

February 4th, 2019

Greetings Grail Council!

The Young Women's Initiative had our first meeting this past weekend at the Norbertine Retreat Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We are writing to you, first, to express our gratitude for your support of our group. A particular 'thank you' to Pam for getting us started with all the logistics and to April for helping with food drop-offs and airport runs! We also wanted to give you a brief update on the work we engaged in this past weekend.

The group met on Friday, February 1st and Saturday, February 2nd. Six women were in attendance: Lisa, Tina, Danette, Veronica, Tiffany and Laura (full contact information attached) and Suzanne Ehly facilitated. We began our session with in-depth introductions and a deeper examination of our own personal realities and identities. With the guidance of Suzanne, we began to explore what it really looks like to be an anti-racist group. We discussed our roles in 'historically-included' as well as 'historically-excluded' groups, we examined white supremacy culture in organizations, and we looked at the shift from monoculturalism to pluralism on the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels. We ended our first day with some ritual and sharing. On our second day we spent a good portion of time in a circle process reflecting on the four parameters of our group (anti-racist, spiritual in a post-religious context, commitment to international empowerment of women and girls, and being created by the future generations for the future generations.) We spent time discussing our next steps before closing our time together with appreciations and gratitude.

This was a really rich beginning to our two year process, and we are very grateful for the openness and insight that each person brought to this gathering. A couple of things came out of our discussion that we would like to share with you. The first is that we would like to request that our first group parameter be changed to say: "anti-racist and anti-oppressive" in order to reflect our understanding of intersectional identities and intersecting oppressions. We also shared a view that we do not actually live in a post-religious world, and thought perhaps we could change the language of that parameter, as well, to say something along the lines of: "interspiritual in a shifting religious landscape."

We would also like to inform you that we currently have six committed members of our group. We are in the process of discerning if we will add 1-2 more people to our group. We will inform you once that has been finalized. Our next Zoom call has been scheduled for February 21st. Please feel free to follow up with us if you have any clarifying questions. We have attached some photos to give you a picture of some of our time together. Thank you again for your support of us as a group. We are honored to be part of this!

Sincerely,

Danette, Laura, Lisa, Tiffany, Tina, & Veronica