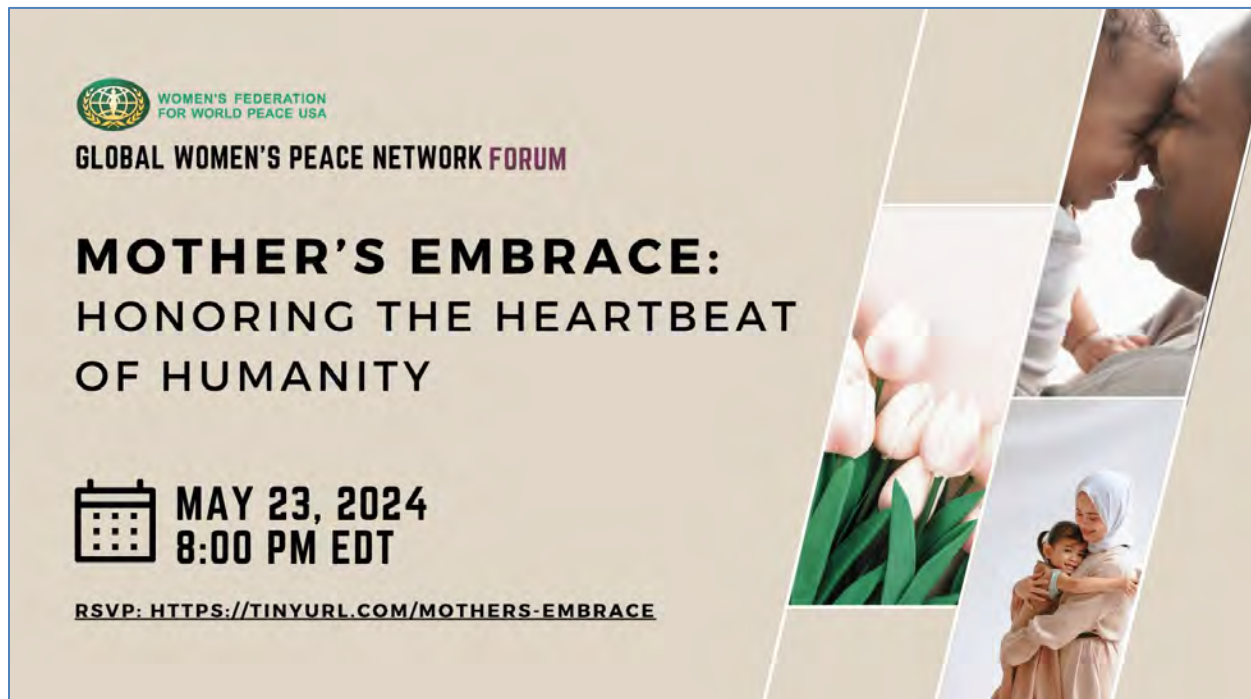


WFWP USA: Mother's Embrace: Honoring The Heartbeat Of Humanity

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On May 23, 2024, WFWP USA hosted a GWPN Forum titled: "Mother's Embrace: Honoring the Heartbeat of Humanity" which was graciously hosted by Mrs. Adia Lancaster, GWPN Field Coordinator. The forum provided an opportunity for three speakers to reflect on motherhood and their lived experiences as women leaders and mothers.

To introduce the forum, Mrs. Adia Lancaster welcomed everyone and highlighted three main points from Dr. Hak Ja Han's peace philosophy on a motherhood:

1. The mother is the heartbeat of the family: The role of mothers in the family is deeply significant and essential to a loving home because the mother-child relationship is rooted in selfless love and care. Mothers have the ability to be in tune with a sacred aspect of God's heart which lives fully and completely for the sake of her children.
2. Mother's have the capacity to embrace all people: Mothers have the capability to create a safe environment for people in their journey of personal growth. With the heart of a mother, women are able to embrace all personalities and seemingly difficult experiences with true love.
3. The world needs the leadership of mothers: The perspective and experience of women and mothers is essential in the quest for peace and harmony.

