

Guest House Newsletter, Spring 2012

Guest House's New Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Logo

In a June 2011 strategic planning retreat, the Ten Directions board of directors reached consensus about its long-term objectives for Guest House. In the months that followed, we finalized mission and vision statements, and in March we approved a new logo.

A mission statement explains the reason that an organization exists. Our new mission statement:

We create opportunities for transformational work and provide a nurturing environment for those seeking to develop human potential and enrich the world.

A vision statement explains what we want to look like in five years, toward accomplishment of our mission. Our new vision statement:

Guest House is a sustainable, nurturing, highly regarded retreat environment that creates programs and hosts individuals, teachers and organizations focused on enriching the world. We foster a depth and range of experiences that are uniquely intimate, immediate and sensitive. Guest House supports the potential for transformation in the realms of social awareness and action, spirituality, psychology, ecology, health and wellness, education, leadership, the arts and related fields.

Once we had a mission and vision, we knew what we wanted to capture in the logo. Laura Wells chaired a logo committee that included Jorge Arango, Don Shaw, Steve Kennedy, and Laurie Leonard. We were extremely fortunate to work with professional designer Chris Gonzalez, who donated his services pro bono. Chris is the Founder and President of zgroupinc. He has

revitalized brands for such organizations as Lenox Hill Hospital, Mead Paper, Western Union, The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, AT&T, Citibank, and The Children's Health Fund.



We are tremendously grateful to Chris, as he worked patiently with us to come up with a design that reflected our mission. In the new logo you see above, the lotus connotes opening and transformation. It grows from the stem of the "h" in Guest House, implying that we create the environment in which this transformation is possible. The colors, font and all-lowercase letters reflect a quiet, comforting environment that is devoid of ego, embodying humility. The two words have an almost imperceptible space between them, resulting in a steady, calm feeling of continuum and uninterrupted ground.



Temporary posts were used to prop up the weight of the White Barn before the steel beams (the long horizontal gray I-beams in the photo) were installed. Photo by Laura Way

Facilities Changes at Guest House

Guest House has a whole new look. Thanks to several furniture donations, the Buildings & Grounds committee has been able to revamp our public areas and almost complete the refurbishing of Parmalee House. Many of the “period” couches, chairs, tables, etc. that formerly decorated those public spaces were moved into the 18th-century Parmalee House to ensure its décor was in keeping with the structure’s historic feel. More comfortable donated furnishings, most with an updated look, replaced these in the main lobby and piano room. The donations also meant we were able to move other pieces from the Pearl Room (317) into the long hall on the second floor, which has been underfurnished and underutilized for years. Now it boasts three separate seating areas for folks to hang out in, do inquiry and exercises in, and otherwise enjoy.

Thanks to Jane Bronson and David Schulz for their donations of various pieces for Parmalee. Enormous gratitude is also due Hilary Peck, a client of designer Donald Shaw’s, who was redecorating her East Hampton house and donated a truckload of sofas, tables, lamps, armchairs and other items that now grace the public areas and Parmalee. And thanks to Don for seizing a rare possibility to benefit Guest House in the first place. We’d like to also extend our gratitude to Stefano Baldasseroni and Steve Jones, who drove out with B&G members to Easthampton, loaded the truck, then



The new view from the second floor landing

accompanied it across the Sound to New London, then to Guest House, where it was all unloaded. Last, but not least, thanks to the facilities team for all the sweat equity they poured into the renovation of Parmalee and the repainting of the main lobby and hall to the piano room. Because of all these people, we’re looking like a first-class, five-star operation!

In order to preserve this lovely atmosphere, we invite all our guests to honor the hard work involved in creating it. Please take extra care when sitting on these new furnishings with beverages and food that can stain upholstery. And please do not move the furnishings, as doing so can damage floors and nick walls. Thanks so much for your cooperation.

New Board Members

In January the Guest House board of directors elected three new board members: Nancy Closs, Tom Gibbons, and Mal Winkley. Nancy is an EM student (originally EM3); she is the Managing Director of Finance Shared Services for the global firm BlackRock. Tom is also an EM student (originally EM2); he is legal counsel for an insurance and financial services group in Bermuda and has both a law degree and an MSW. Mal is the first person elected to the Guest House board from outside the Ridhwan community. He lives in Chester and is the founder and president of Brian House and AVP Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides both residential and vocational supports to developmentally challenged adults.

In other board news, Don Shaw has agreed to serve as co-chair of the Building and Grounds Committee. Jorge Arango has been named chair of the new Marketing Committee, and will continue on the B&G Committee as co-chair. And congratulations are due Jane Bronson, who was ordained as a Ridhwan teacher in September. Jane is the first ordained teacher to serve on our Finance and Building and Grounds committees.

