

A Golden Weekend Get-Together After Years Apart

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On September 20 - 23, 2024, our lives were revived and forever changed - thanks to our UTS sister and friend, Anne Hoover, who invited many women alumni to spend a long weekend at her lovely cottage near Ithaca, NY. A few of us had to look twice to recognize our old buddies from UTS, since for some it had been 30-40 years since they had met! Initially, we relaxed after traveling to her cottage, and then sat down to share a delicious and healthy dinner. The breakfasts, lunches and dinners were so healthy and scrumptious. The food helped everyone feel very much at home and we all pitched in to cook and set up for the meals.

Anne had asked all of us to prepare some activity to share with the whole group. I began outdoors, the next day, after enjoying our meal in beautiful nature with the butterflies, leaves falling and fresh smells all around. It was heaven. I shared a short reading from the Mother of Peace about how precious each of our births is and that we have infinite value to God and the world. Going around the circle, we all shared our gratitude for our lives, the gifts that God has given each one of us and the passions each of us have that we easily give and share with others. While speaking about each of these areas, the women would offer tidbit stories as well as more detailed experiences in their past and present lives. You can imagine how heartfelt and deep the sharing was. It was so moving to hear and see how each of us had grown, had gone through trials and tribulations, and had experienced victories, big and small.



Next, was Tamie Wilenchik (Johnson), who shared a writing exercise in Haiku poetry. We were blessed with the presence of Therese Stewart, our former UTS Dean, who joined our writing exercise and shared dinner with us. The Haiku poetry brought out the creative juices in each of us. Here are a few samples.

Lynn Walsh

Laughing sharing friends
God's love abounds ricocheting
Aging slips away

Therese Stewart

Pond near the breezeway
Koi fish swimming
A flash of gold darts by



Libby Henkins

Delicate and long
Spindly cool and calmly sweet
This is lavender



Jan Breslin

Spread ink on paper
Minds probing into selfhood

A fly passes by

Linda Shapiro-Zochol

Chickadees singing
Jumping on the twigs
Leaves raining down on us!

Tamie Wilenchik

In Cayuga Lake
Setting summer sun brightens
My old friends' faces

Ann Hoover

Shadows all around
The harvest moon lights up the sky
I feel small below

Beatriz Gonzales

Stillness fills the void
Gentle rain upon my face
The touch of God's love

Dorothy Hill

The leaves dance with glee
Swirl and float from above
My heart leaps for joy

The following day, we all took a car trip to Taughannock Falls in Ithaca, NY. Some hiked around a bit and took our group pictures, enjoyed the incredible sights and bought some souvenirs for family. We felt like time hadn't separated us much, and yet it had. The deep bonds from our UTS days were still within us and yet, our lives had all changed and grown in many different directions and paths.



Returning to our cottage, some relaxed in the Jacuzzi, some cut up the veggies and food for dinner and others were engrossed in deep conversations. Later, Beatriz shared about the different levels of spiritual development and had each woman choose a gemstone that she was drawn to. I got the rose quartz stone, signifying the development of my heart and urging me on to higher heart levels within and with God. I'm sure some of us have now developed our shimmering bowls of gemstones to uplift and encourage us on our spiritual paths.

Later, Dorothy Hill shared Ho'oponopono, a traditional Hawaiian practice of reconciliation and forgiveness. I think everyone's tears of regret were felt deeply while going within and saying sorry for our past mistakes in words and deeds. The next day, Jan Breslin shared the essential enneagram personality test and self-discovery guide with us, although we didn't have time to do it there. I wonder what each discovered at their homes. Next, Libby Henkins shared with us a YouTube video on senior exercises to practice at home. How is that going? I need to mention that we also enjoyed a Zoom get-together with several women who couldn't attend in person, such as Mary Jane Anderson, Carol Pobanz, and Linda Howell. It was nice to see their shining faces and listen to their highlights from the past years.



On Sunday, we hiked up the Hoover's property in the woods, on paths, to a spot created with tree logs for benches, and Ann Hoover gave us some words for Sunday service and others shared inspirations as well. Then we all ate lunch together at a picnic table and shared Animal cards with special quotes to encourage and enlighten each of us with new perspectives on our lives and future. Some were surprised at which animals they chose and yet the message given was exactly what she needed to hear. LOL. As well, we had worked with Rumi cards from Beatriz the evening before, which brought tears to some women. Yes, the weekend was full with so much to share. Each moment had a purpose and seemed to draw us closer together in heart. I find myself still reflecting and taking in so much from our four days together. Shall we do it again? Thank you to all our sisters in heart who came from all over the USA to bond with each other.