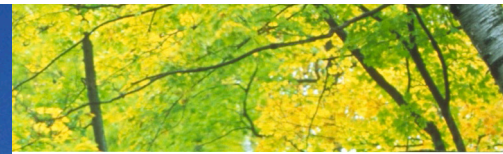




guesthouse

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014



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Value Retreat Draws Many Attendees

From March 6th through 9th, Guest House hosted Diamond Approach teachers John Davis and Rosanne Annoni, who led a four-day retreat called *Being Here: An Exploration Into Essential Value*. The retreat served as an introduction to the Diamond Approach and specifically Diamond Heart Retreat Group 5. This long-term international Diamond Approach retreat group will meet twice a year for eight days each, beginning September 28 through October 5, 2014.



The retreat drew 45 attendees, as well as several Diamond Approach seminarians who sat in on the teachings. Also present were facilitating teachers Jane Bronson, Leah Chyten, Anne Singer and

Susan Weiley. Quite a few of the students expressed interest in also attending the September retreat. "Everyone I worked with told me they were returning in September," said Guest House executive director Steve Kennedy, who also attended the retreat as a student.



Joy Gurrie, a retired mechanical designer who drove down from Boston to experience *Being Here*, remarked, "John and Rosanne's teachings seem to come from within, from who they are, and I found that quite powerful." Gurrie also added, "Guest House provided space and plenty of places to meet, generous and nourishing food and a wonderful holding environment."

My Guest House

Diamond Approach student Neshama Waller wrote this poem at a July 2010 retreat led by Guest House founder Alia Johnson. It came to her during an early morning swim on nearby Lake Pataconk.

For Alia

July 24, 2010

Morning mist on the lake
Rises. Vanishes.
Do your work.

Lake mirroring sky
Silk. Skin. Water.
Dive deep. Grow up.

White lotus flower opens
Floats on the lake.
Be impeccable. Be.

You are the jewel
In the heart of the lotus.
We are your legacy.

nam myoho renge kyo

(Continued on page 3)

Essential Contemplations

In each issue, we look at different views regarding a single subject. In this issue, we focus on value...

.....

Value is truly nothing other than our heart's intimate contact with the immediacy of the moment—with each moment, with where we are precisely.

In that contact, in that being with and knowing reality as it is, we recognize the unquestionable rightness and preciousness of where we are and what we are.

Nothing touches us more deeply than the implicit value of our own beingness. It is value beyond mind, beyond concepts, beyond ideals and hopes and dreams.

This preciousness of simply being here now with awareness and understanding fills our heart with contentment and satisfaction.

We realize that where we are, which is what we are, is also the most real and precious nature of life itself.

—A.H. Almaas



Guest House News

With great sadness, we say goodbye to Brendan Schillberg, who has worked in the Guest House kitchen (with his brother Charlie) for almost five years. But we wish him well in his new position as manager of a Chester-based asphalt company and hope he won't be a stranger.

One of our dedicated housekeeping staff, Ruth Morales Hayes, returned from maternity leave in January. Please join us in congratulating her on the birth of Aaron, her new baby boy, who was born on November 14—a Scorpio in the GH family!



The new year brought us two new guest groups who we'd like to welcome: Internationally recognized leadership teacher and author Peter Bregman (his *18 Minutes: Find Your Focus, Master Distraction, and Get the Right Things Done* was lauded as the best business book of the year on NPR) held one of his popular leadership programs here January 19-22. He is scheduled to return October 19-22 (go to www.peterbregman.com/leadership-school to learn more). Connecticut Montessori held its retreat here January 26-27.



Room 317, a big draw for teachers and facilitators from many groups, now has two entrances—one to the bedroom, the other to the sitting/meeting room—as well a new air conditioning/heating unit.

We replaced one of two main boilers, boosting efficiency. Speaking of efficiency, we also swapped 250 incandescent bulbs for more energy-efficient LED bulbs. ■

Value Retreat Draws Many Attendees

(Continued from page 1)

After the retreat, we spoke with Annoni and Davis, who shared a sense of satisfaction about meeting together at Guest House and offering this introduction to the Diamond Approach. They felt it was a helpful prelude to the Diamond Heart Retreat Group 5. As co-directors of the program, they were heartened by the response to this teaching on Value and appreciative of the opportunity to meet so many interested students as well as to work together with the rest of the teaching team. The entire team left with excitement about the start of the DHR5 group in September and are looking forward to taking the next step.

