

WFWP Hackensack, NJ's Muslim women breaking down barriers gathering

Cynthia Nakai and Irmgard Baynes
December 2, 2018



If you live in northern Jersey, you know that it is a very ethnically diverse community. Living in the midst of such diversity, you come across opportunities to learn about other cultures from around the world. Cynthia Nakai, WFWP Hackensack, NJ chairwoman, was impressed by one particular lady from Pakistan, Mrs. Malik Irim, who spoke about Pakistani customs and values during a children's program at the Little Ferry Library earlier this year. She was so inspired, in fact, that she invited Mrs. Irim to speak at a local WFWP luncheon.

The luncheon was organized by Mrs. Nakai together with Olivia Vozza. Ten ladies gathered on Sunday, December 2, at the Noches De Colombia Restaurant in South Hackensack. Mrs. Irim shared fascinating facts about the life and culture of Pakistanis and showed us some of her personal Pakistani jewelry.



Of special interest was the topic of women in Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim country. Mrs. Irim emphasized that although family is still very important in Pakistan, and the wife and mother have an

important place in their homes, more and more women are receiving an education and going out to contribute to society in different ways.



She highlighted 10 women in particular that Pakistanis are proud of: women who broke barriers, overcame the odds and had a major impact in the country. Among the impressive Pakistani women mentioned were Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Laureate and campaigner for education in Pakistan, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and Pakistan's first female firefighter, Shazia Perveen. Such women have become vital role models for countless women and girls in Pakistan and abroad.

We could ask her questions freely, and we thanked her for sharing stories about these inspiring women with us. Getting to know more about another culture and its people breaks down our preconceptions and broadens our horizon.

Mrs. Irim asked how she could be involved and contribute to WFWP. Hearing that she works as a teacher in her community, WFWP member Irmgard Baynes had the idea that maybe she could contribute articles once in a while to our newsletter, writing about women in the Muslim culture. She signed the WFWP friend card and is looking forward to receiving our e-newsletter.

WFWP Hackensack chapter hopes to meet in early March 2019 for a talk by Jersey City fire fighter T.J. Higgins on tips to fireproof your home and what to look for to make your home safer.

For more information about the Hackensack chapter, email Mrs. Nakai at happiness2075@yahoo.com or Mrs. Voza at olvozza@gmail.com.