

UPF and WFWP Mobile, Alabama Celebrate National Parents' Day

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On the evening of Sunday, August 2, 2026, the Mobile Peace Starts With Me Alliance team, led by Bruna Allen and representing the Universal Peace Federation and Women's Federation, hosted its annual National Parents' Day celebration at South Alabama Family Church. With approximately 30 people in attendance, the gathering provided an opportunity to honor parents, recognize their sacrifices, and encourage meaningful conversations about the well-being of children and families.



The evening opened with an adorable performance by children from the church community, setting a warm and joyful tone for the celebration. Pastor Catherine Collins of Behind the Veil Ministries then offered the invocation.

The first featured speaker was Rev. Mark Lincoln, representing the American Clergy Leadership Conference. Rev. Lincoln spoke about the importance placed on having children within the Bible and connected this theme to the declining birthrates and fertility challenges facing many countries today, including South Korea. His remarks encouraged attendees to consider the broader social and cultural importance of family and parenthood.

The second featured speaker and one of the evening's honorees was Mrs. Filomena Laforgia, who presented an address titled "Children's Health and Vaccines." Drawing from her personal experience as the parent of a child whom she says experienced vaccine injury in 2006, Mrs. Laforgia discussed her advocacy for parental rights, religious rights, disability rights, inclusive

education, bodily autonomy, and support for marginalized communities. She described herself as a "Reasonable Radical," reflecting her commitment to pursuing these issues through advocacy and education.

Mrs. Laforgia currently works remotely as an assistant to Mary S. Holland, CEO of Children's Health Defense (CHD), an organization whose stated mission focuses on addressing childhood health concerns, environmental exposures, and related public-health issues. She brings extensive professional experience in advertising, marketing, sales promotion, and brand development, having earned a BA in Marketing and International Business from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Among her professional accomplishments,

she was part of the startup team at [Audible.com](https://www.audible.com), now an Amazon company, and developed corporate sponsorships for Casa Design for Living magazine and the cable television series Town Tour.

Her commitment to community service has also included public education. In 2019, Mrs. Laforgia was elected to a three-year term on the Board of the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District in Oakland, New Jersey. She served as Board President during her final year and helped lead the district through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 shutdown.

Mrs. Laforgia is currently channeling her advocacy into Simpsonwood, a limited-series screenplay exploring the events and discussions surrounding a 2000 meeting of public-health and vaccine-safety officials at the Simpsonwood Retreat Center in Norcross, Georgia.



Following Mrs. Laforgia's presentation and a question-and-answer period, two additional guests took the podium to share their experiences and perspectives. Mrs. Stephanie Durnin, founder of the educational and advocacy nonprofit Health Freedom Alabama and mother of four, spoke from her experience as the parent of a child she says experienced vaccine injury. Elder Makinde Gbolahan, a herbalist and founder of Rapha Institute of Mobile, also contributed his perspective to the discussion.

The program concluded with the presentation of National Parents' Day certificates and bouquets to Mrs. Laforgia and Mrs. Durnin in recognition of their dedication to raising and caring for their children through challenging circumstances. Their husbands were unable to attend, but the women were warmly celebrated by those present.

A delicious dinner followed the program, giving attendees an opportunity to continue the evening in fellowship. Conversations and exchanges of personal experiences continued well into the night, reflecting the spirit of National Parents' Day: recognizing the profound responsibility of parenthood and creating a community where parents can encourage, learn from, and support one another.