

# **Building a Community of Change**



**Words, Images, and Inspirations  
From the  
Gathering on Social Justice and Contemplative Practices**

**January 10-12, 2003**

**Hosted by  
The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

## **Building a Community of Change**

A Gathering on Contemplative Practice and Social Change  
Hosted by The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

January 10-12, 2003  
Essex, Massachusetts

*[cover photo: sunset at Essex Bay, by Gina M. Smith]*

### **Introduction**

For the past year and a half, the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has been mapping the use of contemplative practices through its Contemplative Net Project. A special focus of the project has been on the use of these practices in social justice work. With support from the Ford Foundation, the project is now entering a phase where we are seeking to be of service to the community of social justice workers by

- Sharing the findings of our research and its implications for social change work
- Building a network of change agents for whom a contemplative approach is the basis of their work
- Developing resources to further this work

This gathering, held at the Essex Conference and Retreat Center in Massachusetts, was a core part of this effort. We hoped that by the end of the weekend, the participants would:

- Feel even more inspired about their work, as well as relaxed and refreshed
- Come away with a strong sense of community and connection, especially for those who have felt isolated in their work
- Gain a better understanding of the Center's purpose and work, and experience what we've seen in our research – the many ways that contemplative approach is being applied to social justice work
- Gain something tangible to support them in their work (i.e. information on organizational development, fundraising, diversity issues)
- Begin to develop a network and consider collaborations that further individual and common work

We held the intention of giving this weekend to the participants as an acknowledgement of their difficult work in the world. Time was woven into the schedule for relaxation for mind and body in various ways, and participants were treated to evening hot tub soaking times (where some of the best conversations took place) and head-and-shoulder massages.

We also built into the schedule time for shared contemplative practices and opportunities to hear about the participants' work and to explore next steps that will support all of us and the collective movement toward bringing spirit and reflection into social change work.

### **Participants**

Invitees included people who were interviewed during the first year of the Contemplative Net Project, as well as a number of guests (see the complete list of participants at the end of this report). Guests were Channapha Khamvongsa of the Ford Foundation, Tulaine Montgomery of Citizen Schools, John Powell of the Institute on Race and Poverty, Nafisa Shariff of Entering the Holy of Holies, and Richard Zayas of the urbanPEACE Foundation. All participants were seasoned social activists who base their work on a foundation of contemplative awareness.

### **The Setting**

The Essex Conference Center was a beautiful, large wooden home where we ate, slept, talked, laughed, danced, and sang together. With the weather outside chilling and cold, the Juniper Room became the heart of our gathering. Inside, people found cozy corners of the house to have small, intimate conversations, to share stories and videos, to watch the football playoffs, and simply be together. Those among us craving even more warmth made the short walk to the hot tub and cedar sauna in an adjacent building. On Saturday afternoon, Jesse led a brave posse out along a road that led to windswept Essex Bay, where the group watched the sunset.





### **Highlights of the Gathering**

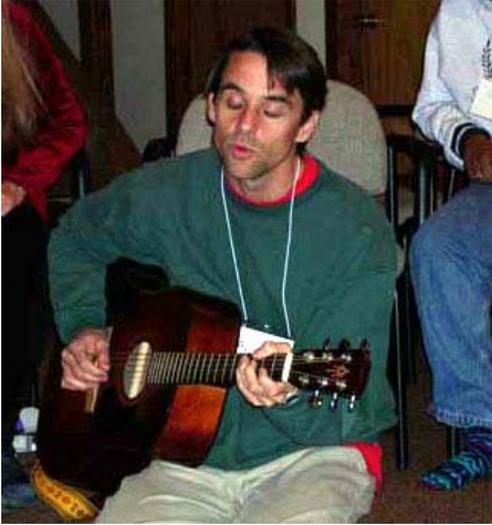
During this dark, quiet part of the year, the weekend's schedule was designed to be spacious and allow for reflection and meaningful connection. The weekend combined times of organizational learnings/sharings along with deeply connecting to each other through practices, movement, dance, yoga, poetry, and laughter.

Throughout the weekend, guests shared contemplative practices from their traditions. On Friday evening, the beginning of the gathering was marked by a sweet and informal Shabbat service offered by Simon Greer, director of the New York City Jobs With Justice office. Simon explained the significance of Shabbat for the Jewish people, and in his own personal life. We shared some good kosher wine (and grape juice) and broke bread together as we all noted one "burden" in our life that we would like to let go of for the next 25-hour period. On Saturday morning, Diana Winston, founder of the Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement, led us in a lovingkindness practice to set the intention for our day. Dan Edwards, the Center's intrepid Youth Program Coordinator, brought us back in to the meeting space that afternoon by bringing our attention to the sound of a paper being torn and dropped on the floor – he challenged us to notice the tiniest and subtlest movements and sounds that are so often lost in the busy-ness and preoccupations of our lives. On Sunday morning, Father Pat Eastman, in full and melodious voice, led us in the practice of lectio divina and invited us to share a phrase from the reading into the collective silence. As we neared the end of the gathering, Pat Harbour, founder and director of Healing the Heart of Diversity, offered an invocation of the ancestors to guide us back into our work in the world.

We began Saturday morning with Maia, Jesse, and Gina giving participants a brief presentation on the design of the Contemplative Net Project and then having them read aloud some of the most powerful quotes from the interviews.

Later in the morning, these findings came to life as a number of participants offered their stories and “lessons learned” about the challenges and rewards of using contemplative practices in their personal and organizational work. Angel Kyodo Williams, Linda Stout, and Arrington Chambliss conducted a discussion about diversity and inclusion in “fishbowl” style, inviting those of us watching to bear witness to the complexities of these issues. Mirabai Bush and June Tanoue spoke of how the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and the Peacemaker Community have worked to create a more contemplative culture in their respective workplaces. Simon Greer presented his experience of bringing contemplative practices into the Jobs With Justice office, a collection of veteran labor organizers and activists, most of whom had no previous experience with contemplative practices. Simon offered examples of practices and talked about how he has dealt with various obstacles. Nancy Roof inspired us with her story of being led to form a meditation caucus at the United Nations. Marianna Cacciatore explained how Bread for the Journey brings a reflective approach to addressing the needs of communities and engaging in philanthropic work. John Powell gave us a sharp, insightful critique that illustrated how social constructs such as race and class affect our everyday lives, and how dismantling oppression requires a deeper understanding of those dynamics.

