



# guesthouse

## NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015

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## Welcome, Enneagram Institute!

Guest House will function as a temporary home for the internationally recognized Enneagram Institute (EI) in 2015. While we are thrilled to host them, the circumstances that led them to our doorstep are devastating, both to the Institute and for the many Diamond Approach students who have also gone through Enneagram trainings and workshops at the EI's

spotted the fire and made a beeline for the Stone Ridge engine company just down the street. As luck would have it, explains the EI's vice president and legal counsel Brian Taylor, "The firemen were already suited up and getting ready to assist at another fire. They arrived at the Institute within 10 minutes."

Taylor and his late partner, Don Riso—who founded the Institute



facility in the Upstate New York hamlet of Stone Ridge.

Last July 8th a violent thunderstorm blew through the town. At about 10:20 that night, the large red barn housing various teaching rooms was struck by lightning and caught on fire.

Although no one was on the grounds at the time, a passerby fortunately



with Russ Hudson in 1997—had converted the barn into teaching spaces between 2006 and 2008. That night it would burn for nearly three hours before the fire was extinguished. The roof and upstairs teaching spaces were destroyed and the first floor and basement suffered significant water damage. Within two days, mold began to appear, and the entire interior had to be gutted.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Helping Chester

Guest House was founded on the belief that openness to and exchange between many forms of wisdom benefits the world. We have welcomed Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims and other spiritual traditions. We invited in healers, thinkers, artists, scientists, groups that believe in social justice, in helping others overcome trauma, in fostering more compassionate leadership...the list of diverse views and approaches to enriching the world grows each year.

But, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said, "It's not enough to be compassionate—you must act." That means giving back. There are a variety of ways Guest House supports those who support us, namely the Chester community and its environs.

### Free meditation classes

Since the earliest years of our existence, Guest House has offered free meditation classes. "Over the years, a number of people have become regulars," notes Jane Bronson, one of two teachers—Nancy Joly is the other—who facilitate the Wednesday night classes.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## A Message from our Executive Director

*Hello and greetings from Guest House, What an incredible season my first winter at Guest House has been. Connecticut enjoyed record snowfalls and record low temperatures. The estimate for Chester 2015 snowfall is 48 inches. There were only nine days in February when no snow fell at all and with an average daily temperature of 16 degrees, much of that snow is still on the ground! The weather and other facility challenges were a great way for me to learn what an amazing team we have. I could see right away that the staff here is willing to do whatever needs to be done, shoveling, snow blowing, hammering ice dams, managing leaking ceilings and even cleaning off roofs and guests' cars.*

*In my first months here, I have observed true teamwork and a strong desire on the part of the staff to give guests the best possible retreat experience. The Mission Statement is not only understood, it is embraced. It is a delight to read the guest visit surveys and find wonderful compliments that exemplify our efforts, such as "Our retreat exceeded my expectations. Beautiful location, attentive staff, delicious food—it was perfect in every way."*

*As we move forward into spring, I look forward to the new challenges and joys it will bring.*

Saralyn

# Guest House News

**Snow Heroes** On March 1, after a heavy snowfall, three of our employees went above and beyond the call of duty. A bus picking up about 50 guests arrived very late and became stuck in the snow. **Marianne Hile, Nick Schultz and Brendan Schillberg** shoveled and sanded until the bus was freed, but it quickly became stuck again, so they started all over. Our snow plow contractor arrived in the midst of their efforts and did his part, finally freeing the bus at approximately 10:00 pm. The guests were so grateful and gracious to our team for all they did, and GH feels incredibly lucky to have such dedicated people on our wonderful staff.



*Snowfall at Guest House*



*Will Galvin*

**Goodbye to Will** We bid a fond farewell to **Will Galvin**, our facilities manager, who was part of these buildings and grounds even before Guest House was established. He had worked here when the place was known as The Chester Inn, and no one was more familiar with the building's quirks, nooks and crannies. After almost seven years with us, he is moving on to other opportunities. Will's stewardship of Guest House these many years has been so important to us. For all the shoveling, the middle-of-the-night basement floods, his vigilance about energy use, his ready wit, the wonderful nicknames he gave people—the list is endless—we thank him from the bottom of our hearts and wish him well.

**Goal and Score!** Guest House is grateful and delighted to announce that we met our fundraising goal of \$100,000 for 2014! We also surpassed our target enrollment in the Friends of Guest House annual membership program, reaching a total of 134 participants. A huge "THANK YOU!" to all 2014 Friends of Guest House (listed on p. 6). Remember, any gift of \$20 or more makes you a Friend of Guest House. Please consider renewing early or becoming a first-time FGH for 2015. Also, now that winter is over—we hope—we're revving up for a new fundraising season. Watch for an exciting new project fund, which we plan to announce in May.

