



WOMEN2WOMEN

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A SPECIAL EDITION OF EP NEWSGRAM

SPECIAL EDITION, 2009

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WOMEN2WOMEN AMERICA —2009: Claim Your Seat at the Table



Letter from the Founder...

Dear Friends,

On the tails of our remarkable Women2Women Alumni Conference held in Amman, Jordan, Empower Peace hosted its fourth annual Women2Women International Leadership Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. Held at Lesley University from August 1st - August 8th, the conference hosted 83 young women from 16 different countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom and locations throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Throughout the week, the delegates heard from a variety of prominent women leaders in the fields of government, business, non-profit, education, healthcare, fashion, film and media. Inspired and empowered by these remarkable women, participants also honed their leadership skills and were exposed to various social issues through a combination of interactive panel discussions, workshops and a live webcast.

As a new initiative, the participants were tasked with researching a pressing social issue in their respective countries and coming to the conference prepared with details. Using the tools and tactics they learned throughout the week, each country's delegation negotiated and selected one issue and prepared an action plan to address their issue of choice upon returning home. The final presentations, delivered in the Massachusetts State House, were impressive and showcased the talent, passion and motivation of this extraordinary group of international young women leaders.

As always, we feel so fortunate to have spent the week guiding and learning from another class of Women2Women participants!

Keep the faith,

Rick Rendon, Founder, Empower Peace

"I am standing here and looking at women who are going to drive the future of this planet... You were chosen to be here because inside of you there is a drive, an intelligence, a sensitivity, a compassion, a creativity, a sense of urgency an ability to connect to others that is extraordinary."

- Ambassador Swanee Hunt



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The Status of Women Worldwide

Victoria Budson, Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, opened the week as the first keynote speaker and introduced the theme of the week with an animated discussion about the global status of women. Beginning with her personal experiences in confronting and overcoming challenges along her path to success, Ms. Budson spoke with W2W delegates about the importance of claiming their seat at the table and making their voices heard. Ms. Budson then facilitated a forum inviting delegates to share the challenges they face in addressing important social issues that affect women in their respective home country. W2W participants eagerly shared their opinions regarding matters adversely affecting women in their communities and their thoughts on how to affect positive change in these areas. Issues discussed ranged from antiquated divorce laws to honor killings, illiteracy to human trafficking, and included a host of other social ills.

It was tremendously beneficial for each delegation to recognize the parallel nature of issues facing women around the world, differing mostly in degrees of severity. On this note, Ms. Budson imparted on the group that there are many areas of commonality where women as a global community can band together to fight injustice. After this high-energy session, the young women were well on their way to further identifying key issues in their own countries and, in the process, learned about the struggles of their international peers. ●



The Art of Negotiation

Longtime Women2Women supporter Susan Hackley, Managing Director of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, hosted the delegates at the school's historic Ames Courtroom for a workshop entitled, "The Art of Negotiation." Susan and her colleague Lisa Witzler presented the delegates with negotiation tactics that serve not only as essential techniques in their future careers, but also as valuable skills that they can apply in their daily lives.

During the workshop, the young women engaged in activities that highlighted important aspects of negotiation, such as the necessity of prioritizing, compromise and integrity. W2W participants were quick to put their negotiation skills to work as each country delegation was tasked with the responsibility of developing an action plan to be implemented upon their return home. For the fourth year in a row, "The Art of Negotiation" workshop was noted as one of the highlights of the week. ●



Delegates with Susan Hackley, Managing Director of the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School.

Tools and Tactics - Creating an Action Plan

Hosted by Jane Christo, journalist and founder of National Public Radio, and Sheila Capone-Wuslin, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus, the "Tools and Tactics" workshop provided W2W participants with concrete tools and a systematic approach to developing a social marketing campaign. The panel discussion featured three prominent women leaders from the world of politics. Offering their individual expertise in organizing a social marketing campaign, the panelists guided delegates through several real-life case studies using their systematic approach in forming a grassroots movement. Through this exercise, the young women gained a greater understanding of the necessary steps in formulating and promoting their own action plan. ●

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The Family Justice Center

Toward the end of the week, W2W participants visited the Family Justice Center - a unique facility housing over 25 organizations that serve domestic violence, sexual abuse and human trafficking victims. W2W delegates were fortunate to hear not only from domestic violence and human trafficking victim advocates, but also met victims themselves who are working in the field to support other victims and to combat these horrible crimes.

Karen McLaughlin, Director of the Massachusetts Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking, facilitated the trafficking discussion consisting of professional women working from all angles to combat the trade. Speakers included Lina Nealon, Project Manager of Demand Abolition - a project within the Hunt Alternatives Fund; Cherie Jimenez, Director of Kim's Project and a human trafficking survivor, and several other experts in the field.

