

What's New with Walking the Walk™?

February-March 2015

Walking the Walk Network Highlights

- ❖ **West Chester Network discusses stereotypes and the recent Chapel Hill murders.** Group Leader Max Dugan shares that *Walking the Walk*, and interfaith work in general, is all about breaking down notions of “us” and “them” so that we can build bridges, learn about and from one another, and catalyze social justice. It speaks to the power of that message that we could leave a session which addressed stereotyping and senseless violence towards young Muslims with a message of unity and shared humanity. (Photo: Group Leader Max Dugan)



- ❖ **Since *Walking the Walk*'s inception 10 years ago, a favorite session for youth, mentors, and religious leaders has been the Religious Leaders Q & A.** Participants in the Q & A of both the Philadelphia and West Chester Networks left with deeper relationships with their peers, a better understanding of the religious traditions of those in their network, and insights into challenges faced by religious leaders. (Photo: *Walking the Walk* students sit together to share perspectives)



Upcoming Events and Opportunities

- ❖ **Walking the Walk Distinguished Alumni Awardee Applications:** Due Friday, April 17, 2015 **APPLY HERE:** <http://goo.gl/forms/c49jNLtp6B>
- ❖ **Student Group Leader Application Available:** Due Monday, June 1, 2015 **APPLY HERE:** <http://goo.gl/forms/C1pmaVde7N>
- ❖ **Walking the Walk Gets Dirty with Urban Tree Connection:** Help Prepare beds in West Philadelphia for spring planting. Sunday, May 3, 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm. (For WTW alumni and West Chester WTW Network). **RSVP by April 3 to Antonia at** antonias@interfaithcenterpa.org
- ❖ **Encountering Other Faiths**, a one day training for religious and lay leaders of adult education. Saturday, April 25 or Thursday, May 21, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm **To register, contact Rev. Nicole Diroff at** ndd@interfaithcenterpa.org

Religious Leaders Actively Engage with Walking the Walk Students through Q & A and "Speed-Faithing"



A Reflection on the Philadelphia Network Q & A Panel held at Beth Am Israel on February 15, 2015

by Group Leader Marilyn Berberich

As soon as I walked into the beautiful, sun-filled sanctuary at Beth Am Israel, I knew we were in for an extraordinary afternoon. Our Q & A Panel of religious leaders included Rabbi David Ackerman of Beth Am Israel, Dr. Kambeze Etemad of the Baha'i Center of Philadelphia, Tarik Selim of New Horizons Islamic School, Reverend Steven Lawrence of White Rock Baptist Church, and Imam Muhammad Abdul Aleem of Masjidullah. They came to share their experiences and unique perspectives on their faith traditions, as well as to answer the questions posed by the *Walking the Walk* youth of the Philadelphia Network.

It was a powerful experience to hear about the struggles the religious leaders experienced coming to grips with questions about their own faith traditions as teens and young adults. It was also enlightening to hear them speak to misperceptions about their faith traditions. There was a myriad of stories that resonated with us, and during our reflective sharing at the end of the session, each person shared a comment that especially spoke to them. We could not have been more inspired or nourished by the sharing on that bright and blustery winter afternoon!

Curious Questions Asked by our Walking the Walk Participants

- "There are many problems and difficulties being faced by the people in today's world. If you could give a one word, root cause for these issues, what would it be?"
- "What is a misconception about being (the name of your religion) that you would like others to understand?"
- "When you were in high school, what was something about your religious tradition or practice that you questioned or even struggled with?"
- "When did you know you wanted to be a (rabbi, minister, priest, imam, etc.)? Share a story."
- "Does Philadelphia reflect religious pluralism? What is a good example of how your community is building bridges with those of other traditions?"

Students gather together in groups to share curious questions



Two religious leaders from the West Chester Network consider a question from one of the students

Walking the Walk Goes to Jerusalem (the movie)!

