

## WFWP Chicago Hosts UN Peace Day with Perspectives on Peace Forum

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The Chicago Chapter of WFWP USA, in observance of the United Nations International Day of Peace, also known as 'Peace Day,' held a forum with the theme of "Peace Begins With Me: Perspectives on Peace" on September 30 at the Elk Grove Village Library. This conference also included a fundraiser for the Lunis Kinderworld preschool in Nepal and the nine Schools of Africa pioneered by WFWP. This was just one of hundreds of events that took place throughout the US during the month of September, commemorating the 36th anniversary of Peace Day, which was established by unanimous resolution by the UN in 1981.

The Peace Day forum began with the soothing sounds of the Japanese Koto musical instrument played by Mrs. Mariko Hosokawa, a professional koto musician, playing "Cherry Blossoms." Individuals perused the Schools of Africa Fundraising table and looked at the gift baskets that were raffled off to raise money for the Lunis Kinderworld, Nepal Educational table. The Mistress of Ceremonies and the WFWP USA Schools of Africa Coordinator, Fannie Smith, introduced the chapter chairwoman, Kathryn Davis, who spoke briefly about the mission of WFWP and the important role of women in creating peace. Highlighting the Peace Day theme, "Peace Begins with Me," she showed a video clip of an address given by WFWP co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, to a crowd of 20,000 people at Madison Square Garden on July 15, 2017.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Clyde Brooks, the Chairman of the Illinois Commission on Diversity and Human Relations, is well known throughout the state for his work to foster harmony between cultures, faiths, and races. He spoke about his personal journey toward peace and his efforts to bridge the gap between diverse people. Dr. Brooks, who has travelled multiple times to the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, stated that **he has great faith in people, as long as there is communication and not violence.** "It

is important to listen to each other and have dialogue,” he stated.

Dr. Brooks worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and shared some of King’s sage advice. “Dr. King spent time in a Birmingham jail because he fought for the rights for you and I, during which time he wrote a letter. He was greatly criticized because of his approach to peace, by both white and African Americans. In his letter, he did not blame hate groups for the civil rights violations occurring at that time, but rather he blamed church-attending people and morally good people for their silence. **This is a major problem in every era, when good people have the opportunity to take a stand, but they instead they stay silent and therefore stand for nothing at all.** Jesus warned of being lukewarm, thus creating a [passive] middle ground.”

Mr. Meraj Sheikh, an IT Data Scientist and the event’s guest speaker, addressed the theme of “Peace Begins with Me,” from a scientific and theoretical viewpoint. As a scientist who understands how things work mathematically and interdependently, he stated that **“human beings are arrogant and brash when they need to be humble.”** Sheikh used the recent solar eclipse to drive home his point. If an eclipse lasted for a long time, preventing the sun’s light and warmth from reaching the earth, our planet would freeze and human beings would die. Therefore, it is wise to have humility towards nature and when contemplating the energy that makes up ourselves and everything around us, since we do not have the power to create or control that energy.

**Sheikh outlined four points that bring peace:**

1. All people must center on something greater than themselves;
2. Take action starting with yourself, then train your family and friends to work in this way in their communities;
3. Be fearless and have patience when you take action. When you do good things, in the beginning many will come against you, but if you stay true to your course, you will be successful and many will begin to support you; and
4. It doesn’t matter how many conferences you go to unless you apply what you have learned in your daily life after the conference ends.

Hopefully all participants in the conference will take this advice to heart and work on bringing positive change to their communities!

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Editor’s note: the quote in the title is taken from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*, written April 16, 1963.