The presentations were rich with useful information – almost too rich! Bringing us to a reflection and one of our own “lessons learned” for the weekend: despite our best intentions, we fell into the trap of trying to do too much in too little time – ironic given our own mission and values. At one point, Claudia Horwitz gently reminded us that “we have all the time we need.”



**Andre Carothers**



**Linda Stout**



**Pat Harbor**

On Saturday night, we reveled in each other's creative gifts during a "Tornado of Talent" (Mirabai told us the story of the "Tornado"'s birth from her friendship with Wavy Gravy). In many ways, this turned out to be the essence of our gathering, giving us a chance to move away from words and presentations and find the heart of the matter through songs, dance, poetry, laughter, and tears.

Sunday morning's time was devoted to Open Space groups exploring next steps – topics were generated by participants. The small breakout groups during this time were: Collaborative Fundraising, Arts and Peacemaking, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society's Potential Role in Supporting the Movement, and Developing Leadership.

The gathering was notable for bringing together a cross-section of activists from diverse settings – education, law, religious communities, economic justice, prison work, youth communities, diversity work, philanthropy, leadership development – and creating a space for creative cross-pollination to occur. In the same spirit, the contemplative practices offered during the weekend reflected the spectrum of practices that the Contemplative Net Project has encountered. In the end, we recognized our shared passion for creating more space for reflection in our efforts for social change, and held ourselves in the light of compassion when we didn't always meet that reality, both during the weekend gathering and in our work in the world.



In the pages that follow are some “gems” from the Saturday presentations. Complete transcripts and selected video clips of the presentations are also available from The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society.

## Working with Inclusion, Diversity, and Oppression

Arrington Chambliss, No Ordinary Time

Linda Stout, Spirit in Action

Angel Kyodo Williams, urbanPEACE

Arrington, Linda, and Angel invited us to witness an honest dialogue that explored diversity of all kinds – ethnicity, class, religion, and spiritual practice – and the implications for working with contemplative awareness. Their conversation produced no easy answers (how could it?), but reminded us that the experience of offering contemplative practices can never be separate from the social contexts in which we live. All three emphasized the importance of language, accessibility, and inviting people to find their own path of transformation.



**Grove Burnett and Angel Kyodo Williams**

*“What we’re saying is you don’t have to come from a particular tradition but rather there is a universal humanity that we all share, and by inviting certain practices, spirit shows up.”*

~Angel Kyodo Williams

*Arrington:*

My work is building communities for young people and young adults that support their spiritual transformation and that support their work of social change. [This kind of work] takes all the energies, both the very deep, peaceful energy of grounding and deep breath and feeling our feet on the earth, and it takes the energy of anger and intensity and bursting out...

Part of the reason I started “No Ordinary Time” was because it felt like there were very, very few spaces where people could bring authentic self. There were very few spaces that were acknowledging issues of oppression as a part of the work, of doing good work... Bringing together a group of people mostly in their twenties and thirties – a really diverse group of people racially, ethnically, and culturally – it became clear that there were multiple expressions of spirit that we needed to create space for...Contemplative or spiritual practice is not just about silence but in many traditions, it’s about deep expression and connecting with a deep sense of spirit and movement.

*Angel:*

[At urbanPEACE], we are lowering the threshold for the invitation of the recognition of spirit, and not complicating it so that what we’re saying is you don’t have to come from a particular tradition but rather there is a universal humanity that we all share, and by inviting certain practices, spirit shows up and it becomes apparent and then we can allow people to kind of move from there.

I’m often concerned about the issues of language and...the inclination to suggest that Eastern practice has in some way a corner of the market on what spiritual practice is, even though I invite meditation practice or some kind of stillness or inward prayer, looking inward...People of color come to me and say, “Oh, I’d love to get into Buddhist practice.” I invite them to realize that Eastern traditions haven’t focused on giving language to these things...There’s no distinction from the spirit that *already* exists. How do we reclaim the language?

*Linda:*

Recruitment is a critical piece of beginning to build diversity in our work...We started the organization saying that the leadership, in this case facilitators, who run the circles, would need to be at least 50% people of color that needed to be inclusive of young people. What we realized after the first year was that while that was a great idea, the ability for, say, the 50% of people who were white to build a diverse circle was just as much of a challenge, because the leadership of each circle didn’t represent the diversity we wanted to build in the circles. And so now all of our circles are run by multiracial teams, and we pay the facilitators.

When I train folks around building diversity, the first thing I ask is, “What is your budget for this?” and if people don’t have a budget for it, then I assume that they’re not really serious about it, because funding is a critical piece of building diversity, particularly around class diversity, class and race diversity, for people who, for example, could not afford to come to the meetings otherwise.

I think the most critical piece for us is waiting until we have that diversity. Maybe our goal is to start a circle by this date, but if we don’t have the diversity that we’re looking for, we don’t start... Probably the hardest thing [is that we say], “We’re not going to have the meeting unless it’s diverse.” And so that means if we have more white people than we have people of color, they get wait-listed, and so we say no to folks coming into that network until we had ensured the diversity. That means really hard decisions and sometimes hard feelings, but we have to be open about it and keep talking about it.

## The Contemplative Organization

Mirabai Bush, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

Simon Greer, Jobs With Justice

June Tanoue, Peacemaker Community

Mirabai, Simon, and June shared stories and ‘nuts and bolts’ practices from each of their organizations, which represent the many facets of the contemplative organization. In the discussion that followed, participants expressed both their inspirations and frustrations of trying to transform work environments. Excellent points and questions were raised:

- What incentive do people have to change the culture of an organization? If it’s simply about getting people to work more effectively, there are many ways to achieve that (some clearly more harmful than others). What is the case for creating a contemplative organization? Why might it not only be useful, but *necessary*?
- How comfortable can we be, in a work setting, with the kind of openness and truth-telling that contemplative practices make possible? Are we willing to push our organizations to the edges that truth can lead?
- What about the shadow side of contemplative or spiritual organizations, which can mask what might be really going on?



