

WFWP Georgia's the Leadership of the Heart Retreat in Savannah

Myrna Lapres
June 21, 2019



Our WFWP Georgia chapter was inspired by the Leadership of the Heart (LOH) curriculum and after experiencing it over a series of Saturdays in late 2017 and early 2018, we decided that the content would be even more impactful in a retreat setting. It took us a while to put our plan into action but when a weekend opened up at the Wesley Gardens Retreat in Savannah, everything began to fall into place.

On Friday, June 21, 2019, women began to arrive from as far away as Jacksonville (Florida) and Las Vegas, as well as Alabama and of course, Georgia. In all, we had 21 women and one man (the husband of a participant). Following a delicious dinner, we gathered in a circle to make connections and get to know each other. Led by Celeste Koshida, everyone found a partner and took turns sharing and listening, centering on the question, "What do you want more of in your life and why is that important to you?"



Journaling

Although many woke up early to meditate or exercise, Saturday officially began with an inspirational reading followed by a walking meditation around the retreat grounds which included a labyrinth. After breakfast, we began exploring the LOH curriculum "Discovering the Leader Within." The presentations were given throughout the day by Myrna Lapres and Loretta Anderson.

Through interacting with the material on topics such as 'Spirituality: The Divine is Calling', 'Self-Worth' and 'Emotional Maturity', everyone had the opportunity to realize their own capacity as a peace leader and to discover the essential ingredient in the work towards peace -- the transformation of the human heart.

The revised LOH curriculum provides many opportunities for individuals to explore peace leadership in a new light, discover the gifts that lie within and make connections with others through thought-provoking presentations, meditations, journaling and pair shares. Many participants commented that the pair shares were a highlight of the weekend as they shared ideas and discovered commonalities.

The Wesley Gardens Retreat site received high marks from everyone and as one participant put it, "It was so easy to open my heart in such a beautiful environment, surrounded by the many reminders of God's love through nature." The Saturday afternoon schedule included time to explore the grounds and connect with others. Those who went kayaking encountered a school of dolphins!

Since this weekend was the Summer Solstice -- the official beginning of summer, we had invited participants Christina and Payton Barea, both Qigong masters, to close the day in a special ceremony. After explaining the significance of being in tune with Mother Earth and the solstice, Christina guided us to write down things that we don't want to take with us as we move forward. In turn, we each placed our folded paper into the small fire, symbolically removing those things from our lives. It was a wonderful way to complete the day and the process of discovering more about ourselves and letting go of things that no longer serve us.



Myrna Lapres presenting

Sunday morning dawned with a brilliant sky and we had the opportunity to participate in some Qigong exercises led by Christina Barea. Following breakfast, our final presentation highlighted the work of WFWP internationally and locally. Although our founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon was at an event in Las Vegas, we felt her heart and presence throughout the retreat. Those new to WFWP were inspired by its vision and impact.

Everyone was invited to keep connected through joining WFWP and save the dates for upcoming events including the Global Women's Peace Network southeast regional launch in Washington DC on November 16. Closing in a circle, we sang "Let There Be Peace On Earth."

The reflections of several conveyed the hearts of many of the participants:

Thank you for organizing such a thoughtful and caring event. You did a great job of providing a safe and friendly place to be in fellowship with other women.

I'm very appreciative of the time and energy all the organizers and helpers contributed to make the event a great success. It was truly a joy to be a part of this Leadership of the Heart retreat.

I loved the location, being in nature, all the presentations, conversations, spiritual practices and opportunities to self-reflect. I leave the retreat determined to continue to be more authentic and open in order to reconnect to my true self.

The content of the workshop is so beautiful. I loved the time available to communicate with others and to be able to digest what I heard and experienced.