

Women Transcending Boundaries News – May 2021

Join us at Mill Run Park on Sunday, May 23rd!

This year has been difficult...but we have endured! We've missed seeing everyone and are excited to be together in person once more!

Please join WTB for "Celebrating Ourselves and Others through stories, poetry, songs and dances." We'll be meeting up outdoors to share our journeys this past year, things we are looking forward to this summer and fall – and stories, poems, songs and dances that inspire us from our faith traditions or personal experiences.

If you or a group would like to share a story, song, poem or dance, please let us know! Program will be very informal. Email wellmond@msn.com

Date and Time: Sunday, May 23rd from 3-5 pm

Place: Tom Whorrall Pavilion, Mill Run Park, 125 Mill St. Manlius, NY 13104

Details and Covid Precautions:

- ✚ Mask and Social Distance (unless eating or presenting)
- ✚ Bring personal snack and/or drink if you choose; bottled water will be provided
- ✚ Bring a chair if you can (and perhaps an extra for someone else); some seating is available
- ✚ Park has play area; this will be available for children but not supervised
- ✚ Rides between parking lot and Pavilion will be available if needed

Directions to Mill Run Park: Exit 481 as if you were going to Fayetteville. Head East on East Genesee Street. At Lyndon Corners, take the Right fork Route 92 to Manlius. Follow Route 92 into Manlius until it intersects with East Seneca Turnpike. GO STRAIGHT through the intersection onto Liberty Lane. Turn Left onto Flume Rd. At the Stop sign turn Right onto Mill St and follow to the end. Parking lot is on the left.

Become a member of Women Transcending Boundaries!

You need only fill out a 2021 Membership Form to officially join. A form is available on our website www.wtb.org or you can use the easy online link <https://forms.gle/oShFU2D5VnzNQPHv6>

WTB Book Club meets via Zoom on Monday May 10th at 7 pm

Join us May 10th at 7 pm via Zoom to discuss *The Yellow House* by Sharon Broom. Winner of the 2019 National Book Award for Nonfiction, this month's book is a memoir about a family's struggle to keep and maintain their home in a neglected part of New Orleans – both before and after Hurricane Katrina—and the deep pull of home and family. To be added to the Zoom meeting, email Anne Flaherty, annebflaherty@gmail.com. June selection will be *A Place for Us* by Fatima Farheen Mizra.

Sewing With New Americans

Although we can't have classes, we are still busy with refugee sewing:

- Three Afghani families, here on Special Immigration Visas because the men worked as translators for the American army, have received donated machines and had an opportunity to sort through fabrics and notions to take what appealed to them.
- A talented Sri Lankan woman requested a serger and received a newly refurbished machine. She also selected from donated sets of buttons. If you need alterations done, you can reach her through Jennifer (who heads up our WTB sewing classes) at 315-345-9217
- In May Jennifer will be speaking to a local Methodist church about the program.

We like to ask how someone learn of our program, and we are often amazed at how far the word is spread. One sewer tells another, and "I heard it through the grapevine" is exactly how word travels.

Time will tell if we are able to resume our classes in September. Please keep us in mind and help spread the word.

Upcoming Project: Pantry Partner

WTB is exploring working with the Pantry Partners program--part of the Round Table of Faith Leaders Community Campaign for Love. Beginning with milk distribution during the pandemic, Pantry Partners has expanded to encompass food hubs/sub-hubs in houses of worship and now includes plans to build and support community gardens to provide fresh, healthy food options. WTB plans to partner with a Southside church and explore how we can support their food pantry mission. We are looking forward to an opportunity to build relationships and help alleviate food insecurity in our city.

Food Pantry? Gardening? Would you like to become part of this effort? We welcome your talents and ideas, creativity and energy as we find our role supporting our pantry partner! If you'd like to be involved please email babova@aol.com.

CNY RISE LADIES Hold Online Cooking Class Saturday, May 22nd at 11 am

On the menu: potato salad, cheese pastry (Borek), and mixed cookies. RSVP by May 18th at cnyriseladies@gmail.com to get recipes and invitation link.

WTB's April Meeting: "A Refugee Experience"

Thank you to everyone who attended our Zoom meeting "Spirit of America: Liberty, Diversity, Dignity" hosted in collaboration with InterFaith Works of CNY on April 18th.

Daryl Files of InterFaith Works led the meeting. She spoke about her agency's role in resettling refugees in our Syracuse Community. She noted that refugees have been thoroughly vetted by international or national organizations in a process that can take up to two years; she detailed the supports provided when refugees arrive here.

Sinedue, a New American young woman who came to this country from Ethiopia in 2012, generously shared her experiences relocating here and graciously answered all our questions about her personal journey including suggestions on how we can become more welcoming and supportive to new refugees.

