

Letter from the Founder...

Dear Friends,

Here at Empower Peace, we are proud to report another successful year marked with innovative new initiatives and enhancement of our core programs. For the first time, Empower Peace was awarded a grant from the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for a Virtual Connections program called, "Global Impact Apprentice Challenge." This inventive project connects three high schools in the United States with three high schools from Egypt, Jordan and Israel in a team-oriented environmental leadership competition via videoconferencing technology. The pair of schools with the most successful final projects will be rewarded with a cultural immersion trip where they will visit each other's school and community.

As always, our hallmark program, Women2Women – America, had another incredible year. Application

submissions doubled and reached a record high for the 2010 conference. In the end, 110 impressive emerging young female leaders were selected to represent 23 nations for the weeklong leadership program in Boston, Massachusetts. Throughout the week, they engaged in various workshops, learning everything from negotiating skills during a session with the Managing Director of Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation Susan Hackley and the history and impact human rights policy with Charlie Clements, Director of the Carr Center of Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. Delegates also made an impressive impact at the Empower Peace – Al-Arabiya TV co-sponsored Electronic Town Meeting.

In addition to all of the activities packed into their intensive schedule, the young women most importantly built friendships and an international network with other likeminded women from around the world. We are

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Women2Women 2010 delegates gather outside the John F. Kennedy Library following the Empower Peace – Al-Arabiya Electronic Town Meeting.

Letter from the Founder, continued

extremely impressed with the progress of W2W alumni in implementing their action plans developed at the conference. We congratulate each delegation on their persistence and determination to remain involved upon returning home. With a growing alumni network of nearly 500 young women, Women2Women alumni have become a positive force of change to be reckoned with worldwide.

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– Rick Rendon, Founder, Empower Peace

W2W alumni’s sustained action is also evident in the Symphonic Relief for Haiti concert and the Books for Afghanistan book drive, both of which W2W alumni largely supported. An Empower Peace staff member was even able to travel to Kabul, Afghanistan to oversee the delivery of the first 5,000 books in Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute’s new English literacy center. Empower Peace also increased its online presence in the last several months, beginning with the “1,000 Voices of Reason” Facebook campaign and continuing with the “1,000 Strong Women Project.” We are also in the midst of revamping the Empower Peace website, so please check back for the finished product in the coming months. On behalf of all at Empower Peace, I thank you for your continued interest in and contribution to our programs, and wish you a happy and healthy 2011.

Keep the Faith,



Rick Rendon, Founder - Empower Peace



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EmpowerPeace
virtual connections



**Global Impact
Apprentice
Challenge**

*An international environmental
leadership competition and
cultural exchange.*

With a grant from the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Empower Peace launched its newest Virtual Connections initiative in September 2010. The Global Impact Apprentice Challenge, or GIA, presents the opportunity for American high school students to collaborate with a partner school in the Middle East or North Africa on a service-learning project addressing an environmental issue of mutual concern in each of their communities. Through digital communication, joint service-learning initiatives and cultural exchange, this program provides a unique forum for youth to collaborate on issues of both local and global concern.



*Two students from the
Beaver Country Day School
study their presentation for
Videoconference #1.*

Through a series of three videoconferences over the course of one academic year, the three teams will present on an issue of environmental concern, devise a community service and awareness project for implementation, and report back to the panel of judges and peers on the outcomes of their project and partnership. "The Wastebusters" from

Beaver Country Day School in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts and Sadat City Languages School in Sadat City, Egypt are collaborating on ideas to structure better waste management systems within their respective communities. "The Lifesavers" from McDowell Senior High School in Erie, Pennsylvania and the Modern Montessori School in Amman, Jordan are focusing on wildlife conservation and preservation issues. Team "H2O and You" from the South Royalton School in South Royalton, Vermont and Shevah Mofet High School in Tel Aviv, Israel are working to reduce water pollution in their local water sources. Following the successful completion of Videoconference #1, Videoconference #2 will air on February 16, 2011 at 8am EST. Please visit the GIA website, to register for



