



# guesthouse

NEWSLETTER

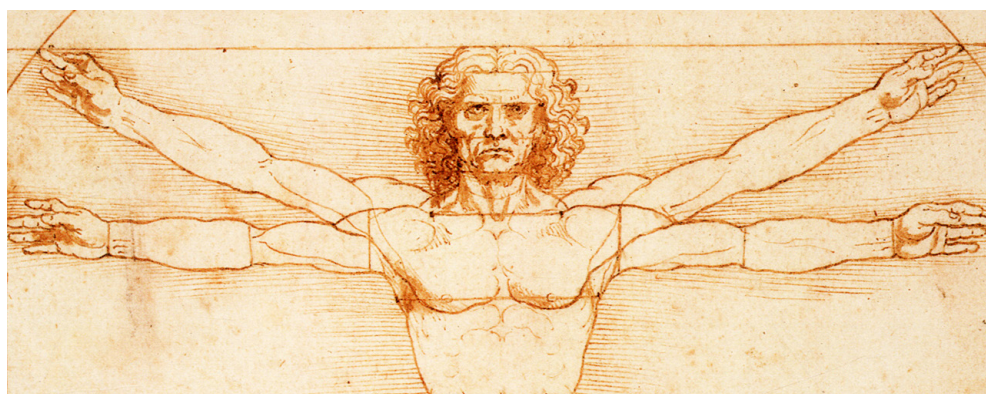
Summer 2016



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## 5 Questions About Being Human



This September 9 through 11, Diamond Approach® teachers *Jeanine Mamary* and *Bob Ball* will offer **On Being Human: Exploring the Essence of Our Humanity**, a retreat to benefit Guest House. Regular room and board rates will apply, but tuition is on a donation basis. We asked the teachers to answer five questions about our humanity. Here's what they said.

**REGISTER ONLINE:**  
[guesthousecenter.org/human](http://guesthousecenter.org/human)

**Q: HOW CAN BEING MORE FULLY HUMAN—OR UNDERSTANDING WHAT THAT MEANS—HELP US IN OUR DAILY LIVES?**

**A:** Becoming more fully human, more fully our nature, means learning to live more fully according to the truth of what we are—all of what we are, including our deepest truth and nature. The life of a true and mature human being is naturally expressed in one's actions and interactions.

**Q: MOST PEOPLE DON'T SEE HUMAN VULNERABILITY AS A BLESSING OR OPPORTUNITY. IN FACT, IT'S USUALLY THE OPPOSITE, A LIABILITY. WHY IS OUR VULNERABILITY A BLESSING?**

**A:** What we call "vulnerability" is actually one way the true nature of a human being presents itself. We usually don't see our various vulnerabilities in that light, and instead tend to protect ourselves from allowing those feelings and experiences to reveal themselves to us more completely. If we can manage to stay open and immediate to the experience of vulnerability itself, we may begin to see how vulnerability can gently transform into an exquisite kind of permeability, and that is the very essence of our humanity. What unfolds from there is actually limitless...

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## GIVING CORNER

### Spring Zing Fundraiser

**ALMOST THERE!** Our Spring Zing campaign is in full bloom! At printing, donors have come through with **\$14,770** (about half of that from our Board of Directors) and another \$1,000 pledged. Thank you to all who contributed. We've got **just \$14,230 to go before the end of June**, our original target date. We're so close! Will you help take us over the top?

Your dollars are already hard at work. Just take a peek into the breakout annex adjacent to the White Barn to see the immediate results of your generosity. New carpet, paint, curtains and art make the space warm and welcoming. Snazzy too! Your vital contributions have also enabled us to completely refurbish rooms 107 and 108. It costs us approximately \$3,500 to re-carpet, repaint and otherwise freshen up a single room. Each year we fix up a few, replacing old wall-to-wall with carpet tiles, a more practical and economical solution that allows us to replace only those parts of the carpets that have been stained beyond remedy.

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# New Partners & Services!

## Essential Contemplations

Understanding our humanness involves understanding our vulnerability. Here are musings from various thinkers and spiritual teachers on vulnerability.

*Vulnerability is the only bridge that builds connection.*

– Brené Brown

.....

*Our vulnerability gives us the possibility of experiencing, and being aware of, being in contact with all levels of reality...We're permeable to not only physical, emotional, and mental stimuli, but to essential and spiritual stimuli as well. So, not only are we vulnerable in the sense that our feelings, our preferences, even our identity can be influenced, but we are also vulnerable to being aware, conscious, and permeable to our true identity, and to the nature of all existence."*

– A.H. Almaas

.....

*To love at all is to be vulnerable.*

– C.S. Lewis

.....

*Vulnerability is the only authentic state. Being vulnerable means being open, for wounding, but also for pleasure. Being open to the wounds of life means also being open to the bounty and beauty.*

– Stephen Russell

We have new partnerships with local service providers who can either welcome members of your group to their places of business, or come to Guest House to conduct individual or group sessions in their specialties. Here are the latest offerings!



