were happy the young people were doing things for others and not just for themselves.” Brianna, grade 11



- “It felt good to clean up, knowing that it would help the environment. There were people who said thank you and that felt good as well.” Alyssa, grade 9
- “It was nice to see how people reacted positively to our offer to help.” Amanda, grade 9
- “It was educational and fun!” Huy Lin from Viet Nam, grade 11
- “Today we swept the street together. I really enjoyed it, and I like cleaning with my friends.” Annie from China 11th grade.
- “It was very fun. It felt good to clean the street. It’s like giving something back to the world.” Mook from Thailand