Beaver Country Day School students gather for the first videoconference in the Global Impact Apprentice Challenge program.

this free event. In addition to learning about key environmental topics from around the globe, all participants will be entered to win an iPod Nano at the conclusion of each broadcast. ●

Empower Peace – Al-Arabiya TV Electronic Town Meeting

Al-Arabiya TV, the third largest television network airing in the Middle East, and Empower Peace collaboratively produced the Women2Women Electronic Town Meeting filmed during the 2010 W2W conference. After airing on October 7, 2010 throughout the Middle East, the town meeting reportedly received enthusiastic reviews and aired for a second time the following evening. Hosted by renowned Syrian presenter **Zeina al-Yaziji**, the meeting featured a panel of highly distinguished individuals, including former Egyptian Ambassador to Canada, **Dr. Sallama Shaker**; Executive Director for the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, **Charlie Clements**;



*Founder of Empower Peace
Rick Rendon, addresses
delegates during the Al-
Arabiya E-Town Meeting.*

former British diplomat and UN Official **Gerard Russell**; and **Hilary Rantisi**, Director of the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Ms. al-Yaziji presented pressing questions to both delegates and panelists, touching upon issues of religion, women's empowerment, and cross-cultural communication. More specifically, the discussion focused on what young people can learn from one another in an environment of open and honest cross-cultural dialogue. The delegates testified to how one week of interaction with each other led to significant changes in their perspectives. A common theme in the conversation was the belief that youth can indeed bring about systemic social change in their communities and, ultimately, the global community. ●



1,000 Strong Women

On November 1, 2010, Empower Peace launched the "1,000 Strong Women Project" via Facebook to enlist the support of women leaders from around the world, of all ages and nationalities, willing to stand in solidarity and work together to promote equality, justice and peace. Within ten days, over 1,000 women from more than 20 countries around the globe signed on as part of this virtual rapid response team committed to organizing and conducting Internet-based campaigns in support of issues of concern to women and girls worldwide. Group members and the Empower Peace team frequently post news pertaining to women's rights and opportunities to take action on the issues presented. To check out or join the movement, please visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/1000-Strong-Women/172078292805232>.

1,000 VOICES 1,000 VOICES?

1,000 Voices of Reason Campaign

Empower Peace created a Facebook page called, "1,000 Voices of Reason" in response to a bigoted proposal to burn the Qur'an. The Facebook page emphasizes that burning the Qur'an is a radical suggestion that the majority of Americans do not agree with as a legitimate means of expression. Instead, Empower Peace hopes to showcase voices of tolerance and reason.



Nora, a W2W 2010 alumna, spoke out against intolerance in an online video featured on the 1,000 Voices of Reason Facebook page.

Over two thousand people read and acted as a voice of reason by joining and linking the page to their personal webpages. Several Women2Women alumni were asked about their feelings pertaining to the issue. In the interview, 2010 W2W participant Nora suggests that burning the Qur'an is the wrong act to effectively convey any message and says, "If you want to gain attention for your cause, then do it in a more peaceful way that isn't going to hurt people." Likewise, in support of the "1,000 Voices of Reason" page, fellow 2011 participant, Caitlin,



Also a W2W 2010 alumna, Caitlin voiced her opinion on religious tolerance.

says, "There are a lot of misconceptions about Islam and this is the perfect way to show people that Islam is a peaceful religion". An act of hatred is no way to lay the groundwork for moving towards a solution founded on understanding and amity. Empower Peace is proud to read the thoughtful comments written by Facebook friends

and fans in support of tolerance. You can join the 1,000 Voices of Reason movement by visiting <http://www.facebook.com/1000-voices-of-reason/145952532110914>.

W2W

WOMEN2WOMEN

Educate. Inspire. Lead.

