

Visit of "DEBATE FOR PEACE" to the Austrian Women's Federation in Vienna

Wednesday, June 26, a group of young people (age 13. To 17 yrs.) came to visit us as the "Women's Federation for World Peace". This group, which came to Vienna for the third time under the motto "Debate for Peace", was founded and led by Mr. Steven AIELLO in Israel, together with other teachers of different religious affiliations.



They choose children from Jewish, Druze, Arabic and Christian backgrounds to experience a "MUN" - a miniature UN where children themselves discuss important issues as representatives of different countries.

After a visit to the UN, the International Institute for Peace Policy (IIPP), among others, they came to us, 11 young people and 4 teachers: Over coffee and apple strudel, everyone in the group introduced themselves.

Dr. Maria Riehl, Director of the UN Vienna Office of WFWPI gave an overview of the now 32-year history of the organisation and its beginnings. On request, she particularly emphasized the initiative "Bridges of Peace", which began in 1995 (50 years after the end of the 2nd World War) and was pursued very intensively in Europe for several years. It is about the healing of inner, mental / emotional injuries caused by war or other dramatic incidents in one's lives in the hope of being able to counteract further violence, or even war. Together with the documentary "A Tribute to "Bridges of Peace" in Europe", which ended with pictures of "Bridges of Peace" in Jerusalem in 2004, the young people were very moved. They expressed how much it gives them hope to be able to contribute something to peace as individuals, as members of civil society!



They also appreciated the consolidation of further activities as WFWPI at the UN in Vienna and our (modest) humanitarian contributions. There was a lively discussion on the question of the role of women in peace education.

Finally, a presentation by Mrs. Jeong Hye Hassinen about the activities of "IAYSP" (Internat. Association of Youth and Students for Peace) was given.

The lively exchange was continued at a joint dinner.



Dr. Maria Riehl, Renate Amesbauer

