

WFWP USA: Celebrating Resilience and Cultural Heritage at San Carlos HerStory Awards

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On Saturday, November 16, the St. Charles Parish Community Center in San Carlos came alive with celebration as the Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) hosted its **HerStory Awards** event. Attendees gathered to honor two inspiring women from the Apache tribe and Hagostelle clan, recognizing their contributions to education and cultural preservation.

The HerStory Awards spotlight women who demonstrate courage, resilience, and leadership within their communities. This event was no exception, featuring heartfelt testimonies and profound insights into the importance of language and heritage preservation.

Honoring Remarkable Women

The first honoree, **Mrs. Joycelene Johnson**, has dedicated over 35 years to teaching the Apache language at San Carlos High School. A graduate of the University of Arizona in Tucson, Mrs. Johnson has presented on Apache language and culture at universities across the United States, becoming a pivotal voice in preserving her heritage.

“Language is more than communication; it’s a connection to our ancestors and who we are as a people,” Mrs. Johnson shared during her testimony.

The second honoree, **Mrs. Heather Haozous**, serves as a curriculum specialist with the Apache Language Preservation Institute. Through her work, she develops educational resources that keep Apache traditions alive. She also reflected on her upbringing on the reservation, highlighting the transformative power of education in shaping identity and opportunity.

“Preserving our language and stories is preserving ourselves,” Mrs. Haozous said.

Renowned linguist **Dr. Willem DeReuse**, known for his work in developing the written Apache language, attended the event and expressed how deeply moved he was by the ceremony.

“This event was an inspiring reminder of the power of cultural preservation,” Dr. DeReuse noted.

All attendees received a biographical booklet on Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, and two copies of *Mother of Peace* were purchased during the event.

A Mission of Peace and Unity

The HerStory Awards concluded with a prayer for peace in the Apache Nation, reflecting WFWP’s mission to foster harmony and understanding among all people. The event served as a powerful reminder of the importance of lifting up women’s voices and preserving cultural heritage as a foundation for unity and progress.

As the evening came to a close, participants left inspired, carrying with them the stories and lessons shared during the event. The HerStory Awards, once again, proved to be a meaningful platform for recognizing the achievements of women who are shaping the future while honoring the past.