Women2Women – America 2010

Empower Peace successfully hosted its fifth annual Women2Women – America conference in August 2010 at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. With the applicant pool nearly doubled, Empower Peace staff carefully read through more than 1,200 applications from over 70 countries before selecting the final delegates. With 110 participants from 23 different countries, this year's conference was both the largest and most globally diverse group to attend a Women2Women conference. Throughout the week, the young women focused on improving their leadership skills through a series of interactive panels, skill-building workshops, videos, and service-learning activities.

Delegates began the week with an interfaith event hosted by the Islamic Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Panelists **Malika** Rushdan, **Dr. Jennifer Peace**, and



Ruth from Colombia poses for a picture with Susan Hackley, Managing Director of Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation, at the W2W Welcome Reception at Boston's beautiful State Room.



W2W 2010 delegates gather for a group shot after their Old Town Trolley Tour and trip to the New England Aquarium – the first aquarium visit for many!

Janet Pen, representing the Islamic, Christian, and Jewish faiths; discussed the core beliefs of each religion and highlighted shared principles and values that lead the religions to intersect. Ensuing discussion allowed delegates to ask questions and share thoughts with both the panelists and participants of differing religions.

Delegates also had the opportunity to engage with leading female human rights activists in an interactive panel discussion led by **Charlie Clements**, Executive Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Crucial conversations arose from questions asked pertaining to human rights issues affecting communities across the globe. Participants also had the opportunity to hear from a third panel at Suffolk University Law School. Co-hosted by **Road Scholar**, the event featured noted former United States Foreign Service Senior Diplomat and foreign policy expert **Janet Bogue** and several impressive colleagues. Ms. Bogue's keynote address was followed by a lively question and answer session with an impressive panel of leaders to answer questions about women in public diplomacy.

In the days following these informative panels, Empower Peace welcomed inspirational men and women to run a series of workshops on topics such as leadership development, grassroots organizing, and media training. **Victoria Budson**, Executive Director of the Women

and Public Policy Program at the Harvard Kennedy School, led a conference's first workshop focused on identifying and fine-tuning inner leadership qualities. Also emphasizing the importance of harvesting personal leadership strengths, **Michael Brown**, CEO of City Year, delivered an inspirational presentation on the founding of his impressive organization. Empower Peace also welcomed **Nasser Weddady**, Civil Rights Outreach Director of the Islamic Congress, who conducted a community organizing workshop. Focusing on social media, **Jim Bloom**, President of Bloom Communications, and **Richard Kang**, Executive Vice President, Corporate Strategy and Business Development for MTV Networks, sparked important conversations amongst delegates on the purpose and social responsibility of the media.



At the conclusion of the conference all participants gathered at the Massachusetts State House and presented action plans, stating their individual missions to bring about change in their respective communities. We at Empower Peace are grateful for the extraordinary effort, passion and energy exhibited by the W2W 2010 delegates throughout the week and are excited to follow their progress in the coming months and years!

Monthly Women2Women Updates

Empower Peace will release its first in a series of "EP Times: Monthly Updates" in an effort to maintain a steadier stream of communication with Women2Women alumni. Each publication will be a brief summary of any relevant Women2Women Program updates, opportunities and news about your fellow W2W alumni! With this in mind, if there is anything that you as an alumna would like to relay to your friends around the world – such as a significant personal achievement or opportunity to become involved with a project – please send your updates to Krisanne at kcampos@empowerpeace.org. We look forward to hearing from you and sharing all of the amazing achievements of you and your peers.



New friends embrace after a rewarding day of service-learning at the Community Harvest Project in Grafton, Massachusetts.

Women2Women – Morocco Alumni Conference

We are excited to announce that Empower Peace's second Women2Women Alumni Conference is in the planning states for Summer 2011 in Morocco, with dates TBD. Please keep on the lookout for a survey regarding potential conference dates. We are eager to hear from all of you, and we will be in touch with further details as they become available.



