

## WFWP UK Christmas Celebration

Mitty Tohma and Oksana Torok  
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WFWP UK's Christmas Celebration was a warm, inviting afternoon that reminded us why we gather: to honor courageous women leaders, celebrate communities united by purpose, and envision a more peaceful world through collaboration and love. The room hummed with gratitude and anticipation, providing a perfect backdrop for a day dedicated to shared service and collective hope.



The program opened with a heartfelt welcome from Tina Coombs, a longtime former WFWP UK President. Her remarks pulsed with passion as she spoke of the women leaders who have dedicated their lives to a higher cause. She reflected on the outgoing branch coordinators' tremendous contributions, highlighting the quiet, daily acts of leadership that sustain movements from the ground up. Leadership, she reminded us, is often a patient, steady rhythm rather than a loud impulse, and she celebrated the resilience and dedication that keeps communities moving forward.

A highlights video by Preet Kaur offered a moving montage of each coordinator's journey. The visuals captured years of hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance - the "blood, sweat, and tears" of leadership in the most uplifting sense. The montage underscored that leadership is a shared, communal effort rather than a solitary one, weaving together countless small acts into a powerful, lasting tapestry of impact.

Mitty Tohma, WFWP UK President, then took the stage to present awards and offer reflections on the

coordinators' outstanding commitments. She highlighted the steadfast work and the deep appreciation owed not only to the coordinators but also to their families - the husbands and children who have supported them over many years. She reinforced that peaceful progress rests on the resilience and encouragement of loved ones who stand beside leaders, rooting their efforts in shared love and mutual sacrifice.



The program continued with warm addresses from outgoing coordinators. Ruby Flavell, Wales branch coordinator, spoke online about collaboration with grassroots women's organizations and the Welsh Assembly, emphasizing how regional partnerships amplify voices and widen the circle of impact.

Patricia Earle, of the Birmingham branch, shared decades of peace work and foundation-building across multiple levels, underscoring how long-term dedication creates lasting, tangible change.

Francoise Murphy, who coordinates Watford, recalled forming a connection with WFWP over 20 years ago and described how the signature project, the Bridge of Peace, inspired her to unite Muslim, Christian and Jewish women in a shared purpose.

Anne Kobayashi, a central London coordinator, offered sincere thanks to her team for years of dedication and help during her tenure and remembered the countless supporters while welcoming the new branch leadership, acknowledging the wealth of experience guiding the transition.

Our co-MC Ena Softic, a board member, invited the outgoing and incoming coordinators to the stage, helped with a cake-cutting, and extended a warm welcome to all coordinators.

The afternoon's musical flow continued with three Christmas carols performed by MC David Rennie, complemented by his flute rendition of "Silent Night," which set a festive and hopeful mood. A standout moment came when David

invited Alicia Gardiner to perform two songs, "White Christmas" and "Oh Holy Night," each met with heartfelt appreciation from the audience.

A raffle, drawn by Laureta, the new coordinator for the Central London branch, added extra cheer as prizes were claimed and conversations blossomed into new connections. As the afternoon drew to a close, attendees reflected on the interconnected stories of leadership, partnership and shared purpose that filled the room, leaving everyone inspired and energized for the year ahead. A final touch was the presentation of flowers to Joanna De Souza for her birthday celebration.

The event also acknowledged the essential support system behind every gathering: the volunteers. Special thanks to Harumi Currie, the branch coordinator for Scotland, who gifted us with beautiful handmade crafts to raise funds for the organization. Gratitude was extended to all who organized, helped set up and prepared the environment, ensuring a welcoming, organized and joyful atmosphere that allowed participants to focus on connection, reflection and celebration. Closing remarks expressed heartfelt thanks for participation and support, followed by mingling and festive refreshments.

With around 40 attendees, the Christmas Celebration felt intimate yet impactful, a reminder that meaningful change often begins with small, steady steps taken together. The afternoon left a hopeful sense that when women unite across communities, bridges are built, peace takes root and the future looks brighter for all.

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