

## AVP IN JORDAN

In September, in place of our usual Area Council meeting, Rebecca Walkley and Carol Ann and Ray Boucher talked about and showed slides of their time in Jordan this summer doing AVP workshops with refugees in Amman. A group of about 20 people assembled at Purchase Meeting House to hear the talk, both AVP facilitators and others.

Ann Ward, an AVP-USA facilitator living in Amman, had conducted several workshops in 2008, and is working towards establishing an ongoing program. The workshops were underwritten by a grant from Relief International, so the other facilitators who came needed to pay only their transportation expenses. Relief International has an office there, and wanted their staff trained in AVP. Carol Ann said that she hoped that RI will find AVP a useful tool for them in their work with refugees.

In all, there were seven facilitators, mostly from the US, who led the workshops. Some of the team building was done during sightseeing near Amman, including a visit to Roman ruins that are the best preserved outside of Italy.

Rebecca had slides of several exercises done in the workshops. In the Basic, they did a fishbowl on the question, "Is violence ever justified?" Rebecca was surprised that their comments revealed very little difference from the responses she had received here. She said that the participants seemed to be familiar with *I Messages* as a way of speaking, and found it easy to create ones that would help resolve the conflicts. In the Advanced, they had an in-depth discussion of consensus. The topic chosen for the workshop was anger and its relation to Transforming Power.

Carol Ann also had pictures of her experience in youth workshops and a Training for Facilitators. She noted that Jordanian youth are polite – very different from what she had encountered here! Some of the Muslim women have not had experience with expressing their thoughts and feelings, especially in a mixed group. Carol Ann felt that as they practice their role as AVP facilitators they will gain confidence and have a great deal to offer.

All three found the experience rewarding. They felt they had brought an AVP perspective to a new area, as well as having a taste of a different culture. Rebecca said that one of the participants said to her after the workshop, "You are the new face of America. Before, Americans were only occupiers."

Bill Leicht, one of the people who came to hear the presentation, said that he has contacts in Amman. He has combined AVP and Aikido, adding a physical alternative to violent conflicts. He will get Ann Ward's email address to explore the opportunity for adding Aikido to AVP in Jordan.