

## **TST 2012 GROUP 1**

### **Ms. Nilam Patel**

Dr. Phillips High School; Orlando, Florida

A series of photographs taken by Ara Guler explain the role the past plays in the life of a Turkish person today. Why learn about Turkey? The amount of information and rich art and architecture the people of Turkey sit on is priceless to the world. Ancient civilization, Ebru art form, philosophy and economics are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the treasures of this irredescent country. The experience in Turkey was my way of walking in the shoes of the people and trying to understand their wealth and challenges. What a humanitarian, spiritual, and educational life-enriching opportunity. Thank you TCF!

### **Mr. Roger Barrows**

Dr. Phillips High School; Winter Park, Florida

Every day of the study tour was exciting- filled with “wow” moments that touched and enlightened me about Turkish culture and history. I have become deeply fond of Turkey and the Turks I met, and my clearer insights and understanding will alter my teaching of this vital part of the world.

### **Ms. Brenda Bartnick**

Ocoee Middle School; Orlando, Florida

For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to visit the ruins of ancient Greece and Rome. It wasn't until my young adult years that I discovered Turkey was the home of my heart's desire. But I really didn't think beyond the past. This trip has opened my eyes to the colors and faces of a beautiful and complicated nation. Turkey is rich in history, cultural diversity, and artistic tradition. This trip introduced me to aspects of a nation that can become an agent of change in a complicated and restless region of the world, even while holding onto the traditions of the past. My experience in Turkey was enlightening. It was joyful, interesting and frequently spoke to my heart.

### **Mr. Ethan Dombkowski**

Yulee High School; Fernandina, Florida

The experiences I have gained in Turkey have changed me as a person, as an educator and as a member of the global community. I value the culture and heritage of Turks in such a profound way that I cannot return to my class and teach the same way as before. I cannot ignore Turkey's place in history or its role in the future of our planet.

### **Ms. Elisabeth O'Donnell**

Jean Ribault Senior High; Jacksonville, Florida

The cultural, historical, artistic and culinary experience is beyond my expectations. Everywhere people were accomadating and always a smile; when I talked with a person they looked me in the eyes and paid attention to me. I find this very pleasing becuase in the states we have so little eye

contact and the person went out of their way to help. My experiences were, from a historian's standpoint, exactly what I needed to know. Everyday was filled with knowledge and excellent information from our tour Guide and then the actual site visit was very hands-on. Listening, seeing, and then reflecting was a great way to absorb this fantastic country that you all call home. From the call to prayer, seeing Istanbul again, the Anatolian plain, to the beginning of civilization, to the Byzantines- to Crossroads of trade and connecting to the greater world your country the size of Texas has so much to give to the world, that if people don't come they are wasting an opportunity of a life time by not seeing Turkey. The accommodations were beyond anything that I have ever had in the United States. I will share this experience with all my county AP teachers in a work shop. To the North Florida World Affairs Council and anyone who will listen: You have been more than gracious wonderful hosts and hostesses. I thank you, which seems like a very small sentence, but I truly mean it. Thank you again.

**Ms. Bethany Bechtold**

Pittsford Mendon High School; Rochester, New York

WOW! I had such an amazing time. I loved learning about all the beautiful and the rich culture that Turkey has to offer. This experience surpassed all of my expectations. Turkey is a country that the world needs to learn about more!

**Ms. Sarah Jacob**

Pittsford Mendon High School; East Rochester, New York

I am leaving Turkey with a remarkable amount of knowledge to share with my students, friends, family, and community. The TCF experience has truly been an enlightening journey!

**Ms. Beth Latini**

Pittsford Mendon High School; Canandaigua, New York

Experimental learning at its finest. This proves that a teacher study-tour can be hands-on, scholarly, AND fun! I would recommend this study-tour to any educator who is interested in bridging the gap of ignorance with knowledge, understanding and respect. 2 weeks is just the tip of the iceberg . . . but it's an amazing start to a life-long journey. This study tour has awoken a passion to learn more and a desire to share this knowledge with students and other Americans.

**Ms. Celeste Volivar-Fry**

Keaau, Hawaii

Before visiting Turkey, I knew as much as an inscription on a grain of rice. My experience has brought me through bowls of rice with enough images to create poetry.

**Ms. Marsha Taylor**

Walalua High and Intermediate; Haleiwa, Hawaii

"I saw more than I will remember, but I will remember more than I saw." The experience of this trip

is hard to put into words . . . the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, colors- were so rich and varied- just as Turkey is. I feel so lucky to have been part of this and want to share it with my students and colleagues.

**Mr. Daniel McLaughlin**

Theodore Roosevelt High School; Honolulu, Hawaii

This trip was psychedelic in the true sense of the word: mind expanding. We spiraled through millenniums of history and culture; sampling a melange of spices, scenery, ancient ruins, melodies and glittering colors. We teachers were treated like rockstars, on a tour of one night stands in luxury hotels while encountering first hand the traces and talismans of civilizations past and present, whose spirits animate the zeitgeist of the panorama of peoples and the traditions which make up the country of Turkey.

