

UPF UK: Insights and Inspiration Uplift Families at UK Day of Families Event

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London, United Kingdom – Families from diverse backgrounds joined a heartwarming event in London on May 31, 2025, to honor the vital role of parents and families in building peaceful communities. More than 80 people took part in the special celebration for the International Day of Families and the Global Day of Parents at UPF headquarters in Lancaster Gate, hosted by UPF-UK, in collaboration with Family Federation for World Peace and Unification - North of the Thames Community.



The program began with an insightful presentation by **Dr. David Hanna**, the former UPF North Region president, who explored the concept of marriage across different cultures and the universal principles upheld by UPF. His reflections highlighted how loving, stable families serve as the cornerstone of peaceful communities, strong nations, and a harmonious world.

A highlight of the event was the Interfaith Peace Blessing Ceremony, where couples rededicated their marriages and invited God to be at the heart of their family life. This moving ceremony was led by Pastor William Haines of the North of the Thames Community of FFWPU-UK. It was officiated by **Dr. David and Patricia Earle**, chair of UPF-Birmingham, UK.



There were celebratory songs performed by soprano singer **Mrs. Betty Rodrigues**. The moving poem "On Marriage" by Khalil Gibran was read by **Ms. Shahd Karaeen**, who is a poet herself.

The event featured practical wisdom from family life experts including Mr. Stephen Stacey, author of "The Seven Principles of Creation Marriage Enrichment Workbook." He is a marriage counselor and has lectured at several universities. Sharing family insights from the Quran was Dr. Wali Islam, a founding global vice president of Sun Moon University, and one of UPF's earliest ambassadors for peace, who was visiting from Australia.



A humorous video by **Mr. Mark Grungor** provided a light-hearted perspective on marital dynamics.

One of the most touching moments was the presentation of Exemplary Family Awards to outstanding UK families, including the **Ildova** family, the **Kapelas** family, the **Dyer** family, **Imam Pirzada** and family, **Rev. Wexilin** and family, **Rev. Takawira** and family, and the **Samushongo** family. Each shared personal insights into the values that sustain their family bonds, with contributions from multiple generations.



The event concluded with the appointment of Ms. Shahd Karaeen as an ambassador for peace, recognizing her commitment to peacebuilding. A musical performance by **Mrs. Julie Dyer**, after her family received an Exemplary Family Award, added joy to the celebration, which was livestreamed on YouTube for wider participation.

The celebration served as a powerful reminder that by nurturing love and unity at home, we contribute to a more harmonious world. As UPF emphasizes, the family is the school of love and the foundation for peace at all levels of society.

