



# Newsletter Summer 2019

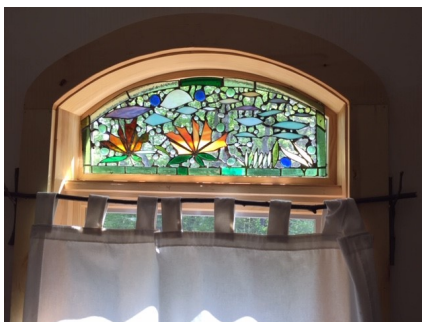


## From the Director

Greetings Friends,

As the leaf buds gently unfurl, they reflect for me the courageous work of the Seekers who come to Inner Fire aiming to reclaim their lives. The challenges are daily as tapering, changing unhelpful habits and building positive self images while developing the connection with their own resilient self is at times very hard work. But, the work is real and essential.

Having the beauty of the East Wing 'home' for the Seekers has been a tremendous addition to the program. Each Seeker works with a local artist to create their



unique stained glass window for their bedroom, taking it with them when they graduate. On Sundays, Seekers collect a 'bouquet' from the gardens and woods, even in the winter, and are impressed by the color and textures year round.

Having raised over a million dollars, fund raising continues...we are so grateful for all the generous gifts made throughout this last year and for a recent gift of \$70,000, which along with an additional

\$50,000, (the last quarter of a gift) will get us close to starting the West Wing and soon after, the heart of the Inner Fire home, where we will all be able to assemble for larger group activities. On behalf of all of us at Inner Fire, I thank each of you who have supported us financially and thereby have helped make the choice Inner Fire is offering visible. Lives are being reclaimed.

We have also received our Therapeutic Community Residence license which allows us to have twelve Seekers in the program. One of the licensees stated: "Inner Fire is shifting the paradigm!" "That's the point, people are dying!" was my response.

So, with forward movement comes also an opportunity to appreciate the wonderful collegueship of guides like Audrie who has nurtured the Seekers and Guides from day one creating remarkable meals of the finest quality. She deeply appreciated the beauty of the kitchen, was often seen with a broom in hand caring for the physical environment, and brought such soul warmth, even to us in the office, by the songs she and the seekers sang as they created GAP based meals. We wish her the very best as she returns to teaching young children. They are fortunate and we hope she will stop in and visit as the years go by! Thank you, dear Audrie!

We also bid farewell to Michael who brought the gift of Speech Arts for the last three years to our Seekers. This therapeutic art form is unique and deepens the integrity of the striving individual and enriches their soul. Michael has been a wonderful colleague in this therapeutic realm and also a creative and resourceful Bio-

Dynamic gardener. Under his guidance the chicken coop wagon was built and his hens were the first to move in. His imagination was always vivid and dynamic. Thank you, dear Michael.



We have also been joined by remarkable individuals who bring their life experiences and commitment to Inner Fire's mission with a sensitivity, enthusiasm and faithfulness to the striving Seeker. We are very grateful to all of you and for the gifts you bring. A warm welcome to Ryan, Jesse, Amanda, Phil, Amandala, Jenn, Martiza, Susan, Alice, Donna - and Joyce in her new role as Director of Operations.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to thank each of you for your belief in our mission and your supportive thoughts which along with your generous gifts are essential to making the choice visible thereby helping to save and reclaim lives.

Most gratefully, Beatrice

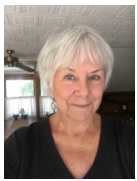
***Inner Fire is a proactive healing community offering a choice for adults to recover from debilitating and traumatic life challenges without the use of psychotropic medications.***

*Inner Fire Mission Statement*

## New Staff



**Jesse Alibozek (Daytime Guide)** comes to us from a very diverse and unique vocational background. In 2008 he graduated from the Community College of Vermont with a focus in Psychology. Out of college, he traveled to the Middle East and Northern Africa with an IED Removal Team, working to remove landmines robotically. Jesse is also a passionate musician, playing a variety of 13 different instruments. He has shared his love of music therapy, working with Autistic individuals, for the past five years as a result.



**Andrika Donovan** became part of Inner Fire due to the licensing requirement for an RN licensed in the state of Vermont. She comes with over 30 years of psychiatric nursing practice, both inpatient and outpatient. She was fortunate enough to have her psychiatric training at the Portsmouth Pavilion in New Hampshire in the late 80's when the work contained many modalities like art and music therapy, the challenge course and psychodrama. Andrika worked at the Brattleboro Retreat for five years in varying capacities. At Inner Fire Andrika feels that there is a possibility of integrat-

ing her clinical knowledge with her hope for helping others and herself to discover pathways for true healing and recovery.



**Ryan Dillon (Overnight Guide)** is a father, partner, and explorer of inner silence. Outside of Inner Fire, he works one-one with individuals mainly experiencing Spiritual Emergence/ Crisis and supports them in integrating and grounding their experience. His main studies include Inner Presence Coaching along with beginning Somatic Experiencing Training.



**Jennifer Frey**, our Yoga Movement Therapist, creates a comfortable, relatable and relaxed atmosphere in which a challenging flow is punctuated with warmth and giggles. Jen began practicing yoga in 1998. What started out as a purely physical endeavor evolved into a pathway for life. Jen is an E-RYT 500 and a YACEP, she studied Fluid Yoga with Kevan Gale at Stil Studio, Boston.

