



Heart to Heart Sisters in the Kingdom of God

Linda Guteres
LWML Atlantic District President 2018–2022

The Heart to Heart Sisters Committee contacted LWML Atlantic District President Linda Guteres to ask her to share how her district embraces the Heart to Heart Sisters program. These are her reflections and the reflections of some of her leadership team members.

When you look through the beautiful lens of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League Atlantic District (LWML AD), you see a stunning mosaic of people glued together by their faith as they work guided by their Leader Jesus Christ. Each uniquely created, God-gifted woman brings her similarities and differences to be shared and appreciated. While this is not always easy, it is rewarding as we work, side by side, for the same goal of service in God’s Kingdom.

Like in many cities and metropolitan areas, there are pockets of culture-specific neighborhoods. Within the Atlantic District, which encompasses the eastern half of the state of New York, we have many of these pockets densely packed together. By God’s design, this unintended, yet unavoidable, intersectionality gives our district an advantage to contribute to and participate in God’s work in many and various ways. Our district LWML is a “joy-filled” group of women who help all believers be disciples for life as we engage the world with His Gospel of Hope.



Perhaps what is most surprising is how the diverse sisters within the LWML Atlantic District find points of commonality with each other. One member of our district board commented, “Because the LWML AD is so diverse, we truly get to know our dear sisters in Christ when we gather for activities and catch up on each other's lives. We see that each culture has the same problems and joys as the others.”

As sisters in Christ, we love and serve the One True God. When we meet together, we recognize our diversity and value our unity in Jesus Christ. The Heart to Heart Sisters (H2H) program is all about assisting women to be united in Christ. H2H helps those who might feel separate or alone to feel included and valued. This connection happens among people who look different on the outside, as well as those who look at



things from different perspectives. By interacting with one another and learning to value our varying backgrounds and perspectives, we develop deep friendships and partner together in sharing the Gospel. Our new eyes help us see people differently and bring the blessing of connecting as the family of God.

Another sister writes, “From what I have observed as a woman, a Deaconess, a Heart to Heart sister, and as an LWML woman, this is what sets us up differently. We are able to share our history and struggles. When we share our experiences, we build connecting bridges allowing someone who may feel like an outsider to draw nearer. Everyone is accepted. Everyone is valued. It is our job as women of the LWML to be open and welcome all those who may appear different and share the same gift of God’s redeeming love with them.”

Another sister stated, “We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. We also respect each other’s opinions whether we agree with them or not.” We might not all eat the same foods, speak the same languages, or dance the same dances, but we are connected in our relationships and in our friendships.



Over and over again we have been pleasantly surprised by what we have in common with other women. Being able to share our experiences with diverse people from many cultures who do not judge or criticize, creates a common ground on which we stand together in the Lord. One member writes, “If you cannot think of a shared history or struggle, then create new experiences and have a blast learning together. This is the beauty of New York, the LWML, and being a Heart to Heart advocate.”

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