

UPF United Nations commemorates the UN International Day of Families 2017

Lynn Walsh
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New York, United States—“Parents’ Role in Helping Their Children Thrive” was the theme of a program held at the United Nations to commemorate the UN International Day of Families.

UPF co-sponsored the program jointly with the Permanent Mission of Samoa to the United Nations, the NGO Committee on the Family, New York, and LDS Charities. The event was held on May 18, 2017, in Conference Room 11 of the UN.



Ryan Koch, the UN representative for the LDS Charities and the treasurer of the NGO Committee on the Family, NY, welcomed the group and introduced the ambassador from the Mission of Samoa, Ambassador Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia.

His Excellency spoke with passion, remarking, “To have strong societies, we must have strong families, and to have strong families, we must have strong parents.” He stressed the responsibility of parents to teach their children values, culture and language and said that ultimately the success of children in school and in life rests with parents. Parents should not blame others for their children’s struggles and not look for others to be responsible, he said.



Lynn Walsh, the director of the UPF Office of the Family and the co-chair of the NGO Committee on the Family, NY, took the moderator role. Dr. Belen Mesurado of Austral University in Argentina gave a presentation on “Family and Flourishing Life: A Study in 20 Countries.” She focused on three components of children’s flourishing—emotional, psychological, and social well-being—and compared results from research on family interactions in 20 different countries. Her results showed that the quality and frequency of family interactions were good predictors of child thriving. Dr. Mesurado concluded by stating the importance of: family interaction, even in non-collectivistic cultures, promoting family interaction and encouraging public policies to enable family interactions.

Eve Sullivan, the founder and CEO of Parents Forum, spoke on “Parent Peer Support: A Resource Hiding in Plain Sight.” Ms. Sullivan listed the three elements of parent education that she has created: knowledge about children’s growth and development; skill in providing care appropriate to the child’s age; and support for social-emotional development. According to Ms. Sullivan, her programs teach parents to better interact with their children, communicating and fostering emotional safety and love. Her programs “can move children from isolated and confused to involved and concerned to inspired and confident,” she said. Ms. Sullivan ended her presentation with a plea for universal parenting programs as a sure method to ensure children’s well-being around the world.

Ms. Renata Kaczmarek of UN Focal Point on the Family, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, concluded the session by pointing out the importance of parents raising children to be not only happy and thriving but also ethical and moral contributing members of the world.