

Fall-Winter 2014

Inner Fire at Grace Brook Farm in Brookline, Vermont will be a proactive, healing community offering a choice for people to recover from debilitating and traumatic life challenges without the use of psychotropic medications.

9 Day Sanctuary

From July 29th through August 6th, we offered a 9 Day Sanctuary for two individuals (our legal limit) a man, age 42 and on psychotropic medications for 20 years, and woman, age 28 and on similar medications for 10 yrs. The Sanctuary gave these courageous individuals, while remaining on their meds, a "mini" experience as to what it would be like to engage proactively in their healing process once Inner Fire opens next year. The mornings began with a hearty breakfast following a walk and the work program of gardening, forestry or housekeeping in the mornings. Four experienced, anthroposophically trained therapists collaborate during the Sanctuary: a speech therapist from California, a spatial dynamics trainer from Vermont, a biographical counsellor from Massachusetts and myself with Hauschka artistic therapy. We each worked with the seekers individually four times during the nine afternoons. The strong rhythm marked by set times for rising and going to bed and 3 co-created organic meals a day added to the empowering experience. Already we have had inquiries as to whether we would offer another such Sanctuary again in the autumn.

Weekly

I receive e-mails and phone calls from individuals keen to learn more about Inner Fire and to engage in one way or another as a 'seeker' or 'guide'. It is so clear to the Board and from conversations with individuals from all walks of life that the need for what Inner Fire offers is desperate.

We aim to open as soon as possible

Due to financial considerations, we may have to opt to initially build a home for Inner Fire which could house only 5 seekers with overnight staff, expanding as soon as possible to accommodate 12 seekers in the field above Grace Brook House. My husband, Tom Kavet and I would share the kitchen and other spaces in the main house until further funds have been raised to complete the Inner Fire home. (However, the sooner our complete capital campaign funding goal can be raised, of course, the better. Gifts are still being matched. (We have raised \$400,000 of our goal of \$900,000.) At this time, we are developing architectural plans and expect to rough in an access road, run electric power and drill the well in the coming months.

Psychiatrist

We are very grateful to have an experienced psychiatrist, Dr. Nels Kloster, join us. He is an extraordinary person who is as enthusiastic about working with us as we are to have such an open-minded and conscientious person on the team. In addition to his private practice in Bennington, Nels hosts a local television program on mental health in Brattleboro.

Primary Physician

Dr. Lynn Madsen, practicing anthroposophical medicine in our neighboring town of Townsend, is Inner Fire's primary physician. It is wonderful to have her insights.

Homeopath

Julian Jonas, of The Center for Homeopathy in Southern Vermont, has been a valuable support for the development of Inner Fire and offers insights from years of experience, for those leaning in the direction of classical homeopathy.

Development Director

We have hired Jim Taggart for an initial 6 month term as our full-time Development Director. He has begun by focusing on and accelerating the development of our website, licensing, permitting and fundraising in support of our launch next year.

Board

Our board is growing, meeting every two weeks at this time. Marshall Hammond, who has developed and run mental health treatment programs over a span of thirty years in Vermont as well as worked extensively with Corrections in prisons and in the community with Probation, has joined us. We have extended invitations for Board membership to several women and hope to attract younger committed and interested individuals as well.

Day Program

Since the Sanctuary, we have decided to offer and are developing a comprehensive, customized day program of work and therapies for individuals who are able to live alone. Though more needs to fall in place before we officially open, we have a mini program and are very grateful to have Barbara Rolinson, an experienced Therapeutic Eurythmist, Joan Shimer offering Spatial Dynamics, Kathleen Bowen working with Biography, myself with the Hauschka Artistic Therapy (clay, watercolor etc.) and both Doctors Nels Kloster and Lynn Madsen who are supporting individuals on their path toward rebalancing and stepping back out into the community. For the work programs, we are in need of a forester, gardener and cook.

Monthly Foundation Gatherings

Every month there are new people interested in joining our Foundation Gathering which, since October 2013, has met on a Sunday from 10:30-1:30 during which time we study and work experientially together, followed by an update of Inner Fire and concluding with a potluck lunch. The purpose of the Gatherings is to begin to build an etheric substance which will help to nurture and support individual seekers when they arrive. Of course, along with this substance, a strong community is also growing with individuals who may have family members in need, or who may want themselves to work with us or who simply want to support, recognizing the need for Inner Fire. We can appreciate the substantial contribution these meetings have made to ensouling and energizing Grace Brook Farm.

In March of 2014, Inner Fire and The Center for Homeopathy in Southern Vermont sponsored a public talk by Robert Whitaker at the Brattleboro Library

The room was packed with standing room only. Following this gathering, about twenty people, all under the age of forty and active in the mental health field, met together at Grace Brook Farm to share of their frustrations with 'the system' as well as to learn about Inner Fire. Their stories were interesting and their questions serious and heartening. Julian Jonas, our co-sponsor and an experienced homeopath, gave a fine presentation of homeopathy reflecting how supportive homeopathy, along with our detox program, will be for those striving to recover, or rather, rebalance, from their debilitating or traumatic life experiences which so often are at the root of addiction and mental health challenges.

Other Celebrations and Activities held at Grace Brook Farm:

Our Celebratory Launch was held nearly a year ago when Robert Whitaker, investigative journalist and author of *The Anatomy of an Epidemic* and Dr. Sandy Steingard, Medical Director of the Howard Center in Burlington, as our key note speakers addressed fifty concerned individuals.

Bio Dynamic Preparations: Twice we have been able to spread preparations on the open land of Grace Brook Farm with the support and guidance of Robert King and Dr. Basil Williams.

An Evening of Remembrance and Appreciation for those who have Crossed the Threshold: This was a beautiful and significant gathering of about twenty-five friends from the neighborhood and further afield.

Our needs for the Residential Inner Fire Program

We would be very grateful if you would help spread the word that, in the . . .

Work Program we are looking for a:

Bio dynamic gardener/farmer, a forester, a housekeeper and a cook, who are all aware of the healing powers awoken by engaging in such work and are able to teach and accompany individuals in their journey.

Therapeutically we are looking for a:

Eurythmist, spatial dynamic practitioner, music therapist, rhythmical massage therapist and a registered, anthroposophical trained nurse.

(We have someone who will work with the Art of Speech and Hauschka Artistic Therapy)

Administratively we are looking for: House manager

I will close this update by sharing that time and again we are filled with gratitude for the encouragement expressed in many ways for the pioneering and development of Inner Fire, whose main intention is simply to offer a choice for those seeking to proactively heal without the use of psychotropic medications. Out of this depth of our appreciation, we send you this update of Inner Fire.

Sincerely,
Beatrice Birch

For further information or to contribute please contact:
beatrice@innerfire.us or phone: 802-221-8051