

Herbs and Roses for Healing and Bonding at the NJ Farmacy and Peace Garden

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July 25, 2026



All smiles at the launch of the NJ Farmacy and Peace Garden with (l-r) Priscilla Garces, WFWPI UN representative and founder of Always Forward, Irmgard Baynes, Dr. Vanette Colmenares, and Merly Barlaan, WFWPI VP and UN Relations Offices director.

The second leg of the WFWPI Climate Action program was successfully launched in a summer garden party on July 25, 2026 at the sprawling backyard of WFWPI UN representatives and Global Women Peace Ambassadors **Maria De Lourdes** and **Priscilla M. Garces**. Guests were elated and said the event was unique while simply being heartwarming.

The NJ Farmacy and Peace Garden in the quiet neighborhood in Union Township was a collaboration of the global organization Women's Federation for World Peace International, UN Relations Office and the nonprofits Always Forward and the Ecuadorian Foundation for Social Services. The project is aligned with SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), 13 (Climate Action), and 17 (Partnerships).



Dr. Maria del Carmen Santiago, Franklin Township Commissioner for the Environment, and Dr. Maria Garces, WFWPI UN representative and president of FESS.



Merly Barlaan with Assembly member Ed Rodriguez, Dr. Maria Garces, Dr. Dely Go, and Mr. Harry Go

More than 40 participants showed up, mostly in floral summer dresses and wide brim hats, bringing potted herbs and roses to be included in the garden. There was mood music in the garden by pianist Hyowon Barlaan.

Assemblymember Ed Rodriguez of Legislative District 20 and Environment Commissioner for Franklin Township **Maria Del Carmen** Santiago shared inspirational speeches rife with support and action. Now, the Garden State has an additional biodiversity garden in Union Township, created by a diverse community of friends and family.

The international and intergenerational event took inspiration from the theme on healing the Earth and

healing ourselves to achieve happiness and higher consciousness.



Guests, mostly in floral dresses and wide brim hats, found the launch unique and heartwarming.

WWFPI VP and UN Relations Offices director **Merly Barrete Barlaan** encouraged local legislators to support community initiatives to create impact and sustainability in the community. The NJ launch was the second leg of the organization's Environmental Action program, following the Permaculture Education program in the Philippines.

Farmacy is a new term to mean farmed herbs that heal naturally, a brainchild of Barlaan. "This is not rocket science. Healing starts at home and when we go back to nature for food and medicine," she said.



The new ambassadors for peace Carmen Skipworth, Dr. Vanette Colmenares, and Yamcy Fleming with UN representatives and Merly Barlaan.

WWFPI recognized three new Ambassadors for Peace during the event, Dr. **Vanette Colmenares** who's working on her biodiverse, regenerative farms in Cebu, Carmen Skipworth, AI and digital technology educator, and **Yamcy Deloso Fleming**, WWFPI intern who helped organize and coordinate the 1st Permaculture Education Summit in the Philippines.

RN **Menchu R. De Luna Sanchez**, a WWFPI Peace Ambassador, remarked that the event was different and remarkable. Dr. **Dely Go**, a nurse educator-businesswoman, said "we enjoyed the event so much." Go was acknowledged at the event for her support to WWFPI's Environmental Action program in the Philippines, the pioneering project on Permaculture Education and Immersion Tour.

The NJ garden party featured the works of art of artist **Lorena Ramos** which highlighted herbs and flowers. Lorena's mom, Selina Soto, will tend to the WWFPI-FESS-Always Forward community garden, a feat which she anticipates being able to share her traditional wisdom on healing and culinary herbs.