

Tony Medina: Inspiring Experience of the Women of Mountains Conference

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2015 WOMC Team during Social Party after the Conference

“Don’t tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.” *George Patton*

I had seen this quote many times throughout my time in the military. However, it wasn’t until the end of the Women of the Mountains conference (WOMC) that I truly understood it. The year and a half that I have been working with the WOMC2015 has been a learning experience that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. The people I have had the opportunity to work with have been inspiring and true leaders for all to emulate. Following the conference, on October 10, 2015, I wrote an email to those intimately involved in the planning and organizing of the conference. I would like to share that with you now:



***I am with Kimberly Williamson, 2015 WOMC Secretariat Advisor and Deann Torsak,
Executive Secretary of the 2015 WOMC***

“Hi guys,

I just wanted to send a quick email out now that this headache is behind us. I hope you all are out celebrating, sleeping, or getting drunk; I know I would be doing one then the other if it weren't for work 😊

I just wanted you all to know how much I appreciate every single one of you and all of your efforts over the past months. When I first came on board over logistics and protocol, it seemed like an easy job, writing letters, ordering food, reserving rooms, etc. It was a scary moment when I realized just how much I had bitten off and had to chew.

Deann (*Torsak-Executive Secretary of the Conference*), thank you so much for taking over for Hailey (*Eggleston, who left UVU due to family reasons during summer 2015*). I had just accepted the fact that I would be doing her job as well when she quit working with us. When you came on, I kept thinking *I need to do that*, and the next day it would be done already. You have done a fantastic job and I couldn't have asked for a more fitting partner in crime (we still need to steal that couch btw). The example you have set for your kids and the other students around you is one we should all hope to live up to. I can't tell you exactly how much I have relied on you the past year because I don't think the words exist. Just know that it is a lot, and I look forward to working with you for a long time to come!

Jenny (*Starley, PR and Fundraising*), you are amazing, for lack of a better word. Your experience, professionalism, and leadership took us to a whole new level and propelled us to places I had never dreamed of going. Every time you prepared a document or a packet or a press release, it blew me away! It was always professional-level and of the highest quality and standard. If it is any representation of your professional life outside of our conference, your boss owes you a big raise (or their job, for that matter)! Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication. We all sincerely appreciate it!

Kamaile (*Harris, Liaison at Salt Lake City and Business fair Coordinator*), you are the sister I never had. When Jenny first brought you on board, I would read your name and see your attachments and I always imagined you as this very stiff and rigid typical liberal (I can admit this now :)) But, once we first met you up at the capital, your personality clicked and everything made sense. You are THE kindest and gentlest person I have ever known, and the size of your heart is only surpassed by your willingness to use it to help others. Your connections, ideas, and dedication made this whole thing happen. From the bottom of my heart, Mahalo (I hope I used that right :)).

Yanko (*Dzhukev, Social Media Liaison*), you have done an amazing job bringing us into the 21st century. Your dedication and tenacity is, what I believe, what really caught the eye of the world and directed it on us. This organization owes you a huge debt of gratitude for your

long hours and willingness to get the job done regardless of the hardship it would put on yourself. And, the fact that when you were 20,000 miles away and could have just forgotten about us and yet kept doing your job screams volumes of your character and personality. I am honored to call you my friend.

Parker (*Nielsen, Head of Protocol*), although you came on a little later than the rest, you represented us all to the world with integrity, professionalism, and dedication. When it came time to start arranging the dignitaries and VIP attendance, I really thought I was going to die from being overwhelmed. Your personal experience and personality are invaluable to the organization, and these past few days would not have happened had you not been tackling such a huge aspect of this whole thing. It had to be like herding cats, and between students and international dignitaries, you probably need that drink more than most. Thank you for all you did, do, and will continue to do, and I know eventually you will get to where you want to go and represent the United States to another country in a phenomenal way.

Carlos (*Alarco, Liaison at the University of Utah*), you were the man behind the curtain this whole time, just like the Wizard. Whenever anybody needed something with the website, posters, or program in general, you always came through and rescued us from the brink of insanity, and brought us back to Kansas (to continue the reference lol). Although I have only known you for a short while, I know that UVU lost an incredible asset when you transferred to the University of Utah. Please know that we all sincerely appreciate all that you have done for us over the past months.

Bek (*Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, Faculty Advisor*), that piece of glass in your office now, is only a symbol of the amount of admiration and respect I carry for you. You have become more than just a mentor or professor to Stacy and I. You are a treasured friend with whom I owe an innumerable large debt of gratitude for your dedication to pushing and propelling students far beyond what they thought possible. You once told me you would be with us through to the very successful end. I think we reached that now. All I can put into words is спасибо. I just want you all to know that through my time in the military, I worked with some great and amazing people. But, working with you folks over the past year has been the single greatest honor I have had. In the military, you work with people who are more or less there because of contractual obligations. You all sacrificed so much and gave even more for a reward that may not reach you for years to come. And even when things looked the worst you all kept pushing forward. To me, that is the epitome of leadership and dedication, and you all exemplify it beyond any other group of people I know. I want you all to know how personally grateful I am to have met and worked with you. You all have made me a better person and taught me things about myself that I never knew existed. From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU. You are all amazing.

Take a break and relax for a while, and we will hit the ground running in a little bit. There is still work to be done, and I know if we put our heads together there is no limit we can't reach.

With warm regards and the utmost respect,

Tony.”

The wonderful people I have been able to surround myself with during this amazing experience have truly opened my eyes to the leadership potential that exists outside of the military. I once thought that the military taught me everything I needed to know about leadership. However, now I know that the military only taught me what leadership is. I have since learned *how* to lead from the wonderful examples of the organizing committee. Lastly, I want to say one last thank you to someone who has supported me more than they realize. My wife, Stacy has been a huge support to me throughout this experience. She has lent a hand many times when I needed help, and always supported my late nights and long days. To her, all I can say is thank you.

Tony Medina, Vice President for Logistics and Protocol of the Fourth International Women of the Mountains Conference
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