If you were unable to attend, minutes of the meeting are available on our website <https://www.wtb.org>

Inspired to read a captivating book about the refugee experience?

WTB Book Club enthusiastically recommends our April selection!! Based on a true incident, *The Boat People* by Sharon Bala captures the plight of a boatload of Sri Lankan refugees seeking asylum in Canada. The novel toggles between that past and present, detailing the horrors endured by people caught in the civil war between the Tamil Tigers and Sinhalese army and the trauma endured in Canada as they are caught in the political and legal process of obtaining asylum. We had a lively discussion at our meeting and recommend it as a good read as well as a sensitive and thoughtful commentary on the plight of the refugee in today's world and the concerns of the country accepting them.

What is the difference between a refugee, an asylum seeker, a migrant and an immigrant?

This question arose at our April 18th meeting. We believe it is important to understand these distinctions today as news and social media tend to conflate all people coming here regardless of how or why they have come.

Daryl Files provided this information to us. We are sharing it in its entirety. Although it is lengthy, we feel it is helpful to clarify these confusing labels.

Refugee A refugee is any person who has been forced to flee their country due to war, persecution, or because their home government cannot or will not protect them.

When a refugee flees, they are registered with an official agency, such as a government or the United Nations, which allows them to gain access to state and international aid and assistance.

Refugees have legal protections guaranteed by the United Nations Refugee Agency, or UNHCR, including economic and social rights, and the ability to bring immediate family with them. Every refugee is initially an asylum seeker, although not every asylum seeker becomes a refugee.

An "internally displaced person," or IDP, is similar to a refugee in many respects, except they did not cross an international boundary when they fled war, persecution, or natural disaster. They also do not enjoy the same legal protection or have access to the same resources as refugees. Many of the families we serve in Iraq and Syria are technically considered "internally displaced persons."

Asylum Seeker Asylum seekers are not officially designated refugees, but they have appealed to achieve refugee status. They are leaving their country of origin in order to escape war or persecution due to their nationality, race, religion, or political affiliation.

During the Trump administration, gang and domestic violence were decreed no longer reasons one can seek asylum in the United States, even if a person's home government does not provide adequate protection. As a result, families fleeing threats of death by gangs are considered migrants (see below) and therefore not be granted any special protections or permitted to seek asylum in the US. A large number of people who come to the US-Mexico border are appealing for asylum because of dire economic circumstances or because of gang or **Migrant** Migrants are people who are leaving their home country and pursuing residency in another place, generally to find work, seek education, or to be reunited with their families. Unlike refugees, migrants can return home to their country if they wish.

"Migrant" is a difficult label, however, and is easily abused or misunderstood. Many people in Central America face extreme poverty and lack of resources (such as food, shelter, access to public services) to meet their basic needs. They are labeled "migrants" even though they have the same limited options a refugee may have.

Some believe that that the term migrant should be redefined as a more precise, neutral term. As currently defined, a “migrant” might be someone who relocates for a job, just as easily as it could be a mother fleeing Guatemala because of horrific gang violence. The two situations are not comparable, but currently the same label would be applied in both cases.

Immigrant An immigrant is an individual who willingly leaves their country of origin and legally enters another country where they are granted permission to permanently resettle, thus qualifying them to work without restriction. Their reasons for wanting to resettle can be many—from a longing for economic prosperity or a better education, to the fulfillment of a dream or reunion with family.

Migrant vs. Refugee Refugees are those who have been forced to leave their home country. Official refugee status is granted by the UN or an official agency. Migrants, on the other hand, are those who have chosen to leave and theoretically could return home. There are many, however, who feel like they have no option but to flee. Still, because they are not officially recognized as refugees, they are deemed migrants.

Migrant vs. Immigrant A migrant is an individual who is purposefully on the move in search of a better life, but arguably could return home if they chose. An immigrant is an individual who willingly leaves their country of origin for any number of reasons and legally enters another country, where they are granted permission to permanently resettle. The term “migrant” denotes temporary movement, while an immigrant typically has permanent residency. Migration can occur within the borders of the same country, or cross international borders, while immigration occurs when crossing an international border and becoming a permanent resident in another country.

Refugee vs. Asylum Seeker A refugee is someone who was forced to flee because their home country is unsafe and their government cannot or will not protect them. An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking protection in another country but has not yet obtained official refugee status. Their reasons for leaving home are often due to war or persecution as well.

Refugee vs. Immigrant Refugees have been forced to leave their home, while an immigrant chooses to leave. Refugees are granted certain legal protections by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Some are eventually resettled in a new place. Immigrants legally enter a country of their choosing, follow that country’s procedures for entry, and have been allowed permanent residency.

“Refugees are you and I under different circumstances.” Ella Johnson

WTB wishes all who celebrate a joyous and blessed Ramadan. Eid Mubarak!