*“Beyond bringing individual [contemplative] practices into the organizational context, [we are] cultivating organizational methods and processes that create a mindful, present, authentic, focused, honest, and listening organization that is more effective in achieving its mission.”*

~Simon Greer, Jobs With Justice

*Mirabai:*

The idea of talking about a contemplative organization itself is fairly radical. The word itself means “being with time,” and being with time in a very different way, and that we’re in the temple, the temple being the container for creating sacred space...Organizations are a collection of people who are usually trying to reach some goals, get something done, and it’s very often future focused. Bringing those two things together is at the heart of our challenge.

The contemplative opens up a space for things to arise. The flip side of vulnerability is that it’s dangerous to be vulnerable in situations where there are power relationships. We open our weekly meetings with personal sharing and contemplative encourages a deeper personal relationship but it’s a little scary. Things come up like people saying, “I’m really not liking this work,” or “I’m really struggling with wanting to do something else.” You’re saying that in the presence of people who are holding the future of your livelihood in their hands, and even if you generally trust somebody, it’s dangerous.

In our monthly retreats, we don't just sit. We also do yoga and other movement practices. But we also use it as a time for different staff members to bring forward different practices. One time we did contemplative gardening together. Twice, Jesse led a great Day of the Dead ceremony in which people brought in stories about people they loved who had died. So we've used it as an opportunity to make the statement that we are here together and, at the level of being on a spiritual search, we're all equal beings no matter what our work is in the workplace. On those days, we cook or prepare food together and eat together in silence and celebrate a different way of creating relationships with each other.

*June:*

One thing I think we've experienced with the Peacemaker Community, we've been through a lot of ups and downs. We put a lot of value in truth telling and naming the shadow and using council practice for that and other modes, and we've kind of intentionally, willfully, pushed the organization into breakdown on a fairly regular basis, and it's painful at times but I think in the long run, it's been very healthy...I think that sense of realizing that there's there are these up and down cycles and naming them, relentless naming the shadow, is very helpful.

*Simon:*

With the help of Rockwood Foundation, we have forged an organizational transformation at Job of Justice in New York City. I got there as director less than nine months ago, and we've both been able to plant the seeds and also begin to reap the harvest. We've been striving to be a contemplative organization, and our work has improved because of it.

**10 Practices Used at Jobs With Justice**

- 1. Begin with silence**
- 2. Leadership Mantra**
- 3. Clearing the Air**
- 4. Yearly Plan and Time Tracking**
- 5. Active Listening**
- 6. Tracking energy**
- 7. Team Assessment & 360 degree reviews**
- 8. One-on-one's**
- 9. Being Aware of our own state of mind**
- 10. Alignment**

To understand the significance of this, you need to know a little bit about what Jobs for Justice is and what we do. It's a coalition of labor community where religious institute, organizations try to build power to expand worker's rights and fight for economic justice in New York City. We believe in an organizing model that's about doing direct action and creating tension. So tension and confrontation are key to what we do.

When I got here in April, it was a small organization where spirituality or the contemplative would be tossed out as touchy-feely, or cheesy. And at the same time, the work was ineffective. In my yoga practice, which is my individual contemplative practice, from time to time, I'm in downward dog and I have a "Oh, that's the answer to that thing I've been trying to figure out," one of those a-ha moments. More often, it's something I'll observe over the stretch of time, like I don't lose my temper as much as I used to, or we get along so much better than we did. It's not an a-ha, it's more of a long-term benefit. I'm going to ask you to join me in exploring how there are organizational contemplative practices that can have the same kind of an impact. So beyond bringing those individual practices into the organizational context, it means cultivating organizational methods and processes that create a mindful, present, authentic, focused, honest, and listening organization that is more effective in achieving its mission.

## Developing Leadership

Andre Carothers, Rockwood Leadership Training  
Claudia Horwitz, stone circles

Andre and Claudia are veteran social activists who have dedicated their work to helping non-profit managers and directors develop their capacity for leadership. They shared with us the philosophy and framework of the approach they use to support current and future leaders. Andre led us on a guided imagery experience to help us each get in touch with the powerful capacity for empathy that we all have, a key ingredient in a compassionate and effective leader.



*“Our overall vision is that every single group that’s working on social change would include people who are equipped in some small or big way to facilitate contemplative, spiritual, or reflective practice within that context.”*  
~Claudia Horwitz

*Andre:*

“I started in 1984 with Greenpeace, which grew to be an \$80 million a year organization with 130 employees and boats and wonderful, incredible people doing unbelievably amazing work. And I also saw where we were wasting money and time and energy and good will. Internal stuff that wasn’t working. And it was clear to me that fixing this and making this collective work in a way that was deserving of the rhetoric that we use and the money that was given us required a certain revolution in the way we thought about what we were doing.”

<b>The Rockwood Leadership curriculum addresses:</b>	
<b>vision</b>	<b>emotional intelligence</b>
<b>purpose</b>	<b>teamwork</b>
<b>communication</b>	<b>authenticity</b>
<b>interdependence</b>	<b>personal ecology (maintaining yourself to</b>
<b>deep listening</b>	<b>do work over the long haul)</b>

*Clandia:*

Seven years ago, we convened three different circles of activists who were wanting to look at their own spiritual life...We found that three needs surfaced – a quest for balance, because people are burning out; a hunger for the deeper connections; and a sense of wanting more integrity in the work, meaning that values manifest more on a day-to-day basis.

Doing that work, I became aware that there were various areas within a social change organization that were just calling out for a practice: the relationships between staff, the way planning unfolded, how policies were structured, how programs got developed, the way gatherings were run, meetings or retreats, etc., how office space was set up.

So where we are now in this idea of developing leadership, is that we want to help nurture and support trainer-practitioners. Our overall vision is that every single group that's working on social change, whether it's an organization and institution network, coalition, would include people like the people in this circle and other people who are equipped in some small or big way to facilitate contemplative spiritual or reflective practice within that context...

There two realms in which I think this becomes useful in the organizational context. One is in the nurturing realm and the other is in the warrior realm. We need healing because there's so many places in nonprofit social change culture where brokenness happens. How do we heal, and who are the kind of water bearers who bring those experiences and create those environments where healing is possible? And then, on the other hand, the work is fraught with so much conflict and so much dissension. How do we bring in that spiritual warrior kind of prophetic voice and skillfulness around enabling people to sit in that fire of conflict, and then work from that place or work out of that place to a new place?

