

WFWP Stuttgart, Germany celebrates UN International Friendship Day 2018

Ute Lemme
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WFWP Stuttgart/Germany hosted an event on the premises of the Family Federation FFWPU: an informal discussion about the topic of friendship. This was an extraordinarily international meeting which took place in midsummer weather marking the occasion of the UN International Day of Friendship.

After casual exchanges over refreshing drinks and snacks, the meeting was officially opened by Gabriele Schickert who told a short story about two friends. Ute Lemme explained that the initiative for a Friendship Day came from South America already in 1958, and finally in 2011 the UN proclaimed an International Friendship Day, to be held each year on 30 July. Ute continued with a report from an Augsburg newspaper in 2017 about the International Friendship Day- an interview with the psychotherapist Wolfgang Krüger in Berlin, who is doing research about friendship and relationships. Any one person has at the most three really good friends: a good friend is one who is absolutely trustworthy and reliable. Many friendships fail within seven years; friendship must be cultivated. Finding a good friend is similar to looking for diamonds. Good friendships result in emotional stability and can add about 20 years to one's lifespan.

Quotes about 'friendship' were distributed, and every guest drew two quotes, which were read out, one by one. After this, we listened to the old German folk song "Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken..." ('true friendship is unfaltering').

We then watched several short films on the topic, and one which was especially well received was about friendship between animal and man. An excerpt from a video interview with the mental and consciousness trainer Irmgard Bronder was also interesting; she stressed the importance of being a friend to oneself. Friendships can be formed between people from different countries, religions and cultures. Here the WFWP makes an invaluable contribution with its Bridge of Peace ceremony. Explanations can be found on the Women's Federation homepage as well as a long list of ceremonies already performed- for example, between women of previously enemy countries such as Germany and Poland or Germany and France, and between women from conflicting factions such as Christian and Moslem, German and Jewish. As an example of how the hereditary hostility between Germany and France was overcome was demonstrated by a short video about the Elysee Treaty in which Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron speak about "55 years of the Élysée-Treaty".

The final contribution was a video about an event in Switzerland on the occasion of the International Friendship Day, 2017. Two women, a Palestinian and an Israeli, are taking the initiative-with complete political independence- to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians by mobilizing mothers in Israel. The video shows them singing together in Switzerland the song of peace "Prayer of the Mothers"
<https://www.kla.tv/2017-06-21a/10696andautoplay=true>.

After this, we broke up into small groups for further exchange and to deepen friendships, in closing we watched the beautiful video "Danke für Deine Freundschaft"(thank you for your friendship) and announced our next event, to be held on 16 August-a summer outing to Ebensee.

Reported by Ute Lemme
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