*The Sound Retreat*

**SOUND THERAPIES** Private and group sound meditation sessions using ancient gongs, crystal bowls, drums, chimes and bells to envelop you in a healing, soothing sound experience and help transport you to a state of timelessness and deep relaxation. Also available: reflexology, breath work and Shamanic energy healing. [thesoundretreat.com](http://thesoundretreat.com) — **860.322.4492**



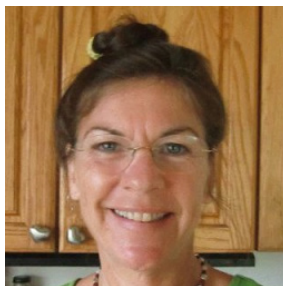
*Ivey Gianetti*

**MASSAGE FOR MIND AND BODY** Swedish massage, deep-tissue massage, sports massage, Reiki (Level II) and Reiki Ryoho by licensed massage therapist (LMT) Ivey Gianetti. Sessions are tailored to clients' needs, whether deep relaxation, relief from pain and discomfort, regaining mind-body balance, etc. [iveymassage.com](http://iveymassage.com) — **860.227.6885**

**TAI CHI FOR BETTER CHI** This ancient Chinese practice of Tai Chi, conducted by Suzanne Hanley (teacher since 1996), consists of soft, gentle movements that can be done by anyone at any age and at any level of fitness and ability. Tai Chi, which means "supreme ultimate," can be helpful in restoring mind-body balance. Suzanne offers both private and group lessons by appointment. Get in touch via email: [Suzannehanley001@gmail.com](mailto:Suzannehanley001@gmail.com) — **203.444.2856**



*Suzanne Hanley*



*Aile Hepburn*

**RELAX AND FOCUS** Licensed Massage Therapist Aile Hepburn offers massage therapy, energy balancing and individual or group "playshops" (conducted with parents and their children under 12) in meditation, focusing and relaxation techniques. Aile's had great success with helping adults and children reduce anxiety and stress, and increasing feelings of calm and wellbeing. <http://theseinside.me> — **860.694.9934**

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# 5 Questions About Being Human

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**Q: BUT VULNERABILITY ALSO TRIGGERS THE PRIMITIVE FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT INSTINCT. BY ACCEPTING VULNERABILITY, AREN'T WE GOING AGAINST A PRIMAL INSTINCT OF OUR SOUL?**

**A:** A human being is many things, or let's say has many facets. Some of our potential is animal-like, more instinctual and primitive. But this is not all of what we are, and these elements can be integrated into the wholeness of our being such that they serve us when needed, but don't become obstacles to our unfoldment.

**Q: MANY SPIRITUAL SCHOOLS TELL US TO ACCEPT OUR LIMITATIONS. BY UNDERSTANDING OUR LIMITATIONS, IS THERE NOT A WAY TO OVERCOME OR TRANSCEND THEM?**

**A:** As human beings, each of us has many kinds of limitations. First, accepting one's limitations is certainly important for understanding and coming to terms with them. Whether we overcome, transcend or resolve them in some way depends on the kind of limitations. In any case, our limitations need to be considered so we can learn how to be and live in a way that is in harmony with the totality of what we are.

**Q: WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY FROM THE RETREAT?**

**A:** Well, one thing about human beings is that each one of us is uniquely different! That being said, we hope those attending will come away from this weekend with a fuller understanding and appreciation of our true nature and human potential—something that can enrich our personal lives in many kinds of ways.

## NEWS

### New Partners & Services!

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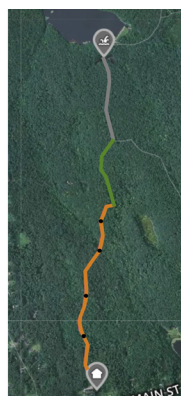
Additionally, Guest House staff has several new offerings for our guest groups available at a nominal fee. If you're interested in any of the following, send an email to [charlie@guesthousecenter.org](mailto:charlie@guesthousecenter.org) or talk to a front desk representative.

**GUIDED NATURE WALKS** Follow Guest House staff from our property, a Certified Wildlife Habitat, into 16,000 acres of State forest. We'll hike along blazed paths, equestrian trails and a forgotten paved roadway to the scenic Pataconk Reservoir. Boxed/picnic lunches or snacks can be arranged.

**BONFIRES** Gather around our firepit at the edge of our clover field. We'll continuously monitor the flames while you tell stories, engage in a little Robert Bly-style bonding, bay at the moon or just shoot the breeze over a glass of wine (BYOB, of course).

**BRUSH UP ON LOCAL COLONIAL HISTORY** John B. Parmelee built the original classic he called home in 1778. This residence forms the core of Guest House, which has functioned, over the years, as a working farm, a country inn and the retreat and conference center it is today. Our staff will gladly share history of Guest House and its local environs with your group, tailoring the discussion to your areas of interest.