## Large Systems Change

Marianna Cacciatore, Bread for the Journey  
John powell, Institute on Race and Poverty  
Nancy Roof, United Nations Spiritual Caucus

*john:*

When we talk about race, we assume that it's real, in the sense that we just perceive it. Instead, race was created at a particular moment in history. It's an institution. It's a structure. It's an ideological structure that we inhabit and that inhabits us. Part of the difficulty when we deal with issues of racism, for example, is that we start by accepting all the terms, the language, the arrangements that are already in place...I'm suggesting that these systems are not simply 'out there,' they constitute who we are. So when we talk about engaging these systems and structures, we're talking about engaging who we are, individually and collectively..."

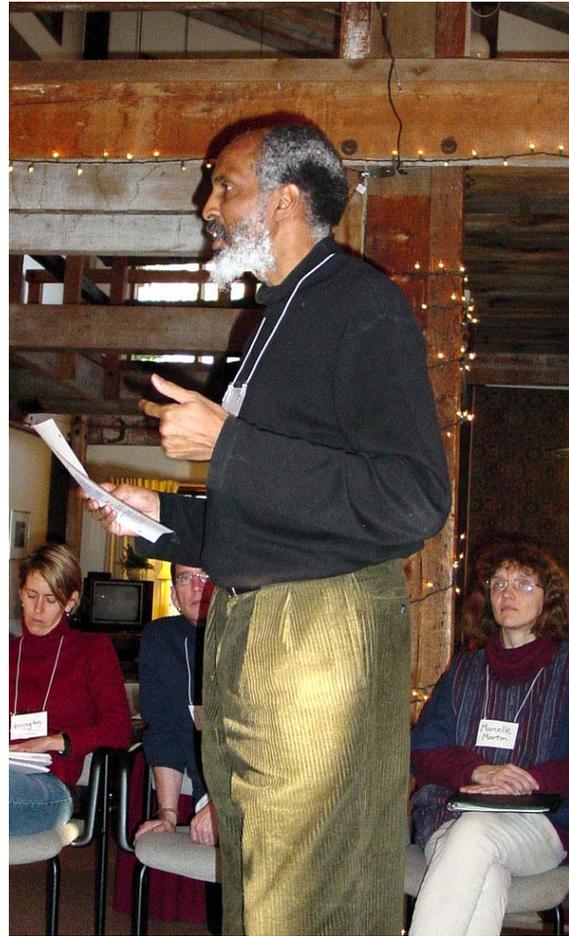
"By the end of this century, there will be no racial majority in any major city in the world...This is globalization, the movement of people. It's a fascinating thing that has happened.

It's also a moment in history where the restructuring of all of these institutions are going to have to be called into question. It's like Tai Chi, like Aikido...You wait until the person is fully extended and pull them. We're fully extended, folks. And so, if you can find those points of pressure, you can cause huge change with little energy."

*Marianna*

In terms of large systems change, my philosophy is Margaret Mead's: never underestimate the power of a small group of people to change the world; in fact, that's the only kind of group that ever has changed the world.

Bread for the Journey is national philanthropy organization that has small chapters throughout the United States and one in Canada. These are people within that community who have a vision and a passion about something that makes that community a better place to live. They



*"I'm suggesting that these systems are not simply 'out there,' they constitute who we are. So when we talk about engaging these systems and structures, we're talking about engaging who we are, individually and collectively..."*

~ john powell

want to do something in a simple kind of way that over time really connects them in a deeper way with people in their community that they might not otherwise have access to. And so, simplicity is one of the key pieces when we're designing this program..

It's really a relationship-centered philanthropy. So, in order for our chapters to be in the community reaching out to donors in a relationship-centered way and reaching out to the community, it's my belief that they need to be with each other in a very solid relationship-centered way...

*Nancy*

We are at a major defining point in the history of humanity where we have a question of whether we're going to be extinct as a species or whether we're going to transform...The thing that I've discovered by being the UN since 1987 is that it's not going to happen through governments. It's not going to happen through business. It is only going to happen through the building of international civil society... There's so many things wrong with the UN which we all know about. We don't have democracy there. We don't have transparency there. It's run by governments whose self-interest is in their own nation....[But] what happens at the UN is that it's a magnet where people from all over the world come and its mission is peace in the world and equality for all humanity...

What I found in the UN is that people who are there are trained in international relations, economics, and law, primarily...They haven't been trained in the humanities. It's not that they're not open to it. It's just that in our educational system we've been split off this way... So, language was extremely important. I learned the way international people thought, the way they expressed their ideas, so that before I spoke, that I would be speaking in their language and not in the language that I speak here. I spent about four years before I did anything at all, because I had so much to learn, and then the first thing I was able to do there was, I would start at the beginning, talking about the human dimension. That was the closest thing that was politically acceptable...

Now we have a spiritual caucus there where we are bringing in silence... We meet twice a month in or around the UN, and we have silence together for half an hour. Then we come out of the silence and we address either a current issue at the UN from a spiritual dimension or spirituality in general in the international community.

We're moving into a new civilization, we're a global world now, and we have not caught up with this socially or economically in many ways. But technologically, it's already happened. It's here, and we are meant to shape this according to our highest values. If we don't participate, other people who have different values are going to participate. I feel that groups like this are absolutely essential for transforming the world. . we can start at a local level with just a few people, and it will expand to the whole world...The most important thing we could do in the world is to bring the development of the interior life to match the exterior world.



