

Unificationist Mom Aims To Create Cleaner Environment for New Jersey Residents

Daniel Franklin and Ariana Moon
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Councilman Grova (dark blue shirt) and Franklin (pink pants) rally together with other WFWP representatives during the Sunday morning clean-up session.

Since July of 2011, Sara R. Franklin, a Unificationist mother and president of Union County's Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), has valiantly met the call of an Elizabeth, New Jersey's Councilman for volunteers to help create a cleaner and healthier environment in Union County.

Franklin, along with other representatives of WFWP, has been leading Sunday clean-up sessions in Jackson Park for the past five months. Her efforts to make Jackson Park and Union County more "family-oriented" has caused the clean-up group to more than double from an initial six volunteers in July 2011 to fifteen volunteers in January 2012.

A highlight of the latest clean-up session, which took place on January 8, 2012, was the presence of Councilman Manuel R. Grova himself, who had arrived to support the volunteers. That day, many of the volunteers wore T-shirts emblazoned with the WFWP logo and a mission statement that read: "Women working together to establish a culture of heart in the family, community, nation, and world in order to achieve genuine and sustainable peace under God."

"Since the ladies of the Women's Federation for World Peace started coming to the park on Sunday afternoons in July, it has become a much cooler venue for citizens, and I want to do my part," said Grova. "The men and women who volunteer for this effort are showing ownership of their little corner of the universe, and that's a good thing. The long-term result of this kind of effort is that crime will go down, property values will rise, and Elizabeth, New Jersey will become a place where more people will want to live. The neighborhood will be cleaner, and all of the residents appreciate the efforts of the ladies and can now feel proud of their park."

Franklin, originally from Argentina, participated in the Marriage Blessing ceremony of Father and Mother Sun Myung Moon in 1982. She was blessed in marriage to Darryl Franklin. She has been living in Elizabeth, New Jersey since 2004, is a cancer survivor and the proud mother of two sons, Daniel, 20, and Nicolas, 15.

"Since we started this little volunteer clean up, an increasing number of folks in the neighborhood are

getting involved,” said Franklin. “Little by little more people will want to join, because the meaning behind this clean-up is to create a clean culture. Seeing a clean park will not only make people want to develop the good habit of cleanliness but also commend the good work of WFWP and it’s founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.



Franklin and her team hope to extend their public service work into other parks in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

“Our mission is to inspire others to take part in substantiating peace and a culture of purity. Our goal is to make the park a place where families will come for picnics and after-church get-togethers. The idea is part of a bigger vision of cleaning up Elizabeth both physically and culturally. Some people say it’s an effort to get away from the ‘broken-windows’ syndrome. If our public space looks like it’s respected and cared for, the people who care and show respect for others will feel comfortable coming there.”

Also present at the rally were Denise Nelson, President of WFWP in New Jersey, and Emiljun Rapada, a representative from the Family Federation for World Peace.

“The event that took place in the park represented what the WFWP is all about,” said Nelson. “Peace through service and living for others. This is exactly what our founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, lives and teaches.”

Rapada said, “Coming together as a community centering upon a good purpose is the foundation of peace and prosperity. This kind of positive change has tremendous impact to oneself and the community it serves.”

According to Nelson and Franklin, the park clean-up project will continue to take place on Sunday’s at 3:00 p.m. during cold weather and at 5:30pm during warmer weather. Franklin hopes to continue this service in other parks in Elizabeth, New Jersey.