WTB Monthly Minutes – October 11, 2017

Dessert and Dialogue Meeting at CNYRise, 275 W Seneca Turnpike

The ladies of CNYRise (formerly Turkish Cultural Council) hosted Women Transcending Boundaries on October 11th from 6-8 PM. Our hosts provided delectable desserts, salads, and fragrant tea; WTB provided paper products and cold drinks. About 30 women gathered eager to share food and conversation, learn more about each other, and make new friends.

Danya Wellmon welcomed everyone and explained the plan for the evening. Five numbered round tables had been set up, each seating up to eight women. A WTB facilitator had been assigned to each table for the evening. Women selected a table where they would be with others they did not yet know well. Facilitators gave out name tags, each with the number of a different table near the bottom. After discussing the first topic question at their initial table, participants would move to their second tables to discuss a second question with different people. Finally, the whole group would come together to share and reflect about the experience.

For the first half hour we shared food and general conversation at our initial tables. At about 6:30, Danya asked the facilitators to begin the discussion by reading the first question: Have you ever transcended a boundary? A dictionary definition of “transcend” was on each table. Each table spent twenty minutes discussing this first topic.

At 7:00 we took a break so the Muslim ladies could go to prayer. Those who remained refilled their plates and continued chatting. When all had returned, Melek Yavuz and Sue Savion briefly highlighted some upcoming activities of CNYRise and WTB respectively. Sue Savion read her poem “The Turkish Ladies” which set a perfect tone for the rest of the evening.

Danya asked women to move to their second table. When all were settled, table facilitators posed the second question: What boundaries do you feel women have left to transcend? Tables held lively discussions for about 20 minutes.

Penny Hart guided the whole-group reflection. She noted that each of us had discussed two different questions with two different groups of women. Penny suggested our conversations highlighted the similarities among us: the boundaries we faced might be different, yet the process of transcending was the same. “What did you learn that surprised you?” Answers reflected the range of subjects covered: Western Turkey has an American-type lifestyle; several women at one table had gotten their educations later in life; women who had broken expectations in Turkish Army and US Army; domestic violence; transcending being judged by how you look. Some “boundaries left to transcend” put forward were unwritten rules, “glass ceilings,” and other generalized positions about a ‘woman’s place.’ Education, learning about each other as people, will help us continue to transcend. “What was the value of this?’ Communication--open, polite, non-judging, out-of-your-comfort-zone dialogue—is key to getting together to solve problems. Everyone agreed they would like to do this type of meeting again.

Danya stressed that WTB is seeking suggestions and ideas for its upcoming programs; we want our meetings to provide opportunities for one to one friendships to grow. Please email her with ideas or to join the program committee. In November, Diane Lansing is planning a program about origami peace cranes that will include opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences. WTB has monthly Schamis: Gaye Montague explained that these are informal meet-ups at restaurants where we can get to know each other over interesting food. (Details on Oct 19th Schami follow these minutes.)

We left energized and excited to “Go forward with more conversation!”

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Bova, WTB Secretary