For more information on the new international DHR5, and to register, go to www.guesthousecenter.org and click on "New Diamond Heart Retreat Group begins..." which is highlighted in red at the left of the home page. ■



Looking forward to spring (finally) at Guest House

Our Gang

Celebrating the great variety of our regular guest groups



DonorsChoose.org
Teachers ask. You choose.

Lauded by First Lady Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey and Stephen Colbert (a board member), and listed among the magazine *Fast Company's* "50 Most Innovative Companies in the World,"

DonorsChoose.org engages the public in public schools by giving people a simple, accountable and personal way to address educational inequity. Public school teachers from every corner of America post classroom project requests on the site, and donors can give any amount to the project that most inspires them. **DonorsChoose.org** ships the materials to the school, and donors get photos of the project taking place, a letter from the teacher and insight into how every dollar was spent. Anyone who gives over \$50 also receives hand-written thank-you notes from the students.

DonorsChoose.org staff met at Guest House for the first time last year, and will be returning in July 2014 for their second retreat. "We had such a fantastic time at Guest House last year," says Human Capital Manager Diana Finkel. "Clean and comfortable surroundings, great meeting spaces, totally delicious food. We rebooked for the next year literally as soon as we got back to the city. What really set our experience apart is the awesome Guest House staff – we came with a ton of special requests, and each and every person was so thoughtful and helpful! We're extremely grateful to have found them and can't wait to head back this summer."

See more at www.DonorsChoose.org. ■

Meet the Staff

Interviewed by Margaret Jasinski

In this issue, we meet Christie Cox, one of the newest employees at Guest House. Christie works part-time behind the front desk. But as you'll learn below, she does much more. Christie's a busy lady! We don't know how she does it, but we feel so grateful to have her for whatever time she can give us.

Q: How did you come to Guest House?

A: I was working at The Ivory Restaurant & Pub and in search of a second job, so I answered the Guest House advertisement on Craigslist. Marianne Hile emailed me to come in for an interview and a few days later, she and Rhonda Nutile offered me the job.

Q: What do you enjoy about working at Guest House?

A: I have a few things I enjoy about Guest House, but I like the folks I work with the most. Everyone has been so helpful and friendly. And the retreat guests who meet here are interesting and pleasant as well.

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: My immediate family consists of my father, my stepmother and her two children, a baby brother and a big sister. They live in Florida, Tennessee and Ohio. I live in Deep River with my boyfriend Mike, a bartender at the Ivory, and we have a handsome black Lab (Brutus) and a cute cat (Sushi).

Q: We understand you are in school. What are you studying and where would you like that to lead?

A: I am currently a full-time student at Middlesex Community College. My major is environmental science. My goal is to eventually work in water management as my field. I enjoy science and I like math. This major combines all of those interests. I was recently offered a part-time job at the United States Post Office in Deep River as



a carrier. I'm also a part-time server at a new café that was opened in Higganum by my friend Kyle. It is called The Blue Highway Café. I enjoy staying busy; I'm always looking for new things to do.

Q: What first got you interested in environmental issues?

A: I've always been a "go green" person. Growing up I had my family shut off water while brushing teeth and we had a time limit on our showers to conserve water. No baths were allowed! We as a family always recycled. We also grew our own veggies and I still do as much as I can up here. We always reuse any containers to store stuff, in the garage mostly.

Q: What is your idea of a perfect day?

A: Relaxing on a boat on a gorgeous 80-degree day while sipping a margarita! Like I am in this picture... ■

From the Kitchen

One of the things Guest House prides itself on is our delicious, wholesome food. Our guests often ask us for recipes. While we're not ready to reveal all Chef Steve's secrets (they'll have to wait for the bestselling cookbook), we will try to include at least one recipe in each newsletter. We start off with the fresh spring flavors of Tomato Artichoke Bisque.

Tomato Artichoke Bisque

Makes about 1 gallon

2 medium carrots, minced
½ head celery (about 4 stalks), minced
½ onion, minced
2 Tbsp. minced garlic
1 tsp. oil
4 cups tomato purée
2 quarts vegetable stock
2 8-oz. cans artichoke bottoms
2 8-oz. cans artichoke hearts, quartered
Salt and pepper to taste



1. Roast carrots, celery and onion in 350° oven until they begin to brown and caramelize.
2. Meanwhile, in a large soup pot, sauté garlic in the olive oil until fragrant. Add tomato purée and stock.
3. Purée artichoke bottoms with their liquid and add to pot.
4. Add caramelized vegetables from oven. Bring contents to a boil, then lower heat to simmer and cook for ½ hour.
5. About 20 minutes before serving, add the quartered artichokes (if you add them sooner, they will toughen).
6. Add salt and pepper to taste and ladle into soup bowls. ■

Giving Corner

Guest House is pleased to announce our brand new **named giving program**, which provides us with a way to acknowledge our gratitude to you, our donors. When you give at the amounts below, you can choose to have your name affixed to one of the corresponding objects or locations.

Of course, you can certainly remain anonymous if you wish. You can also have a message engraved that honors a loved one ("In loving memory of Don Riso"), or you can get creative and dedicate your gift to an essential aspect such as "Joy" or "Loving Light," or to your personal experience of our nurturing retreat center ("For all I have learned at Guest House" or "For helping me understand my value"). It's completely up to you. To learn more about this program, please contact: Josie Sentner at josiesentner@gmail.com or Hadley Perry at hadleyperry1@gmail.com.

NAMED GIVING DONOR LEVELS

\$100 claims a brick on the labyrinth path

\$250 purchases a small inscribed metal plate on the stone wall of the garden next to our dining deck

\$500 adds your name (or other message) to the low wall surrounding our ancient deck maple

\$1,500 buys a teak bench for the labyrinth clearing in the woods

\$8,000 guarantees bug-free meditations in a screened-in shelter by the labyrinth

Our Thanks...

2013 FRIENDS OF GUEST HOUSE HONOR ROLL

Thanks to everyone below for enrolling in our Friends of Guest House annual membership program. You were 116 members strong in 2013! We encourage you to enroll in the 2014 membership club today and help us reach a new target of 130 Friends in 2014. Membership starts at as little as \$20 for the year and entitles you to early announcements of Guest House activities, first e-mailing of our newsletter and gifts appropriate to each level of giving. Go to **www.guesthousecenter.org** and click on "Donate Now!" today.

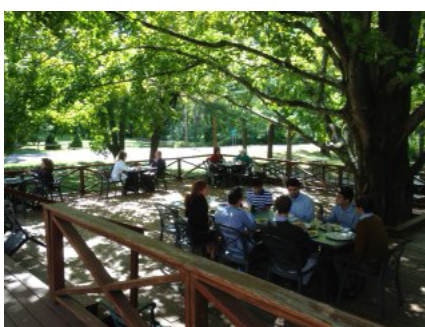
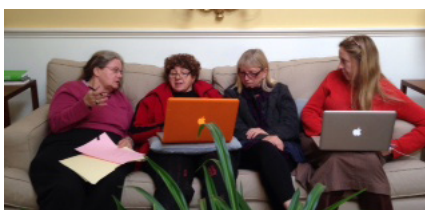
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Who is Guest House?

Guest House is a place where a wide diversity of faiths, traditions, practices and disciplines are welcome. Nothing says this better than the list of groups and organizations below that met here to do their important work in 2013. They, together with our many Diamond Approach groups, were concerned with the infinite mysteries of spirituality, the possibilities for personal freedom offered by psychology, the preciousness of our planet and our ecology. They taught people how to be better leaders, better caregivers and better parents to our children. And they explored creativity, the nature of consciousness and the humanity of tolerance.

Thank you to each and every group and each and every person who came to Guest House last year. We look forward to seeing you again.

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What I Know to Be True
Write Yourself Free

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