**Most Excellent Web Debut** November saw the successful kick-off of Guest House's webinar program. Sandra Maitri conducted a three-session online workshop on deepening the practice of inquiry through the head, heart and belly centers. Enrollment reached 297, drawing people from far-flung places such as Germany, Norway, Singapore and Australia. Thanks to **Chris Macek** and **Eduardo Gómez** for facilitating the use of the new technology. We're planning another webinar, so stay tuned for more as we develop the content.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Welcome, Enneagram Institute! *(Continued from page 1)*

Fortunately the 19th-century post-and-beam structure was solidly built of chestnut wood, which was not harmed by the flames. But the fire rendered the building useless, forcing the EI to seek temporary space for the year it will take to rebuild.

“For me, it was a natural choice to come to Guest House because of our connection in the past with Guest House and the Diamond Approach,” says Taylor. He, Riso and Hudson were all Diamond Approach (DA) students—Hudson still is—as well as good friends with Alia Johnson, Guest House’s founder. All three had helped Alia in the initial search for a retreat center for the New York groups. Alia’s son, Adam Fuller, had served as the EI’s office manager, and her brother James had also worked at EI for a time. Countless DA students have been through Enneagram trainings, and the Enneagram is touched upon in the Diamond Approach® teachings.

Starting this month, the EI will conduct Part I, Part II and Part III trainings at Guest House, as well as its “Inner Work Retreat: Being in the Body” and the “Inner Critic Workshop.” The Inner Work Retreat, which Hudson will teach in July, is also open to DA students. For information about these trainings, retreat and workshop, please visit [www.enneagraminstitute.com](http://www.enneagraminstitute.com). The compatibility of Guest House for the EI’s work, says Taylor, is palpable. “We know that the atmosphere you create there is consistent with what we try to do at the Enneagram Institute,” he says.

As for the rebuilding of the EI’s barn, Taylor says a local engineer and architect, Scott Davis of Peak Engineering PLLC, has drawn up architectural and site plans. Taylor intends to recreate the teaching spaces exactly as they were before the fire, but will also add a 1,600-square-foot wing providing a large dining room and additional office space.

“We haven’t wanted to go into fundraising until we had a final settlement with the insurance company,” explains Taylor. Plans for a campaign are still in the works, but anyone interested in helping now with the effort should contact Donna Teresi at [donna@enneagraminstitute.com](mailto:donna@enneagraminstitute.com). Taylor pointed out that Riso did not set up the EI as a not-for-profit—though Taylor plans to change this—so that anyone wishing to donate “would be doing it out of the goodness of their hearts.”

As for Guest House, we are touched by the EI’s patronage. We welcome them with open arms and open hearts.

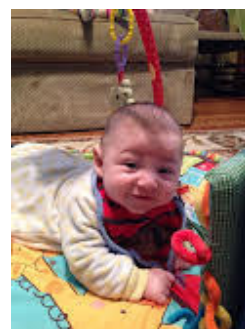
## Guest House News *(Continued from page 2)*

**Staff Updates** We have two new faces—Mary Beth Belisle and Charlotte Gephart—in our incredibly talented kitchen. Welcome! Charlie Schillberg, who has worked in the kitchen for over five years, is taking on new responsibilities at Guest House. In addition to continuing to assist Chef Steve in the kitchen, he will be producing all our Constant Contact communications to our mailing list and also performing some IT functions.

**Oh Baby!** Executive director Saralyn Kerrigan has an adorable, healthy new grandson, James Archer Ford, who was born to her daughter Autumn Ford and Autumn’s husband Brett Ford. Congratulations to all!

**Library Facelift** Next time you’re at Guest House, visit our newly revamped library. Bookshelves no longer sag. The hole-pocked wood around the old dartboard that hung here during the building’s previous ownership (and suffered the slings and arrows of guests’ outrageous aim) as well as panels carved with words (some not so nice) are repaired and the whole place polyurethaned. There’s new crown molding, a cleaned slate floor, a new game table and chairs, and new games and puzzles. It looks lovely, and groups are enjoying it again.

**The Man Behind the Curtain** Our executive director’s husband, Rich Kerrigan, has been consulting with Guest House to make sure we are in fine fettle and to organize areas of the facility that needed some tidying up. He has conducted an evaluation of all our systems and offered various recommendations, cleaned out every storage room and organized an inventory area and tool/equipment room. It has been an incredible amount of work. Guest House has extended his contract for a few months to allow him to implement some of his excellent recommendations. Thanks very much, Rich, for whipping us into shape. ■



# Essential Contemplations

In each issue, we look at different views from various paths regarding a single subject.

This issue seems to have naturally gathered around the idea of service—from our staff, for our community, for our fellow spiritual journeyers. Here are some reflections on service.

