



International Women's Day 2009

“Women as Peacemakers: Building a Culture of Peace”

International Women's Day

The United Nations' Charter, ratified in San Francisco in 1945, proclaimed gender equality as a fundamental human right and professes that “no enduring solution to society's most threatening social, economic and political problems can be found without the full participation, and the full empowerment of the world's women.”

The United Nations officially recognized International Women's Day in 1975, stating:

When women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate their Day, they can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

Fifth International Women's Day Commemoration

For five years International Women's Day has been commemorated in Washington, DC by the Universal Peace Federation and Women's Federation for World Peace, USA. This year Peace X Peace joins in to explore the theme of creating partnerships for peace.

Previous year titles were:

2005 Women Creating Lasting Peace; 2006 The Essential Role of Women in Creating Peace;
2007 Women Transcending Barriers to Create Peace; 2008 Women as Peacemakers

Past speakers were from Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Tunisia, the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Bank, and leaders of national and international NGOs.

Bridge of Peace Ceremony for Reconciliation and Healing

The Bridge of Peace Ceremony is a tool for reconciliation and healing and making new partnerships for peace. It was first used by WFWP on the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II to reconcile the former enemy nations of Japan and the United States during the International Friendship Conferences where 11,000 women from each country “crossed the bridge” to meet a woman from the other nation.

As women cross the “Bridge” any internal blocks are left behind and empathy, forgiveness and unconditional love emerge, such as that shown by a mother for a child, a neighbor toward someone in need, a nation helping another to rebuild. These unique qualities are essential in creating a culture of lasting peace.

This year's participants are asked to consider ‘crossing over barriers’ of race, religion, and nationality by joining in and meeting a new friend on the Bridge of Peace. Guests are welcome to wear their traditional national dress.