## Evaluations

Based on comments from guests during the weekend and evaluations returned afterwards, the weekend was a great success in relation to the initial goals. Some of the comments from the evaluations:

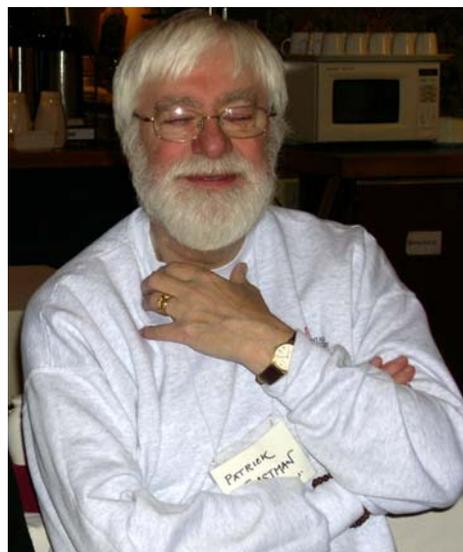
*“The retreat was valuable to me because of the networking and learning what others are doing in terms of social justice and peace. It is inspiring to be amongst fellow travelers and to know how deeply committed they are.”*

*“It was an amazing gathering of people who do social action and contemplation – it was great to see how that combination is one in people’s lives. I don’t feel as isolated and I feel I have resources I can call on to collaborate or get feedback when I’m stuck. I learned that these kinds of gatherings are absolutely crucial to reinvigorate myself and hopefully each other.”*

*“This gathering clarified for me that a movement is indeed emerging. I don’t think we know enough about it yet, but slowly infrastructure is being built, visions are being articulated, and leadership is being developed. This was a vital learning.”*

From Father Pat Eastman:

“I want to let you know personally that as a result of the conference I am in the process of seeing whether I can get sufficient funding to leave parish work and to give all my time and energy to deepening my zen practice and teaching contemplation as a path to non-violence and justice and to support those who are active in the works of peace and social justice through my non profit organization Monos.”



**Father Pat Eastman**

## **Possible Next Steps**

- Identify the role of the Center and the Contemplative Net Project in moving the field forward
- Identify resources/skills of each participant so that all beings in ‘the net’ can tap into our collective strengths
- Explore the idea of establishing a Social Justice program at the Center – could include fellowships
- Explore training program for those exploring how to develop contemplative organizations
- Explore/develop the idea of “temporary autonomous zones” – fluid gathering places that support and catalyze nascent communities, e.g. The Contemplative Café online community
- Serve the net w/ “book reports” and other helpful summaries of community and movement building e.g. “Linked”

## Summary

During the weekend, the Center forged relationships with individuals that have the potential to be mutually beneficial. We identified a number of participants who may be resources in the future as trainers and speakers affiliated with the Center, and Gina documented all of the presentations and “best practices” on video tape. But perhaps most important, the relationships that were sparked and strengthened in this circle of kindred spirits will almost certainly continue to ripple outwards, expanding the “Net” and building the movement.

We end this report with an essay that Soren Gordhamer shared with us shortly after he returned home from this gathering— an eloquent testimony to those rippling circles, and the boundless community that surrounds us everywhere, all the time.

### Recognizing the Contemplative Spirit

Soren Gordhamer

There is a growing movement to quell the frenetic and hurried pace of our society with the balm of contemplative practice. This became clear to me at the recent Contemplative Practice and Social Change gathering sponsored by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. It was great to see so many people doing such committed work around the country. The increase in people interested in this work did not become clear to me only at the gathering, but while I was in transit to and from it.

I was picked up at the Boston Airport in a van along with several others to be driven from the airport to the conference center about an hour away. As we drove, I started talking to the driver, a friendly guy by the name of Mike. I learned that he had lived in Massachusetts all his life and seemed to know something interesting about every town we passed. I mentioned that I had not spent much time in the state but was recently at a Buddhist meditation center in Western Massachusetts.

"Oh really," he said "I have been practicing Shaolin meditation for fifteen years and Tai Chi for the past five. I love them both. They really help to center me."

We talked more about his practice and what it meant to him.

"I love it. I also have two sons and I really try to help my sons. I tell them, 'Just be in the moment. Focus on what you are doing right now. The future will take care of itself. Be present for this moment'. Sometimes they listen, sometimes they do not, but I try anyway."

Curious to know more about him, I asked, "So, how long have you been working for Contemplative Mind in Society?"

"Contemplative Mind in Society?" he exclaimed. "What's that? I work for Northshore Shuttle Service out of Salem."

I explained to him about the center and the conference, and thought the experience to be slightly odd.

At the end of the conference, I left the wonderful people at the conference that I had so much in common with. Arriving at the Boston Airport I felt somewhat isolated as I watched thousands of travelers walk in every direction. I managed to make my flight and had just plopped down in my seat when I noticed a nicely dressed woman sitting next to me reading *The Art of Happiness with the Dalai Lama*. We started talking about the book.

"What he says makes so much sense," she said. "This society is so messed up in how we behave and what we value. It's all about doing and getting more and everyone is so stressed out all the time. People aren't happy. They are on the edge all the time. I'm trying to educate myself through books like this to find a way to live better."

I found that she is in sales at an Oil and Gas Company in Houston, Texas. Go figure. She is planning to go to business school but is not sure why she is going. She really wants to learn meditation then to help others in businesses settings find a more quality way to do business and work. I suggested that she might be able to do an MBA and focus on meditation and contemplation in the workplace. This excited her.

A shuttle driver from Salem, an oil and gas saleswoman from Houston . . . these people are also contemplative activists, trying to bring the spirit to kids and into work. What is the universe trying to tell me?

From these conversations I saw that it is not that there are not enough people interested in contemplative practice. The tribe is actually much bigger than I thought. We do not need to convince others of the need for the contemplative spirit. Our challenge is not to convince; our challenge is to recognize. It is to see the need in all those around us and acknowledge it as such. Our challenge is to engage and nurture what is already there. The calling for a slower more connected way of life is one of the deepest, most profound longings. It is a powerful wind. We don't need to convince people of this wind. We just need to recognize the wind and open the doors to let the wind come through. The wind will do the rest.

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## **“Inviting the World to Transform” Participants**

### **Adi Bemak – Holyoke Youth Alliance**

In addition to co-directing the Holyoke Youth Alliance, a community-based teen health coalition, Adi has a private counseling practice and has been teaching mindfulness-based stress reduction for 10 years. A member of the Community Dharma Leaders Training Program at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, she leads sitting groups with Dharma Dena Meditation Center in Northampton, MA and is presently a mentor for young adults with Insight Meditation Society’s Spiritual Friend/Mentoring Program. Adi is collaborating with The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society to organize a teen retreat in Holyoke, hoping to bring mindfulness practice to young people in their own inner-city environment.

### **Michael Brooks- The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

#### **Grove Burnett – Vallecitos**

Vallecitos is a nonprofit retreat center designed to help develop and create stronger and more effective leadership and organizations in the nonprofit sector. Vallecitos hosts 7-day meditation and contemplative retreats that combine mindfulness practice with periods of silence and periods of hiking in the wilderness that surrounds the ranch as a foundation for critical discussion and thinking.

