

The Purse Project: Women Helping Other Women

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For members of WFWP Arizona, even a small purse carries a lot of love.

The Arizona chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) recently started a project called the Purse Project, in which participants collect used handbags, fill them with several essential items and give them to homeless women. Rhia Clemente, chair of WFWP Arizona, created and helped organize the project with the help of her friends, who were inspired by her idea. One friend even introduced Rhia to a local radio announcer named Naye Olivera, who spread news of the project to her listeners through announcements on her women's radio station. Ms. Olivera also collected bags from her personal friends to support the WFWP project. She was very inspired to hear what Rhia and her team were doing, as she is also passionate about helping women. "When we do something for others, it creates more curiosity, more opportunities for everyone," she said.

The project started out as a Facebook picture that Rhia had seen. It illustrated a person giving a handbag to a homeless woman. It was posted on Thanksgiving and immediately encouraged her to do the same. Together with her WFWP chapter, Rhia started planning over the months of December and January. The project was officially inaugurated on January 19, and since then, the chapter has collected used bags packed with necessities. Some of the items are toothpaste, toothbrushes, socks, deodorant, granola bars, and money. As of this week, the group has collected more than 25 bags, which will be sent to a community home called Maggie's Place by March 12, in honor of Women's History Month.

Rhia explained that this project not only has brought good results in getting volunteers but also will make an impact on those that it serves. One homeless woman was so touched to hear what Rhia and her group are doing, she cried from happiness. If the WFWP Arizona chapter can inspire the people that they work with and serve, then so can anyone else.

Women's Federation for World Peace continually encourages all the chapters to contribute to and serve their local communities. The Purse Project is a great way to serve those in need. All WFWP chapters can start similar projects, such as giving a gift box full of toys and books to children in shelter homes. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve."