

## WFWP USA: Third-Quarter HerStory In Action Event

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July 26, 2025



On July 26, 2025, the Women's Federation for World Peace USA (WFWP) hosted its third-quarter HerStory in Action event, celebrating the remarkable achievements of women leaders who exemplify strength, service, and resilience. This inspiring gathering honored two distinguished women with awards and provided a platform for them to share their impactful personal stories. The event was warmly and graciously emceed by Adia

Lancaster, WFWP's Marketing Manager, and served as a meaningful occasion that brought together the honorees' families, friends, and professional networks in a spirit of unity and celebration.

WFWP USA President Dr. Katarina Connery was introduced and offered heartfelt remarks about the organization's mission and the significance of the HerStory Award. She emphasized the ongoing challenges many women leaders face today, often simply because they are women. Dr. Connery highlighted that what makes the HerStory Award particularly meaningful is the opportunity it provides honorees to share their personal journeys - the hardships they have overcome and the lessons they have learned along the way.

She spoke of the resilience and compassion embodied by the awardees, noting that despite the difficulties they have encountered in their personal or professional lives, they continue to lead with love and a genuine desire to serve others. "It's not just about a job for them or about being recognized," she said. "These are women who are leading with heart, which is what we are honoring today."

Dr. Connery described this as heart-centered leadership, a principle deeply rooted in the values of WFWP. She shared a quote from the organization's founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's memoir: "Women have the capacity to embrace all people. A woman, especially a mother, is like a bowl with the capacity to embrace men, women, children, and the whole. And nobody can change that."

She concluded by affirming that leadership, as envisioned by WFWP, is not defined by authority or having all the answers, but by setting an example - leading through service and with a heart that embraces others. This, she affirmed, is the spirit of the HerStory Award: honoring women who embody this kind of leadership in both their lives and their work.

Following these remarks, the awardees were introduced by their nominators and invited to share their stories.

The first awardee, Dr. Susan Taffer, Principal Founder of the World Connections Foundation, delivered a powerful and deeply personal account of her journey - one marked not by privilege, but by purpose. "As I share my HerStory with you," she began, "I can assure you that I was not born into privilege or advantage, but I was born into purpose. However, that purpose wasn't always clear, and it certainly wasn't easy."

She reflected on her early life, marked by economic and emotional hardship, including the devastating

loss of her brother - a tragedy that revealed the deep shortcomings of systems meant to support families in need. Rather than allowing that pain to define her, she transformed it into a lifelong mission. Dr. Taffer spoke candidly about her struggles as a young woman, acknowledging the anger and confusion she felt without guidance, yet always sensing a deeper calling. This journey led her to a defining question that has since shaped her life's mission: How do we build systems that don't just educate - but heal, empower, and liberate? Through education, personal healing, and commitment, she found clarity and purpose, ultimately leading her to establish the World Connections Foundation and the College for World Connections. Both initiatives aim to reshape education and leadership by focusing on empathy, resilience, and creativity - skills that are uniquely human and vital in the age of AI.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Dr. Taffer highlighted her profound connection with the Women's Federation for World Peace. She recalled attending the Interreligious Peace Conference in South Korea, where WFWP sponsored her participation. Standing alongside over 2,000 religious leaders advocating for peace on the Korean Peninsula, she experienced a defining moment: "That moment didn't belong to politics. It belonged to people." It was, she said, a confirmation that true changemakers often work behind the scenes, quietly and tirelessly.

Dr. Taffer also spoke of her ongoing work with the Global Women's Peace Network in Arizona, a collective of professional women integrating service into their leadership, as well as her recent involvement serving on the board of directors for the National Assistance League (NAL) in Southern California. Founded over a century ago by Anne Banning to support families affected by war, NAL's tradition of quietly making a difference continues today through more than 100 chapters and thousands of members addressing gaps in school system support and community needs - challenges that have been especially amplified since the pandemic. She emphasized the urgent need for community-powered solutions and invited those called to contribute - whether by building new chapters, supporting existing ones, or bringing resources to underserved schools - to connect with her.

In closing, Dr. Taffer offered a personal reflection: one does not need a perfect path to create a powerful legacy, but rather purpose and the courage to live it out. Her story, she said, is one of becoming - a purpose born through adversity. "Here I am - not because I have all the answers, but because I hold a vision and I refuse to give up on it."

Next, Ani Zadikyan, Founder of Remedy for the Needy, humbly reflected on her unexpected recognition and shared the heartfelt origins of her humanitarian work. Ani described how her mission began with collecting used bicycles and wheelchairs for disabled children and adults in Armenia, driven by compassion and community connections. She faced early challenges, including limited volunteers, funding hurdles, and the high cost of shipping donated items overseas, which taught her valuable lessons about sustainable aid.

Ani's work deepened amid the 2023 Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict, when tens of thousands of displaced Armenians sought refuge in mountainous regions far from the capital. Recognizing the critical need for accessible healthcare, she organized and personally funded medical missions to bring doctors and specialists into remote villages. Despite the obstacles, Ani remained steadfast, driven by a vision to empower communities through improved healthcare access - believing this support can reduce forced migration by strengthening lives in their own homeland.

Throughout her story, Ani expressed that her motivation stems not from recognition but from an earnest desire to respond to human need. Yet, she acknowledged that being noticed helps amplify the message and inspire others to act.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to both awardees for sharing their journeys with us. Their stories remind us that purpose often finds us through adversity and perseverance - and that by holding onto our vision, we can create meaningful, lasting change in the world.