#### **Mirabai Bush – The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

As Director of the Center, Mirabai brings a unique background of organizational management, teaching, and spiritual practice. A founding board member of the Seva Foundation, an international public health organization, she directed the Seva Guatemala Project, which supports sustainable agriculture and integrated community development. Also at Seva, she co-developed *Sustaining Compassion, Sustaining the Earth*, a series of retreats and events for grassroots environmental activists on the interconnection of spirit and action. She is co-author, with Ram Dass, of *Compassion in Action: Setting Out on the Path of Service*, published by Random House.

Mirabai has organized, facilitated, and taught workshops, weekends, and courses on spirit and action for more than 20 years at institutions including Omega Institute, Naropa Institute, Findhorne, and Zen Mountain Monastery.

Her spiritual studies include meditation study at the Burmese Vihara in Bodh Gaya, India, with Shri S.N. Goenka and Anagarika Munindra; bhakti yoga with Hindu teacher Neemkaroli Baba; and studies with Tibetan lamas Kalu Rinpoche, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Kyabje Gehlek Rinpoche, Tsoknyi Rinpoche, and others. She also did five years of intensive practice in Iyengar yoga and five years of Aikido with Kanai Sensei. She holds an ABD in American literature from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Before entering the foundation world, Mirabai was the first professional woman to work on the Saturn-Apollo moonflight at Cape Canaveral and later co-founded and directed Illuminations, Inc., from 1973 to 1985 in Cambridge, MA. Her innovative business approaches, based on mindfulness practice, were reported in Newsweek, Inc., Fortune, and the Boston Business Journal. She has also worked on educational programs with inner-city youth of color.

Mirabai has trekked, traveled, and lived in many countries, including Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, India, Nepal, Morocco, Ireland, England, Scotland, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Germany, Austria, Italy, Pakistan, and the Caribbean. She is an organic gardener in Western Massachusetts and the mother of one adult son, Owen.

#### **Marianna Cacciatore – Bread for the Journey**

Marianna Cacciatore is ED of Bread for the Journey, a grassroots philanthropy with 18 chapters in the United States and Canada. She offers training, support, and companionship to each chapter as they practice relationship-centered philanthropy in their local communities. People are at the heart of her work and her life.

Marianna is also founder of Children to Children, a grief support program in Tucson, AZ. She is writing a book about being present and bearing witness for someone grieving death.

#### **Andre Carothers – The Rockwood Foundation**

The Rockwood Social Change Leadership Program is a nonprofit which promotes social change through leadership training and consulting to progressive nonprofits.

#### **Arrington Chambliss – No Ordinary Time**

Arrington Chambliss, an Episcopal priest, is the Director of No Ordinary Time, a new initiative that creates urban retreats which integrate contemplation and action for young people.

#### **Maia Duerr – The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

Maia is the Research Director of the Contemplative Net Project. Maia has been a research associate with the University of California San Francisco's medical anthropology department and has conducted qualitative studies in health, corporate, and non-profit sectors. She has also worked for socially engaged Buddhist organizations and served as associate editor of *Turning Wheel* (the journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship) and managing editor of *The Mindfulness Bell*.

Maia completed an MA in cultural anthropology from the California Institute of Integral Studies in 1996, where her thesis focused on the psychiatric survivor and consumer movement. Prior to that, she worked as a mental health professional and was active in advocating for the rights of people with psychiatric disabilities.

A Buddhist practitioner for the past 9 years, Maia received lay ordination from Roshi Joan Halifax into both the Order of Interbeing and the Zen Peacemaker Order. She has also lived and practiced at the San Francisco Zen Center. Maia loves to travel and her journeys have taken her to Indonesia, Tibet, Nepal, and India.

#### **Fr. Patrick Eastman**

I have been a priest since 1969 when I was ordained as an Anglican in England. I have been in Tulsa since 1983 when I became a married RC priest. Since May 2002 I have been a formal student in the Mountain and Rivers Order under the direction of Abbot Daido Looi Roshi at Zen Mountain Monastery NY. I am a parish priest who also runs an organization called The Monos Community dedicated to wordless imageless prayer [Zen], interreligious dialog, church renewal, women's studies and social justice. We are closely associated with the International Thomas Merton Society. I have been a Benedictine Oblate since 1963 currently with the Camaldolese Benedictines at Big Sur, CA. My wife has Masters degree in Spirituality and Feminism/Liberation Theology.

### **Dan Edwards – The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

Dan Edwards is a multitalented artist hailing from Springfield, MA. He is the Centers' Youth Program Coordinator and received his BA in Writing, Film, and Photography from Hampshire College in 1997. Since then, he has gone on to work with youth from all over the country. Dan has created several contemplative art youth programs that have found a home in various non-profits and schools in the Northeast, ranging from workshops in electronic music production, mindfulness rap, racism, and inner writing to longer projects such as the Peaceful Images Project, Jedeye, and The Advancement Project. He strives to instill a mindset of cultural pride, personal awareness and non-assimilation through artistic empowerment within inner city communities nationwide. Dan practices Tai-Chi and Jeet Kun Do along with several forms of mindfulness practice. When not knocking on your door, Dan is most likely at home raising his empire of three daughters, Brianah, Kwestchan, and Baylee.

### **Soren Gordhamer – The Lineage Project**

Soren Gordhamer is a 34-year-old husband, father, writer, and meditation teacher. He is the author of the meditation book for teens, *Just Say OM!* (Adams Media, October 2001) and the book of interviews, *Meetings with Mentors: A Young Adult Interviews Leading Visionaries* (Hanford Mead Publishers, 1995). He is Founder of the Lineage Project, an innovative non-profit that teaches meditation and yoga to incarcerated and at-risk teens in New York City. The project runs “The Zone: A Teen Center for the Mind, Body, and Heart” located in the south Bronx. In 2000, the organization received the “Mayor’s Voluntary Action Award” from former Mayor Rudolph Guiliani. Soren is also a contributor to the Generation X anthologies: *Blue Jean Buddha: Voices of Young Buddhists* (Wisdom, 2001) edited by Sumi Loundon and *Radical Spirit: Spiritual Writings from the Voices of Tomorrow* (New World Library, 2002) edited by Stephen Dinan. He has written for *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, *Ascent Magazine*, *Inquiring Mind*, *Mandala Magazine*, and *The Mindfulness Bell*.

