



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

Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**UGANDA SCHOOL FUNDRAISER ON OCT. 1**

WILPF member Kyla Mitchell is working with a dedicated team to build and run a primary school in rural Eastern Uganda. The Ibeneneka Learning Community Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with Lance Omeje, a retired Fresno Unified School District teacher, as President. The school is planned to open in January 2024. It is a work in progress, starting with K-Grade 4 classes, adding a class each year. The school will emphasize project-based learning and empowerment of girls.



Esther, a young girl in the area where the school is being built, gives thanks to donors. Check out the video at [facebook.com/ibeneneka](https://facebook.com/ibeneneka).  
Photo by Ibeneneka Learning Community Center

There will be a fundraiser at Detention Billiards in the Tower District on Oct. 1 to help raise funds for desks and other essential items. There will also be opportunities to visit the school once it's built for those who are interested in traveling to the beautiful country often called the Pearl of Africa. Visit [Ibeneneka.org](https://ibeneneka.org) for more information or call Kyla at 559-346-8253.

**SUPPORT THE NUCLEAR ABOLITION AND CONVERSION ACT!**

*Legislative Committee August Visit to Rep. Jim Costa's Office*

Legislative Committee Chair Jean Hays, Patricia Wells-Solorzano, Leni Villagomez Reeves and Kyla Mitchell, with Evalee Jane representing the future, visited Rep. Jim Costa's office on Aug. 11, just days after the peace memorial ceremonies on the anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



WILPF Fresno members doing educational advocacy at Rep. Jim Costa's office. Photo by LVR

We were there to urge Rep. Costa to support the Nuclear Abolition and Conversion Act, H.R. 2775, introduced by Eleanor Holmes Norton, which calls on the United States to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as a first step to eliminating all nuclear weapons.

The bill description: "To direct the United States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and convert nuclear weapons industry resources and personnel to purposes relating to addressing the climate crisis, and for other purposes."

There are 11 co-sponsors for this bill, but in California only Rep. Barbara Lee has signed on as a co-sponsor.

The TPNW sets out a pathway for the verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons from all countries. It is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal being their total elimination.

The TPNW entered into force on Jan. 22, 2021, with 122 countries voting in favor, including all 54 nations of Africa and all 33 nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Following the treaty's adoption, the permanent missions of the United States, the United Kingdom and France issued a joint statement indicating that they did not intend "to sign, ratify or ever become party to it."

We were courteously received by Boaz Khajavi, a staff assistant to Rep. Costa.

**Rest in Power Ed Castro Jr.**

Ed Castro Jr. (right) was always there when WILPF—and so many other groups—needed him. Photo by LVR



**WILPF MEETING**

Sept. 14 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., online and in person at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Watch your e-mail for an announcement with a link and a call-in number. For info, contact Teresa at [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com) or Leni at [lenivreeves@gmail.com](mailto:lenivreeves@gmail.com).

**STIR IT UP—WILPF KFCF 88.1 FM**

Sept. 27 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

**UNPACKING RACISM**

Sept. 24 (last Sunday), 6:30 p.m. With Dr. Jean Kennedy. To join and get a link, RSVP with your e-mail address to [drjeankennedy@yahoo.com](mailto:drjeankennedy@yahoo.com) or text 559-270-1023.

**WOMEN IN BLACK**

Sept. 6 (first Wednesday), noon, Courthouse. Check first with Sue Kern at [skern@netptc.net](mailto:skern@netptc.net) or 559-349-3777.

**THE WILPF CRAFTS FAIRE IS RETURNING ON NOV. 18!**



We are excited to bring our annual Crafts Faire back. We miss seeing everyone. We are making a few changes—and we have a date!

Watch for updates as we continue planning!

We have a new venue, thanks to Rev. Floyd Harris. This year, our Crafts Faire will be held at the Free AME Church at 806 Collins Avenue in Fresno.

We look forward to offering you all the festivities of our annual Crafts Faire but at a slightly smaller scale. We also look forward to seeing all of our friends again!

For more information, contact Teresa Castillo at 559-360-8054 or [taca\\_03@ymail.com](mailto:taca_03@ymail.com).

**CUBA—PASTORS FOR PEACE CARAVAN**

*My Recent Visit to Cuba*

This was my second visit to Cuba, and I was just as excited to go as I was on my first trip. We visited so many provinces and places, including community gardens where fresh organic food was grown.

I was impressed that many such gardens were actually overseen by retired professors—creating a type of educational lab as it were. They helped to provide local communities with various fresh organic food. Nothing is considered waste; even the table scraps are fed to the livestock, which in turn are slaughtered and sold to communities for consumption.

Recently, I was putting out my own garbage and it dawned on me, as I was wondering why we do not feed our farm animals waste food instead of having landfills, that "Of course, our food is filled with so many chemicals that maybe it's a good thing that we do not feed our 'landfill food' to our farm animals."

We also visited various churches. At one such encounter, I heard one of the greatest moving testimonials from a transgender woman who came on the IFCO Pastors for Peace Caravan Cuba trip.

She stood up in that church in Cuba and said that the last time she set foot in a church was 17 years ago but that she felt loved, welcomed and unjudged at that church in Cuba. She went on to say that she was put off from going to church in the United States, or having anything to do with the Christian faith because she felt judged for her gender reassignment decision.

For me, that was such a moving testimony as I know too well how the Christian church, which I grew up in, can be so spiteful to people who are different from "us."

We were also able to visit the Cuban Frontier Brigade in Guantanamo, and that left me wondering what the heck a U.S. naval base is doing on the island of Cuba. I understand the political implications, but the United States is the same country that has set up an embargo, that cruel blockade imposed by the U.S. government, added to which is the arbitrary inclusion of Cuba on the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

Yet, the United States chose to send no help when Matanzas was having its fire crisis. No U.S. aid was sent to Cuba, while the United States continues to occupy "space" on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This U.S. military prison naval base, by the way, is where the most cruel infringement on prisoners' human rights occur, with violations that we Americans allow to take place, while Cuba has NOTHING to do with those actions of the United States.

We visited other memorable places such as the resting place of President Fidel Castro and others who fought for Cuba's independence. Of course, another highlight for me was when we attended the 70th anniversary *del asalto a los cuarteles Moncada y Carlos Manuel de Céspedes*.

Finally, this 33rd group of *caravanistas* will be remembered, no doubt, and be described as "the party IFCO group," as we would enthusiastically break out into singing and dancing everywhere we went. For me personally, God willing, I'll be back next year on the IFCO Cuba trip.

—Dr. Jean Kennedy



Dr. Jean Kennedy and Professor Rafael Avitia on the Pastors for Peace Caravan in Cuba. Photo by Rafael Avitia

**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 information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at [nhatcher46@gmail.com](mailto:nhatcher46@gmail.com) or Kyla Mitchell at [kyla.noelle@gmail.com](mailto:kyla.noelle@gmail.com).

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