**Amanda Kilbride (Daytime Guide)**, affectionately known as Amandala, is a certified



Yoga Teacher and Reiki Master. She has over 5 years of experience in the Health & Human Services field, and has worked with a wide variety of individuals over the years. Amandala brings a strong sense of unconditional love, compassion and understanding to her role at Inner Fire.



**Amanda Perez (Daytime Guide)** is a psychotherapist working in private practice, a post-graduate student at Antioch University, and an apprentice of sacred plant medicine. She is a graduate of Naropa University's Master of Arts in Contemplative Psychotherapy program. Amanda's background in Buddhist psychology informs her belief in the inherent sanity of every human being, and she is highly attuned to the interconnections between the health of the Earth, communities, people, animals, and plants. She is an Army Veteran and paratrooper.

**Phil Greenleaf, Susan Peters, Donna Coty** and others in varying capacities.

### Words of a Parent

Inner Fire is a bold, bright example of the direction in which we can only hope that mental health care may one day advance.

There, in a beautiful rural setting, those who have been given a form of treatment that all too often adds to their burden of distress, at Inner Fire are instead offered an opportunity to reclaim their spirit in an atmosphere of respectful and progressive encouragement.

The warmth, together with a deep commitment to mak-

ing much-needed positive change, practiced by Beatrix Birch and all the guides and therapists is immediately apparent when first arriving at Grace Brook Farm.

A compassionate hand is offered to Seekers, as they are known at Inner Fire. A reassuring middle of the night conversation, when everything seems bleak. The Seeker's unique creation of an amazing and inspired stained glass window insert for their bedroom, after dreading the thought of the assignment. Learning to build fires

and light candles as a way of inviting in spirit and connection with others. Experiencing the healing power of song, in harmony with one's caregivers, together with occasional special guest musicians. Learning the regulation of energy and daily rhythm through productive physical activities - tending the crops, doing forestry work, cooking, and much more.

Seemingly echoed by the rushing stream that runs through the heart of the property, the waters of progress move forward.

### Social Media

Within the past 9 months, our Facebook page moved. In efforts to build our support base, we ask you to visit our new Facebook Page to "Like" and then "Share" this page with those you know <https://www.facebook.com/innerfire.us/>



## Interview with Zach Holmes

### How would you describe your tasks and areas of responsibility at Inner Fire?

I would describe them as wide-ranging. I'm basically the maintenance man of the facilities as well as the property manager of the forest and the gardens, so I tend to all the physical things here at Inner Fire.

### What are your main motivators in regard to this work?

I want to support and guide people in being fully responsible for their life. I've always had a vision of helping those who haven't grown up doing chores learn that chores aren't just things you hire out, that you can do them. Meeting a seeker where they're at and finding a chore that allows them to grow self-confidence and feel that they are contributing to the community in a real and meaningful and purposeful way is interesting to navigate.

### How have you seen Inner Fire grow and change in the 3 years you've been here?

There is certainly more supportive administrative structure in place now. And

of course, the opening of the new building has been the most tremendous material growth. Having the seekers housed here on the property has really helped shape the community.



### How have you seen yourself grow and change through this work?

My confidence in leadership has grown - leading practical activities, supporting other guides to develop a compassion and a directiveness, and helping to direct the seekers toward productivity, responsibility, cooperation. I've grown skills in Biodynamic gardening and I've learned a lot about Anthroposophy, which I knew

nothing about. I've learned about speech arts and eurhythm and artistic therapy, which have brought an inner calm and an inner creativity. I've also grown tremendously in setting boundaries, sharing what I can give and what I can do, and being very clear on what I cannot do and where I cannot give.

### If you could wave a magic wand and make something happen at Inner Fire, what would it be?

Three things: One would be to insulate and put new windows into the entire garage and the room above it. Second would be a portable sawmill. As we clear some of the forest to create a meadow for animals, it would allow us to mill the trees we are felling into valuable lumber. The third would be space and time for a weekly meeting of all the guides, allowing for an increased communion of everyone who works here. This would help us connect and encourage each other more, and have support accountability. It would allow us be there more for each other so we're all growing together as a guide community.

## Garden Update

As we near the spring frost date, the garden beds are prepared and the greenhouse is full of lettuce, radishes, spinach and lots of seedlings. A lot of compost has been turned, moved and spread. We are hoping to expand the herb garden this year under Beatrice's guidance. Each seeker will also have their own small bed in which to grow the veggies and flowers of their choice. The next step for the garden will be to cultivate the space in front of the new building. We envision a vibrant and beautiful landscape of free-flowing beds, rock gardens, berry bushes, dwarf

fruit trees and arbors with some lawn space in between. Ideally there will be a water feature of some kind in the midst of all of this. The creative possibilities are exciting!

Michael



## Employment Opportunities

As our Seeker numbers increase, we are often in need of more staffing. Have you considered being part of a healing community?

For current opportunities, watch our Facebook page or check the website. Email [joyce.innerfire@gmail.com](mailto:joyce.innerfire@gmail.com)

### Quotations from Seekers:

*To me, Inner Fire is a sanctuary where we can practice embodying the rhythm of life.*

*What is most challenging about Inner Fire is facing my own weaknesses.*

*What I appreciate most about Inner Fire is the spiritual growth that it enables and the discipline it teaches.*

*My main goal at Inner Fire is to come fully into myself and engage with the world.*



26 Parker Road  
Brookline, VT 05345  
<http://innerfire.us/>

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
FIVE MAPLES

# Inner Fire Newsletter Summer 2019

