



**WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM**  
 WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**WILPF FRESNO MEMBERSHIP LUNCH WAS AMAZING**

The WILPF Membership Lunch was a wonderful event, with WILPF members putting their spectacular best efforts into food and decoration, transforming the Sarah McCordle Room of the Central Library into a gorgeous WILPF center.

Thanks to all who helped, contributed and worked so hard: Teresa Castillo, Patty Bennett, Cheryl Caldera, Carol Goiburn, Nancy Godwin, Jean Hays, Nancy Hatcher, Sandra Iyall, Kyla Mitchell, Jan Slagter, Leni Villagomez Reeves and Patricia Wells-Solorzano.

Thanks to our impressive speakers!

Thanks to the Raging Grannies who sang for us! In so many cases, they are us!

We were glad to welcome our friends and allies, old and new, and by some incredible good fortune we had just the number of people the room could hold.

"Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion" was our theme, and our speakers were leading examples, as they gave eloquent and insightful answers to questions about equity diversity and inclusion that it was a privilege to hear in full; these few high points don't begin to cover it. All are examples of commitment to working for the future, in a thoroughly dedicated way of life and work.

Our speakers were as follows:

Sukaina Hussain, Deputy Executive Director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations Sacramento Valley/Central California, is a community advocate who has worked to build interfaith relationships with a focus on equity and justice for many years. Driven by her Islamic values, she emphasizes the need to support all communities.

Josie Bustos-Pelayo has been an educator for the past 26 years. Her commitment to education and children is to inspire a love for multicultural/multilingual literacy, learning and culture. She has served on The Jane Addams Children's Book Award Selection Committee (WILPF Fresno gives sets of these books to many libraries in the Fresno County system and to the Jane Addams School), the California Reads Selection Committee for CTA and the REFORMA Pura Belpré Selection Committee.

Aline Reed is a past President and Vice President of the West Fresno Democratic Club, and she is the current President of the Fresno Freedom School. Her political sensibilities were shaped by family members who were Black Panthers, Black Muslim followers of the Hon. Elijah Muhammed and by veterans of the war in Vietnam.

**SOME SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS**

**From Sukaina Hussain**

Women's opportunities lift the whole community and women's rights are indicators of how well the community, the society as a whole, functions for all.

We as women must advocate for ourselves, and when we succeed, everyone around us succeeds.

It has been important to recognize that even well-intentioned organizations dominated by economically comfortable white people will not be able to represent all. Inclusiveness requires assessment, intentionality and a dedication to change.

Key questions: Who is not here? Who are we making decisions for but not hearing from?

Key focus for people who want to be allies: the "unsexy issues"—those that have no special emotional appeal to us but are crucially important to the people affected. Sexy issues examples were Malala Yousafzai and mandatory hijab wearing. But U.S. drone bombings and U.S. economic sanctions that kill people and that do terrible damage to their lives tend to be ignored.

Palestine is an issue of white supremacy, colonialism, displacement of indigenous people from their ancestral land and attempted genocide.



Raging Grannies singing "Women Hold Up Half the Sky." Photo by LVR



Our speakers (L to R): Sukaina Hussain, Josie Bustos-Pelayo and Aline Reed. Photo by LVR



Sandra Iyall (left) and Cheryl Caldera with the WILPF display case they and Nancy Hatcher created for the Central Library. Photo by Nancy Hatcher

Don't stay quiet. Educate friends and neighbors. Advocate. Stand up and speak out.

Participate. But avoid the savior complex: "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time." If you feel that your liberation is bound up with mine, then we can work together.

**From Josie Bustos-Pelayo**

Josie Bustos-Pelayo arrived in the United States knowing how to read and write Spanish, but this was never recognized or built upon. Here, from the first grade onward, her experiences in education were non-diverse and not representative; non-white history was distorted when it was taught at all. An example was Rosa Parks and her refusal to cede her bus seat to a white person.

It was not until Josie was in college that she learned that this was not due to being tired after working all day, but a conscious protest against discrimination. But what about those children who don't go to college and who will never have the chance to hear the misrepresentations corrected?

Josie studied education to have the opportunity "to be the teacher I never had."

Teachers must advocate for their students and teach students to advocate for themselves. Teachers who want to be inclusive need to look for books that will be inclusive, that will reach students. And teachers must be taught to model advocacy for their students.

Josie's refrain is "Oh, I have a book for you," and her superpower is book-giving.

**From Aline Reed**

It's hard to believe that we are still talking about this. Equity, diversity, inclusion: Shouldn't this struggle have been won a long time ago? Clearly, racism, hate and the caste system are hard to shake. In the words of Angela Davis *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle* (read this book!).

We are in a period when white supremacy and fascism are on the rise and the devil is always busy. We are not going back. Getting out the vote is essential.

A strength of the Central Valley is our diversity. A challenge is finding true allies to work with. Frustrations occur when people are participating, offering their opinions and being ignored.

Oppressed people identify with other oppressed people. Their struggle is my struggle. As Alice Walker said, "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." Get out and vote.

When you educate a woman, you educate the whole family, and everyone around her. Love on your kids, and let them see Mom, Grandma and Auntie out on the front lines.



Fresno WILPF Chair and Treasurer Teresa Castillo (at left) also fills in for the crucial Middle East Committee, which needs a Chair. Photo by LVR



Ann Caruthers (left), co-creator and first Chair of the Library Committee, and Joan Poss (right), one of our WILPF Fresno founders. Photo by LVR

**WILPF MEETING**

April 11 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness. Open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For info on a possible Zoom option, contact Teresa at taca\_03@ymail.com.

**STIR IT UP-WILPF**

**KFCF 88.1 FM**  
 April 24 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

**UNPACKING RACISM**

With Dr. Jean Kennedy. Moving toward community event participation. To

join, RSVP with your e-mail address to drjeankennedy@yahoo.com or text 559-270-1023.

**WOMEN IN BLACK**

April 3 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at skern@netptc.net or 559-349-3777.

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW! HERE'S HOW**

Send dues to WILPF Fresno, P.O. Box 5114, Fresno, CA 93755. WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.

For questions and/or information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY WILPF. THE WILPF PAGE IS USUALLY COMPILED AND EDITED BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES (LENIVREEVES@GMAIL.COM).