### **Simon Greer – Jobs With Justice**

Simon is the Director of the New York Jobs With Justice (JWJ) office. Jobs with Justice's mission is to improve working people's standard of living, fight for job security, and protect workers' right to organize. JwJ's core belief is that in order to be successful, workers' rights struggles have to be part of a larger campaign for economic and social justice. To that end, JwJ has created a network of local coalitions that connect labor, faith-based, community, and student organizations to work together on workplace and community social justice campaigns.

### **Vijali Hamilton- Earth Mandala**

A visionary earth artist, sculptor, poet and musician is the originator of Earth Mandala, a global peace project. She circled the globe on the 35<sup>th</sup> latitudinal parallel creating monumental stone sculptures and community ritual-based theater in twelve countries including Egypt, Israel and Palestine, India, Tibet, China, and Serbia. Vijali called this first pilgrimage the World Wheel. She has begun a second Earth Mandala circling the equator beginning in the Andes of Ecuador, and continuing in Brazil, Africa, India, Australia, and the South Pacific. Vijali's work includes education, art, spirituality, peace activism and focuses attention on the resolution of environmental, spiritual, and social problems. Earth Mandala is an artistic forum for global understanding. It activates awareness of our interconnectedness with all life.

### **Pat Harbour – Healing the Heart of Diversity**

Pat is the creator and director of Healing the Heart of Diversity. Healing the Heart of Diversity, a professional leadership development program and change process, fosters a deeper understanding of diversity issues and encourages ways of living and working with the complexities and beauty of diverse relationships.

### **Claudia Horwitz- stone circles**

Claudia Horwitz works at the intersection of contemplative practice, creative expression, and social change. She is the founding director of stone circles, a nonprofit organization that helps individuals and organizations integrate spiritual and reflective practice into the work of social justice. Based in Durham, North Carolina, stone circles has worked thousands of change agents and activists all over the country through training, organizational development, and interfaith gatherings. Her previous work includes developing youth leadership, supporting struggles for economic justice, and strengthening nonprofit organizations. Her book, *The Spiritual Activist: Practices to Transform Your Life, Your Work, and Your World*, (Penguin Compass 2002) is a practical guide to individual and social transformation through spirit and faith. She is a Rockefeller Foundation Next Generation Leadership Fellow and teaches Kripalu yoga.

### **Channapha Khamvongsa- Ford Foundation**

#### **Marcelle Martin – Religious Society of Friends**

Marcelle Martin is a Quaker drawn to the mystical, prophetic, and contemplative--and to the inner place where they meet in our Source, the divine Oneness. For three and a half years she was a regular participant in two peace vigils which she helped to start. One has been held weekly at the Liberty Bell since April 1999; the other has been held every Tuesday evening in her Philadelphia neighborhood since Sept. 11, 2001. These vigils are occasions for prayer, although responding to passers-by is part of the prayer and witness. She has written dozens of the 120 email "reports" that have been sent out from these vigils (originally weekly, then more periodically) to hundreds of people. Her prayer and witness have been part of her process of learning how to "live in that state and power that take away the occasion for war." For two years she lived as part of a Quaker "ministry of presence" in an inner-city neighborhood. From these experiences, she has come to understand better the interconnectedness of all things, and the necessary role of intercessory prayer in the movement of humanity toward a more peaceful world. She has withdrawn from many of these former activities in order to have the quiet needed for writing. She is working on a book about women mystics who were called to be traveling ministers. A teacher, retreat leader, and spiritual director, she works part time at Pendle Hill, a Quaker center for study and contemplation.

#### **Fleet Maull- Prison Dharma Network**

Prison Dharma Network (PDN) promotes contemplative practices as transformational tools for prisoners and correctional environments through its national and international network of individual and organizational members, including most of the meditation and/or contemplative-oriented prison ministries and outreach programs in North America from the Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian traditions. PDN member organizations are also active in Europe, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand. PDN publishes a variety of resource materials including its recently published book, *Sitting Inside: Buddhist Practice in American Prisons*. PDN also corresponds directly with several thousand prisoners and mails hundreds of books free-of-charge to prisoners each month. PDN founder Fleet Maull, a zen peacemaker priest and U.S. Director of the Peacemaker Community, recently co-founded the Institute for Transformative Justice at Naropa University as a consortium of various organizations, including PDN, whose mission is to bring a new model based on restorative and transformative justice along with contemplative practices to the criminal justice system. Fleet, who is also the founder of National Prison Hospice Association ([www.npha.org](http://www.npha.org)), is currently organizing a national conference on Contemplative End-of-Life and Elder Care to be held at Naropa University, May 12-14, 2003 with featured speakers: Sogyal Rinpoche, Roshi Joan Halifax, Rebbe Zalman Schacter, Frank Ostaseski, and Judy Lief. Fleet is currently co-

directing a yearlong Peacemaker Institute training program ([www.peacemakerinstitute.org](http://www.peacemakerinstitute.org)) in Boulder, Colorado integrating contemplative practices and peacemaking skills.

**Tulaine Montgomery – Citizen Schools University**

Tulaine Montgomery is a founding staff member and the Chief Training Officer of Citizen Schools. Born and raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Tulaine earned her B.A. from Smith College in Northampton, MA, then returned to Cambridge to become the founder and director of Young P.O.W.E.R. (Positive Outstanding Women Educated and Respected), an educational network for female high school students dealing with academic and behavioral challenges. While directing Young P.O.W.E.R., Tulaine also worked in the Business Strategy Group of Abt Associates. She has worked in Cambridge and Boston Public Schools and was a founding member of the Benjamin Banneker Charter School, a charter school in Cambridge focusing on math and science education.

Previously, Tulaine was the National Director of Programs for the House of Blues Foundation. She serves on the boards of The Partnership, Inc., No Ordinary Time, Mindwing and The Smith College Black Alumnae Association, and was appointed by the Mayor of Cambridge to serve on the Women’s Advisory Commission. Tulaine is the co-founder of Onyx, Inc. a theatre production company. She has served as a foster parent to three teenage girls.

