



THE DELEGATION NEWS

August 2016

The Delegation for Friendship Among Women

www.friendshipamongwomen.org

Members password: women67

Mission Statement

“The Delegation for Friendship Among Women is a non-political organization that nurtures friendship between women from the U.S. and other countries and seeks nuanced understanding of women’s work and lives throughout the world.

The Delegation accomplishes its mission primarily by self-funded study trips to countries where formal relations with the U.S. are often in transition. Delegates meet with a variety of notable women with whom we exchange ideas and solutions, as well as like to relevant resources. Upon returning to the United States, Delegation members continue the purposeful dialogue with the women abroad, and share knowledge and insights with other U.S citizens through speeches and articles.”

Letter from President Beth Fluke:

In just a few weeks 18 delegates from diverse professional backgrounds will be heading to Mongolia. Thanks to the Internet delegates have already connected with each other and counterparts in Mongolia. Educators are connecting to educators, doctors with doctors, business women with business women, journalist with journalist, dentist with dentist, artist with artist. It is very exciting to witness daily chatting as meeting dates are arranged. Soon we will meet our new colleagues in person.

In addition to our planned meetings with individuals and institutions, we will be visiting the American Embassy for a briefing followed by a reception to meet prominent women of Mongolia. We just heard from the Mongolian Embassy in Washington D. C. that First Lady Bolormaa Khajidsuren has invited us to lunch. We also will visit a number of Mongolia's cultural sites and museums, fly to the Gobi desert to experience nomadic life by staying at a ger (yurt) camp, and for fun, ride a two humped camel.

We are creating a blog so you can follow our activities and encounters to learn along with us. Each day's experience will be reported plus short reports will be written by the delegates. Check us out at:

<https://delegationmongolia2016.wordpress.com/>

after our September 6 arrival in Ulaanbaatar to follow our mission.

This trip, like all delegation journeys, has required a good deal of work. I am grateful for the assistance of many delegates who have reached out to make contacts and help other delegates and also to Vice President Holly Jobe who has been the "counterpart connector".

We are very excited by the warm and generous enthusiasm we have had from women in Mongolia who have reached out to assist in making the delegation a success, introduced us to other prominent leaders and have extended hands of friendship and hospitality. We expect this delegation to be exceptional because of the preparedness of the delegates, enthusiasm for connecting with counterparts and collaboration with each other even before meeting face to face!

We look forward to carrying the Delegation's mission of friendship to Mongolia.

*Sincerely,
Beth Fluke
President
The Delegation for Friendship Among Women*

Delegates to Mongolia 2016:

1. *Tanya English*
2. *Beth Fluke (President)*
3. *Kim Harms (Board Member)*
4. *Kelly Hayes-Raitt*
5. *Holly Jobe (Vice President)*
6. *Brenda Johnson*
7. *Mary Mattson Kenworthy (Board Member)*
8. *Lynda Linaugh*
9. *Jennifer Magnone*
10. *Carolyn Moats (Board Member)*
11. *Susan McGraw-Helms*
12. *Linda Ory*
13. *Cherie Riesenber*
14. *Sylvia Sabo (Past Board Member)*
15. *Cathi Smith (Past President/Board Member)*
16. *Judith Tiede*
17. *Nancy Uscher*
18. *Mary Wallace*



Golden Eagle Hunters

For those who are participating in the trip or those who just are following along:

*go to www.friendshipamongwomen.org
click on members
password is women67*

50th ANNIVERSARY NEWS

*Mary Pomeroy, a founding member of the Delegation, has completed her interviews with the author of the book that will be published in her honor
Publication date is not known but is anticipated to be before the 2017 50th anniversary of our organization.*

Mary Pomeroy Legacy Award

Mary Pomeroy, one of the original founding members of the Delegation for Friendship Among Women nearly 50 years ago with an inaugural trip of U.S. based women traveling together in 1967 to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Since then various Delegates have traveled the world together fulfilling our mission statement.

As per our mission statement, the Delegation is a non-political organization that nurtures friendship between women from the United States and other countries and seeks a nuanced understanding of women's work and lives throughout the world.

While in our destination country and afterwards, Delegates are often inspired to help to fund a needy group and by establishing this Award the Delegation will have the funds to do so while honoring our founders and continuing founding member Mary Pomeroy. The Mary Pomeroy Legacy Award will be given to notable women and their organizations in the countries where the Delegation travels in honor of Mary and our other founding members whose legacy lives on.

Donations may be made to The Delegation for Friendship Among Women, a tax-exempt 501(C)3 nonprofit organization. Make the check out to the Delegation and notate that it is for the Legacy Award Fund.

*The Delegation for Friendship Among Women
c/o Jill Christiansen
18926 Latigo Lane
Rio Verde, AZ85263*

Thanks to Mary Mattson Kenworthy who headed the Award committee.

Delegate updates Rwanda January 2015 Trip: August 2016

Kim Harms:

Hello!!

