

WRJ Northeast District Kallah 2015

Though frost was in the air, our late April Kallah at Dolce Hotel and Resort in Norwalk, Connecticut, was full of warmth and comfort. Contributing to the success of the weekend, attended by many more women than have come to previous Kallahs or Retreats, was the camaraderie between first-timers and returning WRJ Northeast District Board members. The starting icebreaker, involving chocolate, set the tone for the entire weekend: an abundance of food and great conversation!

We were so fortunate to have Elaya Jenkins-Adelberg, third year HUC cantorial student, lead our Shabbat services. Friday night consisted of a slide show with pictures and prayers accompanied by Elaya's beautiful musical renditions. Also on Friday, our scholar-in-residence and nationally recognized WRJ speaker, Karen Sim, gave a compelling D'var. On Saturday morning we were again treated to Elaya's spiritual music with Torah readings superbly done by Paulette Black, Vivian Blumstein and Elaya.

That evening we were able to have our Havdalah service outside. With the sun setting in the background, everyone made her own spice bag, and had it to take home.

Karen Sim not only delivered the D'var on Friday night but also kept us totally engaged with four workshops throughout the weekend. Karen's first discussion on Friday was "How to Write a D'var." On Saturday we attended three more workshops where Karen discussed "Communication", "Public Speaking", and the "Elevator Speech". More than one attendee said they were feeling pretty confident about actually writing and giving a D'var after listening to Karen!

Paulette Black, our Vice President for the YES Fund, presented an informative and inspiring overview about the many projects to which the YES Fund contributes. As a result of this introduction and the enthusiasm of our group, our fundraiser – the Missouri Shuffle – raised over \$2600. Gifts of wine and Judaica were particular favorites and changed hands many times.

For our social action project we made comfort pillows for breast cancer patients at Emek Hospital in Israel. The heart shaped pillows can be used under the arm for pain relief after surgery and under the seatbelt to protect a chemo port.

We had many beautiful flannel fabrics available. Everyone chose two fabrics, traced the heart template and cut out the hearts. Robin Krieger and Diane Heiman sat at the sewing machines sewing the hearts together as fast as they could. After stuffing them, some of our talented hand sewers quickly finished them off.

It was so much fun to see the pile of colorful heart pillows grow while we visited and caught up with each other. A lot of love went into this production of over fifty pillows.

And, indeed, a lot of love went in and came out of this wonderful Kallah. We thank so many people who contributed to its success, especially those who participated to make this weekend both memorable and meaningful.

Diane Heiman
Robin Krieger
Adrian Modansky
Sharon Sobel
Kallah Chairs 2015