A Boston Police Department Detective and Sergeant Detective were joined by two domestic violence survivors in an interactive discussion about the signs of domestic violence and the work they are each doing to combat the issue. The panels were a formative experience for the W2W participants, many of whom chose to work on "Violence Against Women" as the most pressing issue in their homeland. ●

"The Women2Women conference is the most exciting and interesting event that a person could ever get involved in. People who join this conference are really very lucky people. In addition to building strong relationships with strong women leaders from all over the world, they acquire firsthand skills in leadership, and I believe that the potential inside is released."

- Norma, Teacher, Lebanon



Women in Government

Women2Women participants were invited to the historic Massachusetts State House Senate Chamber to engage in a discussion regarding the role of women in government. A number of influential Bay State political figures served on the panel, including:

- Senator Chang-Diaz (facilitator)
- State Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein
- State Representative Kate Hogan
- Mayor Kimberley Driscoll of Salem
- Lora Pellegrini, Board President of the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus

The esteemed political figures discussed the obstacles in becoming an elected official in a traditionally male-dominated arena and stressed the importance of women being actively involved in government. The panelists contested that women bring a different perspective to the table and are often first to recognize and represent issues affecting women. The delegates were encouraged to support women in government and even become involved themselves. Considering many of the conference participants expressed great interest in becoming an elected official, the panelists served as models that their dream is an attainable goal. After the panel concluded, Attorney General Martha Coakley joined W2W delegates as a keynote speaker and answered a range of questions regarding human trafficking and domestic violence.



James Roosevelt

For the third consecutive year, Women2Women was lucky to be joined by James Roosevelt, President and CEO of Tufts HealthCare and grandson of the great Eleanor Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt gave an anecdotal account of his childhood memories with his grandmother and shared his thoughts as to why Mrs. Roosevelt became such a legendary female figure in American history. He also recounted his own path to success through the story of how he became the leading figure in one of the United States' largest health care plans. ●

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Essays

Reem, Lebanon

I thought that the W2W experience would teach me more about how women live their lives outside of Lebanon and what troubles they have to face daily. By the end of the week, I realized that in addition to learning about women around the world, I learned a lot about myself. I had truly transformed from a young lady into a woman. I learned how to listen and communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

...I realized that I have the potential and willpower to shake up the society I live in; hence, my action plan...I am currently working on a short documentary featuring accomplished Arab women who have acquired leadership positions in their societies in order to make the young generation aware of their potential. I have been busy filming different female leaders and going onto the streets of Beirut and getting the public's opinion...I feel like I owe this documentary to Arab women everywhere. I believe that the future is what we make of it and so we should 'claim our seat at the table.' I hope that this short documentary will inspire young women to stand up for their dreams and aspirations...My one goal is to spark a change in the young generation of Arab women in hopes that the spark will soon turn into a long-lasting flame."

Gullan, Kurdistan region of Iraq



For me Women2Women changed my personality and I think that was for most of the girls. We all came to this program as young girls, but we all go out leaders... Since my plan is about helping the victims in the shelters and going to [a] family justice center, it [visiting the Massachusetts Family Justice Center] was such a great thing for me...I have been to one of the

shelters that we have in our region before I came to [the] US. I collect[ed] some statistics about them and I was able to see what they are lacking from. The first thing that I was very concern[ed] about was that women in these shelters are not getting any type of education, while most of them are illiterate. They even do not know how to write their names. So when I went back from [the] USA, I had my plan ready.

Now I am taking the first step, which is talking to other young girls to work voluntary in these shelters twice or three times a week. Their help will be giving lectures to these women



and teach[ing] them how to read and write. This week I have been to [an] IYLEP workshop [Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program], since I am an alumni of this program, they asked me to give a lecture to the new students who are coming back from [the] USA...to talk about how [these] two programs help[ed] me to come up with my action plan and how to implement it. Luckily they found my project very interesting and many of them told me that they are willing to work voluntarily, so I got their contact information and I'm in contact with them. My next step will be going to the center and tell[ing] them that we want to work there voluntarily so as to get their permission...I am very happy that I got many girls who are willing to work with me. I hope by this I can do something for the women in Iraq because they really deserve more than this.