Tulaine was recently recognized as one of the Boston Herald’s 20 Young Leaders to watch in the Year 2001. She was also recognized as an Emerging Leader by the University of Massachusetts’ Center for Collaborative Leadership.

**john a. powell – Institute on Race and Poverty**

The Institute on Race & Poverty was established in 1993 by john a. powell, former national legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union and current professor of law at the University of Minnesota Law School. john has written extensively on the intersections of race and poverty and how they affect U.S. society. He speaks throughout the country on related issues, including the benefits of regionalism, urban problems associated with sprawl, the negative effects of concentrated poverty, and issues associated with welfare reform. He is the editor of *Dividing the Nation: Housing and Desegregation*, and co-editor of *The Rights of Racial Minorities: The Basic ACLU Guide to Racial Minority Rights*.

**Nancy Roof- Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations**

I direct a project called Spirituality and Global Affairs at the Center for Psychology & Social Change. Currently this work involves being the Editor of a Journal called “Spirituality & Reality: New Perspectives on Global Issues,” and serving as co-convenor of the Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations.

**Fred Rooney – Community Legal Resources Network, City University of New York [CUNY] Law School, New York, New York**

The Mission of CLRN is try to increase access to justice in urban communities where people have very limited or no access to justice. CLRN has created a network of private attorneys practicing in small firms concerned about access to justice in their communities who have agreed to use their own firms for pro bono work. CLRN in turn provides them with technical training and professional support in order to keep their practices viable.

**David Sawyer**

David Sawyer has worked in the capacity of organizational consultant, leadership mentor, and management coach for various social entrepreneurs, business leaders and non-profit directors. His work in leadership excellence is based on the notion that the most potent leverage point we have for realizing the new paradigm for social change is leadership.

**Nafisa Sharrif- Entering the Holy of Holies**

Nafisa is a multi-talented dancer/choreographer of modern dance, hip hop & West African dance who has performed with Stevie Wonder, Whitney Houston, Spike Lee, and Kairaba West African Dance Company among many others. The work of ETHOH includes meditation classes and workshops on spiritual transformation, private body work for balancing and healing, stress management through movement and meditation, hands on healing with the Universal Life Force [Reiki], and Woman's Rite of Passage.

**Gina Smith – The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

Gina M. Smith has worked as a college Ombudsperson, law school Assistant Dean, law school Assistant Professor and Attorney, bringing her compassion and sense of justice to those considered institutional outsiders. Her interest in spiritually based social justice was awakened listening to her grandmother's stories of growing up African-American in racially segregated Baltimore, and being raised in a socially active United Methodist congregation. Her work as a community activist has been in housing, racial justice, children and families, sexual orientation issues, media and cycling. She is a community producer for Northampton Community Television, and a member of several community committees in Northampton.

Gina's spiritual path has led her to the Religious Society of Friends, (Quakers). As a result of her interest in justice, she has earned a J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law, and a B.S. from Towson State University in history and political science. She is Mommy to two young sons, Avery and Quinn. She and her partner, Heidi, are plaintiffs in an historic lawsuit pressing for the right for same-gender couples to marry in Massachusetts, and were the recipients of a 2001 Human Rights Campaign award for their work.

**Linda Stout – Spirit in Action**

Spirit in Action's Director, has been a grassroots organizer and activist for almost two decades. As a thirteenth-generation Quaker born to a tenant-farming family, Linda founded a successful grassroots organization in 1984, the Piedmont Peace Project, in a conservative region of North Carolina. PPP worked successfully to forge extraordinary alliances across race and class lines and won major public policy changes in spite of opposition from politicians and the Ku Klux Klan. Linda's awards include a Public Policy Fellowship from Harvard University's Radcliffe College and the Freedom Fighter Award of the Equal Rights Congress. She is also the author of Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing, published by Beacon Press in 1997.

Spirit in Action is a force for unleashing stories and visions of a life-affirming future to build a movement that embodies love, equality, justice, nonviolence, spirit, and respect for the earth. Spirit in Action works by linking with other social justice and spiritual activists to strength collective action for transformative social change.

### **June Tanoue – Peacemaker Community**

June works in the Peacemaker Community's social action sphere as the director of villages in the global hub office in Montague, MA. Villages are what we call the activist groups who work together in our global community. It is taken from the African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child." The Peacemaker Community's offering is a new organizational model for spiritually integrated social activists and activist groups that is based upon Indra's Net and our three tenets of not knowing, bearing witness and loving action. June is also a kumu hula or a master teacher of the hula.

### **Judith Thompson – Spirit in Human Rights**

In her work with Children of War Judith co-created a form of transpersonal emotional healing. She moved on to help create Global Youth Connect which does deep inner disarmament work with youth all over the world. She is presently involved in Spirit in Human Rights in which she uses practices of contemplative dialogue, sweat lodges, council circle and meditation with human rights.

### **Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey – The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society**

Jesse is a writer, artist, brother and son holding it down for Holyoke, Massachusetts. He received his BA in History from Macalester College in 2000 and continues to pursue his interests in oral history and storytelling using graphic, written, and digital techniques. He is also involved in developing a program of community-based cultural activism in his hometown. He is a Buddhist.

### **Angel Kyodo Williams- urbanPEACE**

urbanPEACE is a non-religious spiritually-based empowerment initiative. Its mission is to inform, incite and empower peacemaking in urban environments using self-awareness and community-making as vehicles toward authentic personal and social transformation of consciousness. urbanPEACE encourages the integration of awareness practices with social action. It develops universal practices as a shared language to facilitate greater connection between peoples of different races, genders, cultures and faiths, and especially to ourselves. It promotes a culture of peace, tolerance and nonviolence, creatively using every resource available.

### **Diana Winston**

Diana founded the Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement (BASE) program in 1994. She is a writer, activist, teacher of meditation, especially to youth, and a many year practitioner of Vipassana meditation. Diana spent a year as a Buddhist nun in Burma and is currently working on a book about Buddhism for teenagers.

### **Richard R. Zayas -- UrbanPEACE**

Richard Zayas has been a practitioner of tai chi chuan, chi gong, and the internal arts for more than 22 years. He is also a practitioner of Reiki and the healing arts, as well as a student of interfaith spiritual traditions. Under the auspices of UrbanPEACE, Richard provides business development and management training, as well as leadership and diversity training, and executive coaching services.