Guest House Financial Update

In 2011 our revenue increased by 12%, mostly because of an increase in guest groups (groups unrelated to the Ridhwan School) renting Guest House. We continue to operate close to breakeven, using the additional revenue to improve food service, increase programming, better maintain and improve the functioning of the facility, and prepare for additional growth. Excluding the major holidays, all of the remaining weekends in 2012 are at least half full, if not fully booked.

The merger of the two Emerald Mountain groups that took place last December will result in a decrease in the total number of EM retreats at GH each year. In addition, some EM students left to join the Diamond Heart Retreats national group. The Ridhwan School merged the two EM groups because the teachers' busy schedules limited their availability to teach two separate groups. However, because so many other groups are using Guest House, we have been able to replace the lost revenue from EM groups by booking other groups into the newly open weekends.

Although sales are strong, Guest House relies on contributions for almost twenty percent of its revenue, in order to fully cover operating and program expenses. We are thrilled to announce that we have received a \$50,000 matching grant that will help us reach our contributions goal in 2012. Individual members of the Guest House board of directors have contributed \$25,000; now we need to raise an additional \$25,000. Please make a tax-deductible contribution to help us meet this match by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/guesthousedonation>.

This summer we will be refinancing our mortgage. You can help Guest House and yourself by making a loan to Guest House. You will earn 3% interest a year on a 5-year loan, and Guest House saves some money by borrowing from our friends instead of the bank. The loans (minimum \$10,000) are secured by a second

mortgage on our building. If you are interested in learning more please contact Cory Greenberg (cory285@gmail.com or 413-549-5594).

Teacher Sabbaticals

We are pleased to announce that we have received funding to begin offering sabbaticals for Ridhwan teachers in 2012. The teacher sabbatical program was conceived by Alia Johnson when Guest House was purchased in April 2008. She envisioned a location where teachers could stop in between trips to Europe, Colorado, Hawaii, or California to rest, to meet other teachers, or just relax and renew. She also imagined a place where Ridhwan teachers could explore the edges of their thinking, develop new programs to bring the Diamond Approach into the world, and converse with other traditions of the Work.

Sabbaticals include a private room in Parmalee, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Meals are provided for free when Guest House is serving other groups, though a small kitchen is available in Parmalee for guests to use. Additionally, teachers will receive compensation for travel expenses, as well as a stipend of up to \$300 per day, if needed. Sabbaticals can be for up to one week. In the first year, sabbaticals will be awarded to Ridhwan teachers on a first come, first served basis as funding allows. We are awarding sabbaticals for four weeks in 2012: April 8-15, June 3-10, September 2-9 and December 9-16.



Removing the bar in the tavern had been a long-term goal for many years.

Space Still Available in Upcoming Programs

Body of Being, with A. H. Almaas (Hameed Ali) May 2-4

Please note that overnight accommodations are sold out, but a few commuter spots remain.

Tango as a Door to Presence, With Jeanne Hay and Gawain Bantle, September 20-23

We are offering an early registration discount until April 20. Space is limited for this program, so please register soon.

Living Freedom: An Exploration of Personal and Collective Transformation, facilitated by Adam Lobel and Adam Fuller, November 15-18
Register by June 1 for reduced rate. Space is limited for this program, so please register soon.



Our apple tree in bloom, next to the corn crib. Photo by Laura Way

2013 Programs in the Works

The Program Committee is hard at work planning a slate of exciting programs for 2013. We are currently working with well-known teachers such as Bernie Glassman, Gayan Macher, and Russ Hudson on programs that will bring the orientation of the Diamond Approach into dialogue with other modes of knowing. We are also planning a retreat with well-known poet Marie Howe from Sarah Lawrence, who will be working with Ridhwan teacher and writer Kristina Grondahl (former assistant for EM 1), which will bring inquiry and poetry writing together.

We will also be bringing Diane Poole Heller back for another installment of her wonderful program "Trauma, Attachment, and Embracing Essence." In case you haven't heard about it, here's what two EM attendees at her February program had to say about it:

"The best workshop related to personal development I've ever attended. Supported my Diamond Approach work in a significant way."

"This was a wonderful program and serves as a welcome addition to years of work in Diamond Heart for me. It may even be called life-changing."

In addition, we are excited to be able to offer our first video-retreat with Hameed. As a benefit to Guest House and the new building in Berkeley, Hameed has offered us the use of a retreat he is teaching in California on the heart. The retreat will be offered only for members of ongoing Diamond Approach groups, and will be supported by assistant teachers.