Women Transcending Boundaries November Program Meeting, 2023
Collaborative Dinner Event with The RIse Center
Wednesday, November 8, at 6:00 PM
Held at the Rise Center, 275 Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse NY 13207

The evening at the Rise Center marked the 18th Annual Friendship Dinner for the organization. The Turkish Dinner and site was provided by the Rise Center, but volunteers of the Rise Center and WTB worked together to prepare for, lead, and staff the event. The theme for the evening was Climate Change. The issue was addressed and information provided in a number of ways.

Approximately 100 persons attended the free community event. About 20 WTB women, some with family and/or friend accompaniment, were among the group.

At the entry to the large assembly room, *Women Transcending Boundaries* had a table with information about the organization. The table was staffed by Lorraine Markley and included information about WTB as well as some current programs. The WTB book *Bringing Women of Faith Together* and interfaith bracelets with religious symbols were for sale. Also, on the table were membership forms, WTB brochures, a sign-up sheet for assisting at the Plowshares Craft Festival on Dec. 2 and 3, and a number of posters related to climate issues including *Green Rule Study Guide Poster* from Faith and the Common Good, a poster stating *Do Unto the Earth as You Would Have it Done to You*, and The Golden Rule poster with that guidance as it exists in 13 religious traditions.

A second table at the entry to the room was staffed by women from the organization *Habitat Gardening of Central New York (HGCNY).* Members of that organization discussed with interested persons and provided written information on the effects plants can have on the environment. There were brochures and posters identifying Native and Invasive plants and the roles they play in the environment for birds and insects. A large poster about the important roll milkweed plays for butterflies was prominently displayed. The women were engaging persons in discussion about the environment.

In the large assembly room 14 round tables with eight place settings at each table had been set up. Volunteers from the Rise Center and WTB assisted in preparing the tables. Persons were assigned tables in ways that encouraged participation among groups attending. At about 6:00 a delicious Turkish dinner was served from four buffet tables in corners of the room. Live music was performed by Azat Orazmyradov.

At 6:15 Dr. Lisa Saka welcomed persons to the Rise Center and the co-spored event. She talked a bit about the community purposes and events of the Rise Center. Melek Yavuz, Board President of CNY Rise Center and President of Women Transcending Boundaries also welcomed everyone. Both mentioned the issue of the current crisis of the environment and how climate change affects every person in the world now and is a concern for all religions and groups. Thus, it seemed an important focus for this interfaith and community event.

The Rise Center was then presented in a video *We Rise By Lifting Others*. The focus was on some principle events sponsored by Rise Center, such as Community Activities, History of the Friendship Dinners, Ramadan Events, the interfaith *Learning With Our Neighbors* program.

Women Transcending Boundaries was then depicted in a second video which showed the founders of the organization in discussion, photos of events of the organization including work with refugees such as sewing classes, monthly programmatic themes, restaurant social gatherings, and the Youth Interfaith events.

Prior to the address by the speaker everyone viewed a video describing the issue of climate change and the science behind efforts to reduce carbon dioxide, methane, and other gasses the world is releasing into the atmosphere. Dr. Rhea Jezer, President of Energy 21 was introduced as the speaker for the evening. Rhea's background and commitment to the work of environmental issues was highlighted. Some of the numerous awards received for her work related to climate concerns were mentioned, such as one from the Sierra Club. In addition to her volunteer work, she is also an Assistant Professor at SYNY ESF. *How Will We Rise Together to Address Climate Change?* was announced as the title of her presentation.

She began her discussion by talking about the fact that 2022 was declared the hottest year on record, and then talked about the history of warnings the world has received in specific ways at various times over the past 50 years. During he last 10 years the critical nature of the threat has become more apparent. She mentioned how critical it is that to decrease greenhouse gasses, the world decrease and then stop burning fossil fuels, and cutting down forests.

About 20 years ago, she said, the availability of some renewable sources of energy became commonly known. Solar and wind were the initial uses of renewables, but increasing knowledge has shown other resources being discussed and used, such as underground thermal energy. She mentioned that sometimes a price must be paid to change the way we create and use energy, and then asked: *Are we willing to pay to save our planet?*

Using the five fingers of her hand as an illustration having the optimal use of the hand is dependent on all five fingers acting together. The heart of her presentation was that five parts of the society must collaborate and each do its part to make the change we need. These are: Industry, Environmentalists, Labor, Communities, and Elected Governments.

The Inflation Reduction Act is one piece she talked about emanating from government that is making a significant change in a number of ways. A project she mentioned in NY State is the purchase of electric school busses has begun and the number needs to increase. She cautioned that the world needs to cut emissions in half by 2030.

Following her conclusion, the Community Service Awards were awarded by Melek Yavuz and Danya Wellmon of WTB. As each award was given, the environmental work supported by each recipient was mentioned, and then briefly discussed by recipient.

Awards were given to:
Dr. Rhea Jezer, President of Energy 21
Rachel May, NY State Senator
Chris Carrick, Energy Program Manager at CNY Regional Planning the Development Board
Al Stirpe, NY State Assembly
Joanie Mahoney, SUNY ESF President (award accepted by Matthew Millea)

Follow-up Remarks were made by John Mannion, NY State Senator. Sen Manion also received an award.

Barbara Bova of WTB made closing remarks summarizing that though the issue of climate change can feel overwhelming, each of us needs to do what we can to play our part in the change needed.
8:15: Dismissal

Cara S. Steiner, WTB Secretary for Sunday Program Meetings