Molly, Cape Cod

Relaxation was scarce during the week. Luckily, all of us took a deep breath on August 1st and raced through the week, morning to night. We participated in icebreakers, held discussions on important human rights issues, listened to panels of intelligent and ambitious women. But sometimes we just collapsed in our dorms, or the cool grass, or Starbucks counters, and learned about each other's lives. Friends, family, school, hobbies, fears, achievements, boys. We couldn't just go to sleep (not even me, who LOVES my sleep); we needed to keep talking to each other.

...I had an action plan before I went to W2W, but it helped to give credence and substance to it at the State House in front of panel of judges. In addition to orchestrating our 2nd annual Fashion Show and Raffle in the winter for survivors of human trafficking, I am trying to go to India in January. On a larger, long-term scale, I am attempting to launch a national awareness campaign of trafficking through the popular soap opera General Hospital. I know that with the support of all my friends from W2W and with the contacts I made, I can achieve my goals.

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1,000 VOICES for the FUTURE

Just before the Women2Women Alumni Conference held in Amman, Jordan earlier this summer, Empower Peace started a new initiative called "1,000 Voices for the Future." The goal of this interactive webcast series was to recruit over 1,000 young people from throughout the world to sign on and participate in the first webcast, broadcast from Amman. We asked all past and present W2W applicants and alumni to join us as "Team Leaders" tasked with recruiting supporters who would watch the webcast, with the top three recruiters receiving a full scholarship to participate in W2W - America 2009.

With the remarkable help of our Team Leaders, not only did we reach our goal of 1,000, but we surpassed it with over 3,000 young people from over 60 countries signed in to watch the webcast! With an overwhelming majority, our top recruiters were Ghofran - from Yemen, Sukainah - from Yemen, and Dina - from Iraq. Below, Dina and Ghofran have shared their stories about their involvement in "1,000 Voices."

Essays



Ghofran, Yemen

...I talked not only to girls but also boys from different ages and explained to them what the webcast was about. Through talking to them, I got their opinions as boys and girls about leadership and other issues...In addition, I mentioned the advantages

for us as young Yemenis who want to make a difference in our country through supporting each other and coming up with ideas to share with each other.

I went to many places, which have many students of age 19, like colleges, universities and institutes. Also we told some by communicating with Facebook and other websites. I sent them the link, and I also gave them my email to keep in touch.

They were interested in it and everyone was excited about it... [S]tudents, friends and the teachers who were at the institute where I study logged on from our computer lab which has 25 computers with Internet access, so we were able to let a group

of five students in each computer to log on. One by one they asked their own question then we watched the webcast together!

...There were some challenges doing this webcast, but the most difficult one was the power outage; always in Yemen the power goes off twice or three times a day and for one or two hours so it was hard for some students and friends to sign and watch the webcast. However, luckily there were people logging on from different places in our city, and in my institute, we have a power generator, so I was able to log one with the rest. Besides, the big time difference between us and US was eight hours so it was night here, and in Yemen it is so hard for a girl to stay out of home later than 7:00 pm. So I had to stay then until that time...It was one of the happiest moments ever when I won the 1000 Voices contest; all the challenges I faced and all work I did was worth it, because I have hope, self-confidence and passion which help and motivate me the most to be a person that can do something not only for herself but also for all!

Dina, Kurdistan Region - Iraq



When I first heard about the 1000 Voices For The Future webcast I was very excited to become a team leader and tell everyone I know about the webcast and encourage them to watch it but after knowing that the one who recruits the most people will have the chance to attend W2W conference I was even more excited and it was a big challenge for me so the next day I went to school and made an announcement in the class

and told them about the webcast. In addition I told everyone in my family and all my friends in YFCL (youth center) which is the organization that I work in as a volunteer so I told all my friends, classmates, relatives, cousins, family, friends, some politicians, etc...Some of my friends had Internet problems and some others didn't have Internet access so I invited them to my house and we watched the webcast together as a group of 8, 9 students. The best part was that when the webcast finished most of my friends called me and said that they liked the webcast a lot and we even continued the conversations of the webcast on the phone. It was a very good experience for me because motivating and working with youth is exciting and easy because they care and they are always ready to help and do something about it.

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"I'm meeting young women, in front of my face, I'm not imagining them... They're like me — they dress like me, they like the same TV shows — I see them and it's amazing! It's amazing that I met a girl from Afghanistan and the United States and we're the same. It's unbelievable that we're so similar."

- Ellie, Israel



Former Lt. Governor Kerry Healey



Reem from Lebanon and Ellie from Israel



Delegates from the US and Egypt



Delegates with guest speaker Ateema Elcai of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

"You break the borders between each other. We are from different countries, from different cultures; people think in a different way. But when we talk, we are women. We have faced the same issues - there are no borders anymore."

- Sukainah, Yemen

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