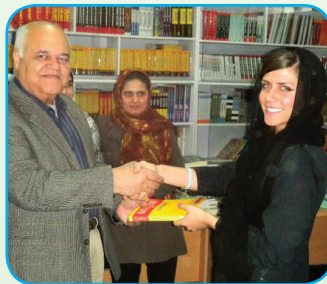
Algerian, Kuwaiti, and Egyptian delegates enjoy the sunset over Boston outside the JFK Library.

Books for Afghanistan – Take Two

Over the course of only a few short months, Women2Women alumni rose to the challenge and succeeded in collecting over 10,000 books for donation to students at the Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute (ATVI) in Kabul, Afghanistan. The books were collected at the Empower Peace Office in Boston, Massachusetts and by Women2Women alumni in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

In October 2010, Empower Peace staff member, **Kristin Wagner**, hand-delivered a large portion of the donations to **Ambassador Sardar Roshan**, the Founder and Headmaster of ATVI. Wagner assisted in the unpacking and sorting of various genres of books collected through the efforts of W2W alumni. At the opening of the newly stocked library, Ambassador Roshan delivered an address extending gratitude to all participants of the book drive. ATVI is currently seeking additional funding for bookshelves and to expand their English language library in order to accommodate all of the donated books.

Kristin Wagner poses with Ambassador Sardar Roshan, now Executive Director of the Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute (ATVI), where 5,000 of the 10,000 books collected by W2W alumni were donated to establish an English Literacy Center. ATVI was Afghanistan's first post-war, co-educational vocational college.



We thank all Women2Women alumni that contributed to this successful project. A special thanks to **Yasmine Dannawy** of Dubai – a continuous W2W supporter and three-time W2W teacher and chaperone – and to **Ahmad Rashad Popal** in Afghanistan for their commitment to the goals of this book drive.



Two ATVI students display new books provided by W2W alumni through Empower Peace's 2009 – 2010 Books for Afghanistan project.

Symphonic Relief for Haiti



Empower Peace Founder Rick Rendon poses with Boston's Longwood Symphony Orchestra before the Symphonic Relief for Haiti benefit concert.

On January 31, 2010, Empower Peace sponsored and produced the “Symphonic Relief for Haiti” concert to benefit Haitian earthquake victims. Empower Peace worked with the Longwood Symphony Orchestra and the New England Conservatory to hold a benefit concert with over 500 attendees. Throughout the concert, Empower Peace encouraged W2W alumni to promote donations and raise funds. Thank you to all who donated and encouraged others to join the cause. Through ticket sales and generous contributions, the event raised over \$100,000.00 for Partners in Health, a key organization working tirelessly on the ground in Haiti.

Women2Women Action Plan Highlights

At the conclusion Women2Women - America 2010, Empower Peace asked participants, in partnership with their delegation, to design an action plan for implementation upon returning home. In light of newly



Delegates from the United Arab Emirates present their Action Plan to panelists at the State House.

Promoting Cultural Understanding Through Communication

YEAR IN REVIEW 2010

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Dr. Sallama Shaker, former Egyptian Ambassador to Canada, addresses W2W delegates and listening panel members at the Massachusetts State House prior to the action plan presentations.

honed and developed skills, the young women decide throughout the week the best way in which to implement change in their communities on a particular issue. The young leaders presented their action plans for critique to women community leaders at the Massachusetts State House at the culmination of the conference. Participants were treated to addresses from honored guests including **Dr. Sallama Shaker**, former Egyptian Ambassador to Canada, and **Maura Pally**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Professional and Cultural Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, US Department of State. Since August 2010, Empower Peace has received encouraging updates on the actualization of alumni action plans. We are exceedingly pleased with the efforts of committed W2W alumni!

