

Dorothy Jo Lower

This was my first visit to Cuba. Could it really be 40 years ago that I started wanting what Cuba has: A say in the important decisions that affect my community here in the US? What I discovered on this US Women and Cuba Delegation of September 2012 is that in all these 50 years since the beginning of the Revolution, Cubans still enjoy community participation in the form of their local Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). Among the many events and groups that we met with, this one was a party planned for us. This neighborhood organization, covering 10 blocks in Santiago De Cuba, planned entertainment, refreshments, dancing and an informal getting to know you opportunity just for us. I had a blast. It was hot; I was soaked in perspiration; it was late; there were two more scheduled events that were to happen after this neighborhood gathering; I was tired; and still I had a blast.

The impression I have come away with is that so many Cubans are strong defenders of their country and their revolution. They are knowledgeable about their own history, and they know way more about us than we do about them. I have been moved by the honesty and transparency that I witnessed. I want honesty and transparency for us here in the U.S, too. I want Cuba to survive. I want the US to quit bullying. I want the Five Heroes to be released and for the evidence they discovered about terrorism against Cuba by the U.S. to be prosecuted.

Cindy Domingo, Moon Vasquez and Marazul Travel Agency did the hard work of planning for us. It was a demanding 2 weeks. It was not a vacation. I would go again if circumstances allow.