



Mid-Hudson Teachers Return from Study Tour to Turkey

Sevgin Oktay, WACMHV
Brian Wagner, TCF

On **July 19, 2011**, three teachers from the Mid-Hudson Valley returned from Turkey after spending two weeks studying the country through the Turkish Cultural Foundation's Teacher Study Tour program, organized in collaboration with the World Affairs Council of America and its nationwide chapters.

The local teachers, selected by the **World Affairs Council of the Mid-Hudson Valley**, New York were part of a group of 27 teachers to take part in the second of two Study Tour trips this summer. They come from **high schools in Bedford, High Falls and Lagrangeville, NY**. We welcome them here today to tell us about their Study Tour trip, and they are, respectively,



Tara Colen



Rose Ann Lapp



Anna Tihin

The teachers will now start to work with the **World Affairs Council of the Mid-Hudson Valley** to develop cultural and educational programs that introduce Turkey to the local community and in their classrooms. The World Affairs Council is a non-partisan, non-profit, volunteer organization whose aim is to enhance global understanding of global concerns among the residents of the region through lectures and other programs. One of the Council's major efforts is to enhance global education among the young people of the region. The Turkish Travel/Educational program is a part of that effort.

During their time in Turkey, the teachers met with fellow teachers and students, learning about the Turkish educational system at various schools including:

Darussafaka, a school for orphaned children, and the Atakoy İlkogretim Okulu in the Turkish village of Karacasu. The latter school has been adopted and is being supported by American teachers from previous Study Tours.

(p.4)



The teachers visited numerous cities and villages across the country, beginning in Istanbul, where they toured famous historical sites such as the Hagia Sophia, the Spice Bazaar, Topkapi Palace and the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, which holds over a million artifacts representing the span of world history.

Other highlights of the trip included a visit to Bursa, the first capital of the former Ottoman Empire, where the teachers learned shadow puppet techniques to share with their students, and a trip to Ephesus, where they toured the site of the Celsus Library, one of the richest libraries in the ancient world when built in 117 A.D. The teachers also visited the archeological excavation of Catalhoyuk, a 7,000—year—old Neolithic settlement that has been nominated for UNESCO's World Heritage List, and toured the Cappadocia region, known for its famed landscapes and ancient cave churches.

With the return of this group, TCF has introduced 348 American educators to the history, culture and landmarks of Turkey since 2007. As part of the same collaborative program, nearly 2,500 teachers across the United States have attended educational workshops on Turkey held by local World Affairs Councils.

For more information about the Turkish Cultural Foundation, with offices in Boston, Detroit, Istanbul, Sonoma, and Washington, DC, visit www.turkishculturalfoundation.org.



2011 Trip participants visiting the Celsus Library ruins at Ephesus.