Action Plan Highlights:

Led by alumna and teacher, Faryal, **Pakistani** delegation submitted and began two separate action plans. In response to the tragedy that occurred while they were in attendance at the conference, the team of four returned home to provide aid to flood victims in their community. Independently moved by the suffering of their countrymen, **Aman, Zainab, Jasmine** and **Faryal** devised plans to meet the needs of those suffering from the floods. Aman worked with friends at school to raise money for the purchase of enough goods to fill two hundred boxes to be distributed to women in safe camps. The boxes contained necessities including towels, sanitary napkins, soap and shalwar kameez. Zainab also responded to the tragedy quickly by collecting \$1,265 in strategically placed donation boxes in shopping malls to provide

necessities to 35 families in need. Upon returning to school, Jasmine elicited the help of friends to start a blood drive. In just one week, Jasmine encouraged 98 of her peers to donate blood to the Red Crescent. Team leader Faryal worked with friends and family to collect 102 dresses for those in need.

Delegates from **Egypt** also enacted their action plan immediately upon returning home. **Sarah, Magy, Bassma,** and **Sally** want to eradicate illiteracy in their country and work to develop the slums in Egypt. Recognizing the benefit of generating support for their mission, the women proposed their plan to an organization on campus called Better World. In partnership with the group, the Egyptian delegation began working on establishing contacts for their program. The group is currently working with Goldman Sachs' *WELL Program* to teach computer skills to women in their community and recently, along with fellow Egyptian delegate, **Samar**, presented their plans to U.S. government officials at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.



Fatin, from New Jersey, and Simonia, from Rwanda, tip their hats to a fulfilling day of service at the Community Harvest Project.

Fatin, a 2010 delegate from **New Jersey**, is working to raise awareness about an issue occurring in the country in which she was born. Fatin hopes to shed light on the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Sudan. Aware that many women are subject to this violent custom, Fatin is working to obtain more information on the magnitude of the problem. She will soon be traveling to Sudan and will investigate the issue by speaking with locals and studying the issue at a grassroots level. While still at home, she is spreading awareness and planning fundraising events for the development of her program that she hopes to launch in 2012 entitled, Global Anti-FGM Project. Fatin hopes to bring a group of invested peers with her to **Sudan** in 2012 for the launch of her initiative.

Women2Women alumni are working on an impressive range of issues through their action plans. Empower Peace acknowledges the effort and passion of all alumni working to develop their action plans and, accordingly, we would like to highlight a few projects undertaken by W2W 2010 alumni:

Marvah, Afghanistan – Planning a video conference video-conference for women’s rights advocates in her community.

Diba, Afghanistan – Working with with women in Afghanistan to sell their crafts at fair trade prices on the international market.

Raquel, Brazil – Working with *React and Change* to stop gender inequalities and youth apathy.

Samar, Egypt – Teaching young women about legal and social rights through the use of art, play, and music.

Samaher and Yafa, Israel – Establishing a magazine focused on women’s rights.

Tami, Israel – Starting a program in her school that will encourage young women to make good decisions and express themselves.

Chahrazad, Morocco – Teaching English at *Association Al Wafa*.

Fatima, Morocco/Canada – Working towards increasing awareness of domestic violence.

Faryal, Aman, Jasmine, Zainab, Pakistan – Working with *Crisis Center for Women* in Islamabad.

Raqiba, Kate, Ashlea, Kristen and Rebecca, United Arab Emirates – Recently raised 2,000 + cans of food for Pakistani flood victims; raising awareness about ill-treatment of immigrant workers in Dubai.

Arianna, USA – Establishing *Dorm Room Diplomacy* at Stanford University, group that will promote cross-cultural understanding.

Cathy, Fiona, Neena, & Emma, USA/Canada – Using the internet to promote positive self image amongst young girls in their communities.

Molly, USA – Filming a documentary on the portrayal of women in the media.



Delegates from Algeria, Israel and Egypt enjoying the Lesley University Campus quad.



Who said weeding can't be fun?



Delegates, take a break during Soccer1's community building soccer clinic.

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