

BPW NZ President's Candle-lighting Message 2011

Congratulations to all of you who are present celebrating this special event on the BPW calendar. It is the time of year when we all come together to remember each other and our BPW sisters around the world. It is also a time of reflection and over the last year we have seen a number of events that have either impacted on members and their families directly or on the organization as a whole. So please stand for one minute to remember these clubs and members who have been affected by disasters and/or loss:

- BPW Haiti
- BPW Pakistan
- BPW Christchurch
- BPW Japan
- and the passing of members and friends.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to every club and member who has generously made donations for the members or clubs affected.

Now it is time to look to the future, our strength is in our Aims and commitment in BPW, what we have achieved, individually and collectively. It is the diversity within a club that ensures its success, the projects that members are involved in and the future strategic planning that provides the strong foundation for members, clubs and the Federation as a whole to work towards strengthening and growing BPW. 2011 is a year for change, a new Executive, BPW International Congress, a new national project is being explored, the current BPW NZ strategic plan is being reviewed and developed with a five year plan and the birth of an idea, a membership task force, to name just a few.

Therefore, as you light each candle remember you are providing the light for all women around the world and for your members. The light is a sign of new beginnings; it is the beacon of hope, providing warmth and the power to keep darkness at bay. As BPW members, you also provide the beacon of hope to all the women of NZ, your commitment, the projects that clubs individually and collectively undertake, the issues you face and act upon, the submissions you contribute to all provide a light for other women to follow.

The lighting of each candle provides a beacon for the future, our own and that of our Sisters around the world. Take a moment to remember them, but also take the time to remember each other, share your memories of BPW with other members and guests to show what makes BPW unique. As you sit in the glow of the candle-light I would like to note the glow within each of you and for every woman you touch you set a light within them. I wish you all a beautiful evening, one of joy and celebrations.

I would like to leave you with the words of BPW NZ Past President (1985-87) Beverly Sturgeon: *"Equality – Development - Peace.....It is encouraging that more than ever before, women are accepting decision-making responsibilities in their community as well as nationally and internationally, but we have a long way to go to attain full equality"*

Warmest regards
Carolyn Savage
BPW NZ President