.....  
*"[W]hen we objectively understand and appreciate what service is, we realize that there is no true difference between serving human beings and serving God."*

—A.H. Almaas

.....  
*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."*

—Mahatma Gandhi

.....  
*"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."*

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

.....  
*"The vocation of every man and woman is to serve other people."*

—Leo Tolstoy

.....  
*"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."*

—Rabindranath Tagore

# Helping Chester

*(Continued from page 1)*

"Not all of them come every time but when they come they always drop into a place they call, variously, home, peace, depth. Some comment that they feel very connected to others in the meditation space, even though they might not necessarily see one another in the outside world."

Bronson says there are new people too. "Some try it out and decide it's not for them, which is also useful," she says. "A couple of people that tried it out are now in the Diamond Heart Retreat 5 (DHR5) group. Having found Guest House and meditation class, they became intrigued by the Diamond Approach itself. Some local DHR5 students come to meditation class to deepen their practice with the support of a group. And this is, perhaps, worth noting. Meditation can be difficult, especially in the beginning. The support of a group can be very helpful in establishing a practice."

Bronson says as few as three (on a particularly cold and snowy night) and as many as 18 have attended. To find out more, please visit [www.guesthousecenter.org](http://www.guesthousecenter.org).

## Local food pantry

"It's been very helpful," says social worker Rosie Binger of the donations of food and money raised at Guest House by the social action committee, which was formed by students of our founder, Alia Johnson. Binger works in the human services office of Chester Town Hall and manages the cash donations, which over the years have totaled, she estimates, approximately \$10,000. "That's a lot of money," Binger says.

Food donations help stock a food pantry open to anyone in need, continues Binger. "It's been very helpful to residents, especially a lot of elderly people who might be on fixed incomes and running out of food at the end of the month." The cash donations are deposited into the Chester Community Fund. With those monies, explains Binger, "I've helped people with rent, medications, groceries, electric bills, oil—any basic need. I recently even bought a bed for somebody."

Both the pantry and fund are periodically replenished by other groups in addition to Guest House, including the Rotary Club, the local hose company and ambulance corps, both Chester churches and by local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops.

Food donations can be dropped in a box in the lobby of Town Hall. Checks should be made out to The Chester Community Fund and mailed to: Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Ave., Chester, CT 06412.

## Moving the local economy

Of course, Guest House could not provide the level of service that has come to distinguish us among retreat centers in the Northeast without our valued staff. Throughout the various departments—management, retreat services, kitchen, housekeeping, facilities maintenance—Guest House currently employs 12 full-time and 11 part-time staff. Soon we will also hire a full-time facilities manager. Three of our employees live in Chester proper. Many of the wonderful people who work at Guest House have been with us for many years, some from the very beginning.

Additionally, Guest House contracts with a number of central Connecticut vendors, tradespeople and service providers. And quite a few of our 2,600 annual guests enjoy driving into town for a meal and to patronize the charming shops and galleries. In these ways, we function as an economic engine for the region.

## A Great Spring Stew

At Guest House, we're known—and appreciated, according to our guest surveys—for catering to the specific needs of vegans and vegetarians, as well as adapting recipes for those with specific food allergies. One popular option amongst vegetarian and vegan guests is Chef Steve's savory curried lentil stew, which is redolent of the Indian subcontinent. Even if you're a die-hard omnivore, you're sure to like this warm, nutritious stew, which is perfect for those days when spring isn't quite sure she's arrived and the temperature can still drop at night.



### Curried Lentil Stew

Serves 6

2 Tbsps. olive oil  
1 whole yellow onion, large dice  
2 carrots, large dice  
2 zucchini, large dice  
2 yellow squash, large dice  
1 16-oz. bag of lentils, precooked  
2 Tbsps. salt  
2 Tbsps. freshly ground pepper  
3 Tbsps. granulated garlic  
4 tsps. onion powder  
3 tsps. curry  
1 tsp. turmeric  
2 tsps. cumin  
Chopped cilantro or parsley for garnish

1. Heat the oil in a heavy cast iron or enameled pot over medium high heat. When hot, add the onion and sauté until translucent.
2. Add the carrots and sauté for about 5 minutes.
3. Add the zucchini and sauté for another 5 minutes, then do the same with the yellow squash.
4. Add lentils and spices and cook for about 1 minute, stirring to coat all vegetables and lentils.
5. Add 1 cup of water, turn the heat down to low and let simmer 10 minutes.
6. Scoop into bowls, sprinkle with chopped cilantro or parsley and serve. ■

## Giving Corner

### Why I Support Guest House

*We've been speaking with donors to find out what inspires them to give to Guest House. We hope to make these into occasional features of the newsletter (anyone wishing to contribute, please e-mail either [jorge@jsarango.com](mailto:jorge@jsarango.com) or [hadleyperry1@gmail.com](mailto:hadleyperry1@gmail.com)).*

*For this installment, we spoke with Diamond Approach student and Emerald Mountain member Daphne Cruze-Zug.*

I get so much out of going to Guest House that I just feel, if I can, I need to support it. This is at the top of the list. If I had to give up all my other charities, I would do it in order to support Guest House because I feel its gift to the world is so unique and precious—and so rare, really. There's just not anything like it anywhere. So to support that I think is the most important thing. Other people will give to my college [and other charities]...but there's just a very small group of people who know about Guest House and who are invested enough to support it, so I feel that I really need to do that.