**CHESTER MUSEUM AT THE MILL** Open limited weekends and by appointment, this 1860s mill overlooking a waterfall contains award-winning permanent and seasonal exhibits about our picturesque and quite historic town of Chester, CT.



Hike with us!

## Spring Zing

(Continued from page 1)

With over 3,200 visitors a year, our facility is really taking a beating these days. Believe us, we are happy for all the traffic! But our 48 bedrooms, four large meeting rooms and innumerable nooks, crannies and alcoves require continuous maintenance. Many of our wing chairs are getting threadbare and need to be reupholstered—at \$350 a pop! Remember we're always on the lookout for furniture donations that blend with our period décor. If you know of some gently used chairs, area rugs, lamps, artwork or other furnishings that might be appropriate and available, please contact the co-chairs of our hard-working Buildings & Grounds committee ([jorge@jsarango.com](mailto:jorge@jsarango.com) and [shaw\\_donald@hotmail.com](mailto:shaw_donald@hotmail.com)).

Thank you for helping us care for Guest House. We want to keep it beautiful and inviting for all our intrepid guest explorers and seekers. So many of them have told us that the comfortable, nurturing environment created by our sensitive staff and the warm look and feel of our lovely physical space provide invaluable support for their inquiry and unfoldment. We hope you feel the same and want to **help us reach our \$30,000 goal!**



Historic Parmelee House

# THE POSSE FOUNDATION, INC.

[possefoundation.org](http://possefoundation.org)

Guest House recently hosted the Posse Foundation, which selects students who exhibit extraordinary academic and leadership potential, but who may be overlooked by the traditional college admissions process. They're placed in supportive, diverse teams of 10 students ("Posses"), and each posse is then sent to one of 55 partner colleges and universities with four-year, full tuition leadership scholarships. We spoke with **Ileana Casellas-Katz**, Director of the Veterans Program, about the **PossePlus Retreat** held earlier this year at Guest House.

## Q: WHAT IS THE VETERANS PROGRAM OF THE POSSE FOUNDATION?

**A:** It's a unique initiative that applies the Posse model to post-9/11 veterans of the US Armed Forces, a population severely underrepresented at our nation's top colleges. Prior to matriculating them in their respective colleges, Veterans Posses go through an intensive one-month, pre-collegiate training program and receive on-campus mentorship and support. It helps veterans have success in college and, ultimately, in the workforce. My role is to manage recruitment, selection, training and on-campus support of our Posse Veterans Scholars at our three partner institutions of higher learning: Vassar College, Wesleyan University and Dartmouth College.



*Posse Scholars in White Barn*



*PossePlus Retreat, February 2016*

## Q: WHAT DID YOU COME TO GUEST HOUSE TO DO?

**A:** The first Scholars from Vanderbilt University felt it was important to do something that would create a positive impact for the campus community. Working with our staff, they created the **PossePlus Retreat**, a weekend of interactive and challenging workshops designed to tackle important national and campus issues such as race, meritocracy, class, gender, power and social responsibility, to name a few. This retreat, "Sticks & Stones: Language and Speech in a Diverse Society," brought together Posse Scholars and Wesleyan students, faculty and staff to talk about this topic at the national, personal and political levels.

## Q: CAN YOU SHARE STORIES OF POSSE SCHOLARS YOU TRACKED THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL WHO WENT ON TO LEADERSHIP ROLES?

**A: Brian Barkman Jr.** is a post-9/11 veteran who joined the Army National Guard in high school. He was deployed to Bosnia and Iraq, then to Afghanistan as a civilian military contractor. He and a fellow student launched Veteran Art Foundation, which offers art therapy sessions and organizes exhibits where veterans show and sell their work, thus helping veterans cope with and recover from trauma they faced during war. Another art-minded Veteran Posse Scholar, **Malcolm Phillips**, enrolled at Wesleyan just last fall and is already blossoming into various leadership roles. He is founder of the Wesleyan Comic and Graphics Club. He is contributor to the campus newspaper, the Wesleyan Argus, where he examines social issues. And he participated in a Connecticut Campus Compact, which brings together students involved in social work across the state.

## Q: HOW WAS YOUR GUEST HOUSE EXPERIENCE?

**A:** A surprise blizzard hit Connecticut the day we arrived at Guest House. All the staff were pitching in to ensure the driveway and walkways were clear. Despite the chilly weather outside, we were greeted with warm smiles (and cookies) by everyone on staff. Melissa Hall Baker, who helped coordinate our stay, was fantastic to work with and Marianne Hile took great, thoughtful care of us throughout the weekend.

**VETERANS PROGRAM:**  
[possefoundation.org/veterans](http://possefoundation.org/veterans)



*Malcom Phillips (top right)  
& Brian Barkman Jr.  
(just below, to right)*

This newsletter is published by:

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Retreat & Conference Center**

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860.322.5770

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