**Ms. Shawna Stockberger**

Patriot High School; Upland, California

This cultural study has completely changed my perceptions of Turkish people and culture. I had always heard of Turkey being the crossroads, but it's another thing to see and experience the multiculturalism of Turkey. I will definitely be changing how I teach and approach Turkey in my classroom.

**Ms. Diana Stiller**

Norco High School; Norco, California

I can't wait to share my experiences with my students! And with my colleagues and friends as well.

**Ms. Janet Weinstein**

Hyde Park Middle School; Henderson, Nevada

I never realized the contributions this region has made to our world. From neolithic sites, Greek ruins, Roman ruins, to the Ottoman Empire and the current republic, Turkey is one of the richest countries in history, culture, and people.

**Ms. Pamela Butler**

Swainston Middle School; Las Vegas, Nevada

My experiences in Turkey during the past 2 weeks have been overwhelmingly outstanding. I have had a very close bond with a Turkish family for the past few years so I very well know how remarkable Turkish people are . . . I am passionate about Turkey and consider Turkey to be my "second motherland." Visiting the mosques, museums, Ephesus, and other landmarks has inspired an additional love and I am honored to be here and look forward to educating others in my school and community about Turkey's heritage and culture. I hope to return to Turkey in the near future. Thanks! ☺

**Mr. Christopher Nezin**

Mt. Abraham Union High School; Lincoln, Vermont

Short of bringing my students to Turkey to see the Neolithic, Greek, and Roman sites, I can think of no better way to expose my students to this kind of history. It creates a passion that cannot be measured.

**Ms. Kimberlee Rizio**

Long Trail School; Manchester Center, Vermont

This experience has re-organized my approach to humanities studies about this region. I now have so many ideas about introducing aspects of Turkish culture to my students! From history to ethnics, from geography to art, from architecture to patterns of politics and power, from literature to cuisine- I am full of knowledge shared with me through TCF from guides, scholars, museums, and sites. My life is changed because of this trip, no exaggeration! I cannot wait to spread this knowledge to others: what an amazing, generous and phenomenal gift. I am humbled.

**Ms. Donna Waelter**

Blue Mountain Union; Granton, Vermont

Everyday presented more surprises- beauty of mosques, the rapid growth of Istanbul, very ancient sites, a stop to a small town's weekly market. The country is vast, the people diverse and the food varied. Each town, each region, presented its own cultural and historical flavor. I hope to return to some of the same sites and to explore many new regions.

**Ms. Emily Goodreau**

Sheridan Preparatory Academy; Menands, New York

My trip to Turkey has been a once in a lifetime opportunity. It truly exceeded all expectations that I had. Everyday on the trip, I thought about how lucky I was to be having this experience and how much I was learning in such a short amount of time. At least once each day my breath was taken away while looking at a site or I was overwhelmed with the amount of information I was learning, but I wouldn't trade either of those feelings for anything.

**Ms. Tara Siudy**

G.W. Krieger Elementary; New Paltz, New York

There are not enough powerful words to explain how life-changing this trip has been. Before coming to Turkey I knew so little about the country, people, and culture. Leaving Turkey, I obtained so much rich information, it will take me years to digest! "I saw more than I can remember, but I will remember more than I saw."- unknown

**Mr. Andrew Krakat**

Catholic Central High School; Watervliet, New York

Words alone cannot even begin to describe how meaningful this experience has been for me. I am eternally grateful to the TCF for having selected me to participate in this once in a lifetime person to person cultural study tour. My knowledge and view of Turkey and the role it has, and continues to play, in the world has greatly expanded, and has altered my approach to this topic within the social studies curriculum. I am eager to share my experiences with my students once I return to the US. Myself and the other teachers arrived as strangers, but now leave as friends. Thank you for everything.

**Ms. Rose Brown**

Aurora High School; Chagrin Falls, Ohio

This study tour taught me not only about Turkey, but about the development of humankind through the ages. The history and culture in Turkey helped put into perspective the theology and politics from Neolithic times to present day. The variety of sites included were a well-balanced mix of religion, culture, history and current events. I enjoyed the pace, the tour guide and the wonderful food and lodging; most of all I enjoyed all of the people associated with the tour- from the TCF staff to the other participants, even the incredibly gracious people of Turkey.

**Ms. Kathryn Stone**

Jackson High School; Canton, Ohio

Outstanding! TCF/TCA/WAC spared no expense in sharing the culture of Turkey and their passion for this beautiful country. Listening to all (both American and Turkish) of the teachers on this tour, and hearing how they are going to share these amazing experiences with their students, colleagues and friends, I can promise you that we will all represent this organization in the fairest, most professional manner possible. We are the diplomats for these countries. Thank you! Much much love!