

## WFWP Canada's Eighteenth Celebration of International Women's Day

Christine Ranisavljev  
March 23, 2024



The 18th edition of the Women's Federation for World Peace Canada (WFWP Canada) celebration of International Women's Day was held on, March 23, 2024. There were 66 participants in the hybrid event which included French interpretation. With an impressive lineup of guest speakers, including Asma Mahmood, Artistic Director, Canadian Community Arts Initiative; Atiya Ahsan, Financial Advisor, Ahsan Financial and Zonta Club volunteer; and Yulia Tarasova, Clinic Clerical Assistant at Trillium Health Partners. There was also entertainment, a luncheon and plenty of opportunities to network with other socially engaged women and youth.



Asma Mahmood opened the speeches with a 120-year-old story that still holds today. Her journey as an artist who made the conscious decision to come to Canada and found the system too one-sided to accommodate diversity describes her tenacity. Although she could not directly enter the existing art scene, she volunteered at the Art Gallery of Ontario and gained insight into the organization that eventually gave her the wonderful opportunity to showcase her artwork in 2000. Selling her artwork onsite gave her the funds to open her non-profit organization SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Collective) which had the primary objective of supporting local artists of South Asian origin which is now one of the largest in Canada.

"...we realize that learning to work with the system is the way to succeed. Once you gain that confidence, that trust in the system, then you start opening doors for yourself. ...I'm saying all these things to let you know that we've come a long way from those times." - Asma Mahmood

Atiyah Ahsan volunteers with Zonta Club International, an organization that believes in making the world a better place by empowering women. They find joy in doing this in a supportive community of like-minded professionals from diverse countries and cultures. Their global initiatives are three-fold:

1. To End Child Marriage
2. To Say No to violence against Women and Girls
3. To close the gender gap in education.

**WOMEN'S FEDERATION FOR WORLD PEACE CANADA**

**“Women and Family;  
Cultivating True  
Inclusion and Belonging”**

**Asma Mahmood**      **Atiya Ahsan**      **Yulia Tarasova**

**Lilly Tadin**      **Eveline Stewart**

**March 23, 2024**  
**10:30am - 1:30pm EST**  
**Port Credit Memorial Arena**  
(40 Stavebank Rd  
Mississauga, ON, L5G 2T8)

**INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY  
2024**

**Lindsay Hampton**

Atiyah believes that we must develop a principled voice that will speak up for what is right and honorable. As we develop this voice, we are doing the kind of service and advocacy that people on our earth need all year round. By strengthening our self-image and self-worth we will develop the confidence to do more things.

"As individuals and families, business owners or public servants, we must show leadership to do all the things that can make the world a better place." - Atiyah Ahsan

Yulia Tarasova spoke very deeply and honestly about "belonging," basing her thoughts on the work of Dr. Brené Brown, whose work she highly recommended the audience to research. She focused on the difference between real "belonging" and "fitting in" and concluded that when you truly "belong" you have the ability, if necessary, to stand on your own. As a Ukrainian married to a Russian, both Yulia and her university student daughter, Sasha, spoke about how Yulia and her husband try to help their children "belong" to both sides of their ancestry and cultural heritage.

Lindsay Hampton, the recipient of the annually given "Herstory" Award, wove the two central threads of her life over the last several years in an almost poetic fashion. These were her prolonged fight with cancer and the culmination of her work of the last 20 years helping those with serious sight problems in poorer nations, especially Kenya and Pakistan and most recently, applying for and receiving a significant US government grant for work in Bangladesh. After establishing the work in Bangladesh, its government is now also financially supporting Lindsay's most noble endeavor.