Following the vibrant, beautiful movie, our large group of *Walking the Walk* students and teens from Blair Academy in New Jersey walked to the home of Student Group Leader Anna Luce for snacks and discussion.

Thanks to Anna and Antonia, our intern from the University of Pennsylvania, for creating a “*Walking the Walk*-style Discussion Guide which kindled **rich, lively and thought provoking conversation**.

Before the film everyone was asked to record their image of Jerusalem (Who lives there? What languages are spoken? What does the city look like? What are its most popular sites?) Then in small and large groups, we tackled such questions as:

- How does what you saw in the film compare to your previous knowledge of Jerusalem?
- What do you think was the goal of the film? What did it emphasize? What was left out?
- Does Jerusalem manifest religious pluralism?
- How has your experience with *Walking the Walk* informed the way you think about spaces like Jerusalem?



Student Reflections

“I was struck by how closely people from the three religious traditions live, pray, and celebrate in Jerusalem. However, in the movie there was so little interaction between the religious traditions. I wonder if there is any push for interfaith dialogue and action in Jerusalem and if so, if it is successful.” – Dana

“This movie opened my eyes to how many religions are practiced in Jerusalem. I originally thought it was mainly a Christian and Jewish area for worship. Me being Muslim, I completely forgot the rock where Muhammad passed to heaven is in Jerusalem!” – Shaza



“The film highlighted the beauty of Jerusalem, mildly mentioning inevitable conflict and hope. What was the film's purpose? Was it ‘hope?’ I am leaving wondering if the film fully portrayed its purpose.” – Husnaa

“Because my own trip to Israel focused primarily on the Jewish culture and religion, it was wonderful to see Jerusalem from the perspective of other religions. It was especially interesting to see the Dome of the Rock. As ‘Women's Rights’ is a pressing issue in every religion, I was disappointed because although the representatives in the movie were girls, they did not deal with that issue.” – Julia

How Do I Become Walking the Walk Certified? (and what is "certification"?)



"Become *Walking the Walk* Certified! We did."
-- from your 2014 – 2015 Student Group Leaders

We hope that you are enjoying your *Walking the Walk* journey, developing new friendships, and learning about other traditions through others in your network.

Becoming *Walking the Walk* Certified is an indication that you have taken full advantage of *Walking the Walk* in your own way. It is not hard. To be considered to be one of the Student Group Leaders next year, *Walking the Walk* Certification is required.

Here is how to become *Walking the Walk* Certified:

- Attend at least 9 *Walking the Walk* sessions (make-up sessions can be approved by your *Walking the Walk* Group Leader).
- Complete one self-guided footstep to understanding, that is, share something about your *Walking the Walk* experience with your congregation, school, or neighborhood. Examples could include a presentation at your congregation or youth group, an article in a neighborhood newsletter, or a posting on your school bulletin board. Submit a copy to your Group Leader.
- Engage in an interview or conversation about your *Walking the Walk* experience with your religious leader and/or mentor during the second half of the *Walking the Walk* year.

Questions? Talk with your Group Leader or Mentor.



SAVE THE DATE:
Walking the Walk
End-of-the-Year
Celebration

Families Invited! Fun for all!
Sunday, May 17, 2:30 – 4:30 pm

Location: Offices of the Interfaith Center, 100 W. Oxford Street, Philadelphia, 19122

- "Wow Moments!" *Walking the Walk* slide show
- Reflections from Group Leaders Marilyn Berberich and Max Dugan
- "Interfaith understanding? What's the big deal?" Reflections from *Walking the Walk* Youth
- Announcement of Distinguished Alumni Awardees
- Presentation of Certificates and *Walking the Walk* Shoelaces to NEW Alumni of *Walking the Walk* (this year's *Walking the Walk* participants!)
- Interactive exhibits
- Refreshments

RSVP to Marjorie Scharf by May 8:
mns@interfaithcenterpa.org



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