I just wanted to let all of you know that the books and computers (including a computer lab at Akilah donated by Mary Mattson Kenworthy) have arrived in Rwanda and will be distributed soon!

Thanks for your generous donations!

Kim

From Holly Jobe: A wonderful example of how our International networking works:

Lizzy Discovers Rwanda

by Elizabeth Hilt, July 28, 2016

On a frosty Philadelphia night in late December 2015, I found out that I would be embarking on an adventure of a lifetime.

I had just gotten off the phone with Mardge Cohen, the co-founder of WE-ACTx for Hope, an international women's HIV relief clinic in Rwanda, Africa. She approved my proposal for a 10-week internship at one of her clinics in Kigali, Rwanda for the upcoming summer. After running around the house for a solid five minutes with pure elation, I whipped out my laptop to email Holly Jobe, a close friend of my father's. Holly had connected me with Mardge earlier in the year through the Delegation. She knew my interests in women's empowerment and health care; the clinic and its history married the two perfectly.

Shortly after arriving in Rwanda, I began my exploration of WE-ACTx for Hope. Unaware of how much I would learn, I stepped through the creaky front door for the very first time. For the next few months, I learned

everything there was to know about the clinic from lab protocol to music therapy. My goal was to gain a better understanding of the Rwandan health care system in a clinical setting, as well as learn about HIV and its effects on the female population in Rwanda. My experiences at the clinic and in the surrounding culture of this beautiful country taught me so much more.

For one thing, everyone at the clinic was open to letting me observe and to teaching me whatever they could. I shadowed nearly all personnel in the clinic, which gave me a very holistic view of its interworking. The nurses graciously allowed me to sit in on countless patient consultations to observe the provider-patient interaction. Since each consult was in Kinyarwanda, the language of Rwanda, the nurse and I would discuss the nature of the conversation after the patient left. But Rwandans can be very expressive with their hands and body language, so I had a pretty good idea of what was being said most of the time. I learned about personal stories and how the nurses are responsible for checking up on patient ARV (antiretroviral, the medication taken by HIV-positive individuals) adherence. The nurses provided care, as well as support for their patients living with this highly stigmatized disease.

I also got to sit in on youth support groups each weekend. WE-ACTx for Hope holds support groups to encourage adherence while creating a safe and inclusive environment for children. One session I sat in on focused on a discussion of sexual health for HIV positive people. The lesson detailed the ways HIV is transmitted as well as prevention and safe sexual practices. The moderators asked kids to explore their sexual health in a very proactive and interactive way, something that the United States, with its limited sex education programs, should definitely learn. I felt encouraged because observing this comprehensive support group gave me a glimpse of what effective sex education could and should look and feel like.

Once a week I accompanied the psychosocial nurse and doctor to WE-ACTx for Hope's rural partner clinic. Here, the doctor treated more serious cases where HIV had created health consequences for individuals. My trips to the rural clinic allowed me to become familiar with the culture of Rwanda (did you that it is not uncommon for male patients to contract another STD and then pass it along to their wives?), as well as the various circumstances impeding people from taking ARVs (one woman didn't take her ARVs for months because she was afraid her family would find out).

Since HIV is heavily stigmatized, it's hard for many working people to take their medication, which leads to physical ailments such as swelling in the joints and impaired vision. It also leads to a great deal of psychological distress in vulnerable patients. In my shadow sessions with the psychosocial nurse, I learned that his various cases primarily consisted of genocide survivors. This is where I learned how the violence in Rwanda had targeted women, leaving them vulnerable at best and emotionally and financially devastated at worst. The psych nurse discussed his strategies for therapy and improvement with me, allowing me to understand the difficulties these women face in their daily lives. One woman who had survived the genocide and repeated sexual abuse throughout her life was struggling to secure financial stability. This left her in a state of distress and depression, and this patient exemplified the true extent of despair women can experience not only from war, but from extreme sexual abuse as well.

Other clinical personnel also took their time to show me and teach me how they care for their patients, including the lab technician, psychosocial therapists, music therapists, and administrative staff. Each interaction led me down paths I could have never imagined, and I am immeasurably grateful for the gifts the clinical staff gave me.

The degree to which the clinic has advanced the treatment of HIV, especially psychosocial treatment, amazes me. The staff taught me that you must recognize HIV not only as a physical disease, but also as a psychological and emotional burden that is critical to providing appropriate care. WE-ACTx for Hope Rwanda has taught me invaluable lessons that, as a mere rising junior in undergraduate school I could have never learned anywhere else. I will always carry their knowledge, open hearted ness, and pioneering spirits with me as I continue to pursue my healthcare degree. Hopefully, one day I too will empower women.

If you have any updates or follow up from past trips or delegation activities that you would like to share in our newsletter, please email to editor:

DrCathleenSmith@aol.com

*Thanks,
Cathi*



