

## FFWPU Elizabeth, NJ's Excellence in Parenting Award and Blessing

Emiljun Rapada

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Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) in Elizabeth welcomed over one hundred people and recognized six couples for their Excellence in Parenting at the Parents' Award and Blessing which took place at the Peterstown Community Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey on July 22. The guest of honor was no other than the City Mayor of Elizabeth, Honorable Christian Bollwage who came to congratulate all the awardees as well as the organizers.

The program was co-sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation USA and the Filipino International Community of America (FICA). Other partners included Women's Federation for World Peace Elizabeth, American Clergy Leadership Conference Elizabeth and the African New Hope Association.

The program began with an international lunch buffet which was mostly contributed by the multicultural families of the church community. Elizabeth Family Church Pastor Rev. Darryl Franklin offered a prayer invoking God's blessing upon the feast and festivities. While everybody enjoyed their meals, the Elizabeth Family Church band presented some wonderful music followed by an enthusiastic dance presentation by the FICA Children's Dance Group.

Elizabeth Family Church Pastor Rev. Emiljun Rapada, the master of ceremony, offered a brief remark about the significance and the purpose of the event. He stressed the four major criteria used to nominate the awardees: Does the person exemplify qualities of sacrificial love? Has the person overcome major obstacles (emotional, physical, financial, etc.) to provide for the personal development and happiness of their children? Does the person exhibit qualities of personal moral virtue and/or religious commitment? Does the person have a noteworthy record of contributions to the family and community?

Rev. Miilhan Stephens, the Secretary General of FFWPU Northeast Region shared a sincere congratulatory message and led the audience in a True Love Toast to bless all of the participants, awardees and their families.

The program concluded with a raffle drawing of a donated Coach bag. The program generated more than \$700 in funds to support the Blessing Movement activities of the Elizabeth Community.