Following this introduction, Mrs. Adia welcomed the first speaker to the virtual stage. Ms. Apryl Davis, Council Assistant for the City of Dallas, started her presentation by sharing her deep love and appreciation for her mother, the foundation of their family. She highlighted her mother's unwavering support through her years of active addiction and the crucial lesson of perseverance in supporting loved ones. Inspired by her mother's example, Ms. Davis has made it her mission to care for the homeless, give back to those in need, and embrace all people. She emphasized that a mother's heart is driven by a desire to help others find their way, reflecting on her own life lessons. "If I can share something that can help a person 10 years down the road, then I will have done my job," she stated joyfully. Ms. Davis also shared her excitement about the prospect of becoming a grandmother one day and experiencing that next level of love.

The second speaker was Ms. Ritu Chopra, a technologist, author, international host and executive coach. She began her presentation with a quote from the late Maya Angelou: "To describe my mother would be to write about a hurricane in its perfect power. Or the climbing, falling colors of a rainbow." She followed this with a quote from Rudyard Kipling: "God could not be everywhere, so he created mothers." She shared that by carrying forward the lessons and values learned from our mothers, we contribute to a legacy of love and compassion. The journey of motherhood transforms a mother's capacity for love, compassion and patience as she raises her children. Ms. Chopra reminisced about a memory after her daughter went off to college. Filled with sadness one day, she sat at her dining table with pictures of her mother and daughter, sharing with "them" how they had shaped the person she had become. It was a profound experience as she reflected on her role as a daughter and that of a mother. She shared a beautiful

poem:

As a daughter, I learned your song,
As a mother, I sing it too
A lullaby of love from me to you
From a daughter's heart to a mother's soul
Taught me how to be whole
You gave me roots, you gave me wings
You taught me strength, you showed me love.

She highlighted the evolving nature of motherhood in today's world, where mothers are no longer confined to traditional homemaking roles but instead juggle various responsibilities outside the home. This shift has compelled mothers to adapt and find new ways to navigate the complexities of modern life. Emphasizing the importance of women's leadership, she urged a deeper understanding of the inherent powers women possess and how to effectively wield them. "Command is different from influence, authority is distinct from voice, competence stands apart from might and capability differs from usefulness," she stated. Concluding her remarks, she stressed the necessity for women leaders to be not only self-aware but also committed to contributing positively to society as a whole.

The third speaker was Mrs. Merly Baarlan, Director of the WFWPI Office for UN Relations-NY. She shared the profound belief that to truly make the world a better place, one must experience a personal relationship with a mother figure, as it is through this connection that individuals can feel the essence of God's heart. Reflecting on her upbringing among eight siblings, Mrs. Baarlan spoke of the deep and personal love she received from her mother. Her journey with WFWP influenced her perspective on maternal leadership, acknowledging the significant impact of women who were both mothers and leaders making strides in various professional fields. Working closely with the UN, Mrs. Baarlan encountered numerous women advocating for equal access and equity in the workplace to facilitate a better balance between work and family life. Through experiencing unconditional love and support from female leaders in her workplace, she recognized a critical missing element in many corporate and UN environments - a need for personal connection, visibility and guidance for women leaders.

Reflecting on the nurturing influence of a mother's embrace, Mrs. Baarlan shared poignant insights into the profound impact of personal connections. Recounting her experiences in the Philippines, she highlighted the WFWP Philippines' initiative, the Zero to Hero project, aimed at addressing societal challenges, particularly delinquency. Through collaborative efforts with local communities and government agencies, the project emphasized the transformative power of grace, unconditional love and support. Mrs. Baarlan witnessed firsthand how the project's women participants exemplified maternal love, fostering positive change and transformation in individuals and revitalizing the communities.

After the speakers' insightful sharing the moderator Mrs. Adia Lancaster invited the speakers to a round table discussion whereby they could answer questions and share their reflections on motherhood. Thus, the webinar brought valuable insights to the speakers and the audience.