

Building a Compassionate Community: WFWP PA Bridge of Peace Event

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In the Sayre Morris Rec Center, which serves the community of West Philadelphia, a moving ceremony was conducted on Saturday, January 27th, marking the 1st Annual Bridge of Peace Ceremony with a "Multiculturalism and Compassionate Community" Panel. Sisters and brothers of humankind, 60 participants total, put down their historical and personal burdens and crossed the Bridge of Peace, to embrace one another and move forward into an era of peace, compassion, and serving one's community.

The Bridge of Peace, which serves as a turning point of change, brings people together in one common denominator: love. WFWP USA President Angelika Selle initiated the ceremony, assisted by WFWP Membership Coordinator Hana Deshotel, by sharing about the necessity of overcoming the past and embracing the future as new partners for building peaceful communities. Black and white, women and men, all who have been at odds in the past, can choose forgiveness and love. Civic leaders, family, friends, and children were all invited to cross the Bridge of Peace. The audience was welcome by WFWP Pennsylvania Chairwoman Mrs. Jizly Dohou, who is also a board member of the Diversity Program of Pennsylvania. Mama Gail Clouden, director of the Sayre Morris Center, founder of Universal Love

Ministries, called on folks to have a change of heart in order to forgive and love themselves as a first step to making positive change in the world.

Those gathered also heard from three panelists, women of the community in different stages of life: Nicho'le Chennault (Legacy of Love Success Center), Brittney Richardson (A.A., B.S.), and Tiye Coles (Bright Lights program, Frontline Dads). They talked about how they have come to understand their own identities, their own value, and how they now seek to inspire compassion in others, regardless of race or creed. Collectively, these inspiring women have raised children, earned their education, internalized their own value as children of God, and shared their blessings with others.

The panelists discussed challenging topics like, "How diversity can create a compassionate community," sharing their expertise to instill peace in the hearts of attendants.

At the closing, Musu Kamara, a professional artist and a survivor from Sierra Leone, had everyone up and dancing to an African beat, to take a stand and end abuse once and for all. The atmosphere was exuberant and hopeful. Philadelphia is alive with brotherly and sisterly love!

The goal of WFWP is to administer a spirit of promoting compassion as the path to reconnecting ourselves to God. Among the participants at the event, there was a common goal of expanding one's spiritual dimensions by understanding one's feelings and dethroning ourselves from the center of our world in order to direct our energy to another person. In other words, this event promoted a profounding teaching dating back to Confucius and before Jesus, which is: do not do unto others what you wouldn't want done unto you, the golden rule. Through this practice, we seek to embrace the vision of our founders, which is "living through the logic of love."

Reflection from one participant:

"Saturday made my day. It was so uplifting and warm to see all the hearts in that place. Many people were unified because of it and that was a good way to spread love. It starts with us at home then we can spread more love to the world. WFWP is an important organization and I'm glad to be connected to it. It was fun and I look forward to continuing the working with you. WFWP is a great organization of great women. All power to us. ALL POWER TO LOVE!"