Guest House takes care of everything. You really can just concentrate on your presence and what's going on inside you. There's a comfort level there; it's beautiful, it pleases the senses...The Work sometimes is really a struggle. To have all these little physical comforts creates this fabulous space for you to go as deeply as you can.

It's like the place calls me, and it calls something *out* of me. It attracts my inner longing to know. ■

# The 2014 Friends of Guest House Honor Roll

Thank you, thank you, thank you. All 134 of you! Without your support in 2014, Guest House would not have been able to provide the level of service that has made us one of the premier retreat centers in the Northeast. Your invaluable support is validated by the many visitor surveys that praise Guest House for the sensitive, compassionate, nurturing field we create, a field that would be inconceivable without your participation in the Friends of Guest House annual membership program. We look forward to your continued support.

Towne Allen  
Karen Anderson  
Jorge Arango  
Elizabeth Archambault  
Stefano Baldasseroni  
Robert Ball  
Barbara Bennett  
Jill Berman  
Andrew Billeb  
Anthony Braun  
Peggy Braun  
Jane Bronson  
Laurie Brown  
Barbara Buda  
Barbara Burst  
Tabor Butler  
Tom Butterfield  
Carol Carbon  
Sydney Cash  
Betts Cassady  
Denise Catuogno  
Jeff Charno  
Leah Chyten  
Nancy Closs  
Jeff Collins  
Linda Combs  
Diane Crawford  
Daphne Cruze-Zug  
Ralph Curcuru  
Camille Danzi  
Julia Dengel  
Ann Diller  
Lorna Dolci  
Vincent Draddy  
LeClanche du Rand  
Bill Dubin  
Sara Ellison  
Mary Faria  
Franz Feige  
Ruth Foy  
Terril Gagnier  
Tom Gibbons  
Ilka Giges  
Eduardo Gómez

Jordan Goodman  
Sally Gottesfeld  
Anne Gottlieb  
Parvati Grais & Cory Greenberg  
Kristina Grondahl  
Margaret Hixon  
Grace Holland  
Diane Ingram  
Waltraud Ireland  
Carol Irving  
Joey Jacob  
Margaret Jasinski  
Nancy Joly  
Steve Jones  
Stephanie Kenen  
Tracy Kirshenbaum  
Suzanne Koblentz Goodman  
Emi Kubota  
Carolyn Lamson  
Michael Landgarten  
Dorothy Landry  
Laurie Leonard  
Isabelle Lorans  
Vern Ludwig  
Cynthia Martin  
Linda and Everett Marvin  
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Kathie Mazonson  
Colquitt Meacham  
Nancy Meneely  
Mary Moloney  
Rennie Moran  
Bonalynd Mosteller  
Neil Moylan  
Thomas Muraco  
Traci Nelson  
Helen Newman  
Suzanne Noble  
Jerry O'Halloran  
James O'Hern  
Kostas Oikonomou  
Richard Onken  
Cynthia Overstreet  
Stephen Paschall

Helga Paulsen  
Terry Pennebaker & Douglas Woodard  
Evelyn Perkowski  
Hadley Perry  
Ken Porter  
Bernadette Prue  
Marlene Reisman  
Lisa Ricci  
Robert Foundation  
Barbara Rosen  
Sherri Rosen  
Michael Rosetta  
Richard Rowley & Deborah Lebeaux  
Margaret Rubick  
Diane Sacks  
Terry Saracino  
David Schulz  
Duncan Scribner  
Josie Sentner  
Catherine Seo  
Don Shaw  
Anne Singer  
Elizabeth Slayton  
Leigh Smith  
Jesse Stoner  
Jane Strong  
Mary Ann Taylor  
Jean TePaske  
Sarah Tremaine  
Upstream Foundation  
Ann Viviano  
Susan Von Reichenbach  
Neshama Waller  
Jay Walsh  
Edwin & Maxine War  
Michael Ware  
Diane Weinstein  
Barada Weisbrot  
Michele Weissman  
Laura Wells  
Michelle Williams  
Malcolm Winkley  
Michael Zanta  
Sara Zwart

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