

WFWP Scotland UK's joint event Happiness Program by Art of Living

Keiko Fraser-Harris
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On Saturday, 14 April 2018, WFWP Scotland/UK held a joint event with representatives from the group 'Art of Living' to introduce their 'Happiness Program'.

Around 20 sisters gathered in the afternoon at Partick Burgh Hall in Glasgow and Keiko Fraser-Harris, chairperson for WFWP Scotland, welcomed everyone and spoke briefly about the work and vision of WFWP, followed by Dr. Sujata Sriram from the Glasgow branch of Art of Living, introducing their visitor from the United States, Sharmila Udiavar, who is an international instructor for the Happiness Program.

Since the time was limited we went straight into action and Sharmila asked us all to pair up with a sister we didn't yet know. We were given a few minutes to introduce each other and talk about what we think are our strengths. Afterwards we shared those discoveries one by one with the group and Sharmila pointed out, that this positive sharing was instantly lifting our spirits.

Next, we met with different sisters in groups of 4 and were asked to identify things that were hindering us from doing what we would like to achieve and after a short time of discussion, we again shared our reflections with everyone present.

Then we were encouraged to talk about situations that aren't going well in our lives, but the discoveries we made there were not shared with others and Sharmila reminded us that anything we heard during the session was confidential and should not be shared with anyone afterwards.

The point of these exercises is to take time to look at ourselves and erase our ego and learn to control our emotions.

Following this sharing of thoughts and feelings, Sujata lead some breathing exercises – focussing on slowly inhaling and exhaling. Sujata mentioned that breathing patterns change according to the feelings we are having. When we are angry, we have shallow and short breaths and when we are relaxed and joyful, we take long, deep breaths. The obvious conclusion is that our breathing is influenced by how we feel, and therefore our negative emotions can be transformed by controlling the way we breath.

Then Sharmila demonstrated some Yoga exercises and challenged us to use them to release stress and get rid of negative feelings. Finally, our introductory session to achieve happiness was closed with some relaxing meditation.

Sharmila pointed out that this program is about connection in action - harmonising our body, breath and mind, and connecting with oneself and others on a deeper level.

After a group photo, we shared some refreshments and lively discussions continued.

Reported by Keiko Fraser-Harris
WFWP Scotland/UK