

Cultural variety on display for Women's Day

John Boccacino • Staff writer • March 8, 2010

Jamie Columbus admits Rochester International Women's Day will never surpass Mother's Day in popularity.

But during the second annual celebration of all things women — from food and music to fashion and jewelry — more than 600 people came out to Good Luck restaurant in the Village Gate Sunday to experience an eclectic mix of activities.

The event featured dancing, live music, food and an exhibit of more than 100 hats from around the world, including pieces from China, Africa and the Middle East.

But the festivities also addressed serious issues, such as ways to reduce violence against women. Representatives from Empowered Girl Alliance, which aims to provide young girls with a better sense of identity and self-worth, ran an arts and crafts booth where people could make and decorate crowns to express who they are.

"We are simultaneously celebrating women with women all over the world, and we're forming a connection with people in other countries," by observing International Women's Day, said Columbus, of Brighton.

"We're all in this together and it's a great visual seeing all the nationalities represented."

Alice Pylko and 13 girls from the Trinity Montessori School in East Rochester wore hand-made hats representing different cultures.

Columbus said 11 countries celebrate International Women's Day. Today marks the actual day when women come together to share their struggles for peace, justice and equality, said Pittsford's Sheila Gavin.

"We share the same passions and the same concerns, and the fact that we're thinking alike and can discuss our issues amongst each other, it pushes the commitment to our individual rights forward," Gavin said.

Culinary treats from Ethiopia, Vietnam, India and China were among the foods sampled by the attendees.

The movement behind International Women's Day dates back to a 1908 suffrage movement.

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