

Report on the annual WFWP Christmas Celebration event, 1 December 2012

Louise Rawlence and David Rennie - December 1, 2012

Approximately 60 guests and members came together for the annual WFWP Christmas Season Party on the afternoon of the 1 December in the ballroom of the Lancaster Gate building. As always, it was a moment for sharing, meeting old friends and developing new friendships, forming new partnerships with like minded people, a great way to come together one last time in 2012.

Five new Ambassadors for Peace were appointed, acknowledging past achievements of these women activists and promoting them to being Peace Ambassadors in their fields. They were:



Margaret Getfield whose experience and passion is in the field of adult and community education she understands that proper education is helping people, young and old to develop their full potential.



Tatiana Tarasova: a Russian national living in London and founder, owner and editor of the magazine 'From Russia with love' which aims to bridge the gap between the differences in the traditions and cultures and encourage integration on many different levels. Tatiana said that nowadays London is increasingly being referred to as Moscow-on-the Thames!



Another newly appointed peace activist was **Elsa Vogel**, who for most of her life, together with her husband devoted her efforts the 'Moral and Spiritual Rearmament Movement' now known as 'Initiatives of Change'. She has worked in many foreign countries to serve, promote, and teach the essential principles of this renowned organisation.



Julie Coker, also an appointee, is Nigerian and has against all odds, pioneered many 'firsts' in her country and beyond. She became the first woman in Africa making a career in television, she has a doctorate degree, is an award winning actress, singer, author and one of the first ever women to be made a Chief.



Betty Makoni is committed to save children in Zimbabwe from the violence of rape and sexual abuse. With her organisation 'Girl Child Network' she has gone to the villages and works to rescue children and empower them to become free and go through the process of education to grow into responsible citizens. Betty is also reaching out among the African Diaspora here in the UK.



A long-time member of the WFWP, Francoise Murphy, was acknowledged and honoured for her work and reaching out in the community in Watford, especially creating the platform for women from all ethnic backgrounds to learn from each other and working together for the good of the Watford town.

All of us wished these women well, to continue their work with even greater vigour and stand up for what is truthful and good, never forgetting that we as women have to play our role if a community and nation are to move forward into a more peaceful and just future.



As the proceeds of the afternoon program were for the Hyderabad Interfaith Children's Home, David Earl gave a short and comprehensive report on developments, which was well received by the audience. It has taken more than 20 years of hard work, many struggles and tears, including funds, by David and Patricia Earle and so many friends, supporters and countless helpers in communities up and down the country to make a dream come true.

The program continued with entertainment, which included songs by the young W.A.I.T. group, Margaret Aberdeen, singing with all her heart "You will never walk alone", a poem written and presented by Betty Makoni, a song from the film 'Sister Act' offered by Marion Reynolds and 2 songs by the sisters Nancy and Ingrid Ciacudia. Nancy is the co-founder of the H2O Congo, an organisation that wishes to raise awareness about the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and help bring change and stability to that region. She and her sisters are using their creative, artistic talents to bring healing and reconciliation, believing that only with the true love of God lasting change is possible.

We concluded with the song 'Silent Night', sung in French, German, and an African language plus in English.

The willingness of the women to share more informally and do a little bit of networking happened over the refreshments, many dishes were contributed by volunteers.

'Thank you' to all those who helped to make the event meaningful and enjoyable, e.g. staff, speakers, musicians and the co-emcees Louise Rawlence and David Rennie.

Report compiled by Christa Rennie December 2012