



# guesthouse

## REBIRTH & REJUVENATION NEWSLETTER 2023



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## A New Landscape

*And a new way to say “Welcome!”*

If you haven't been here in a while, you may be surprised—perhaps even shocked—to find the stand of majestic pine trees that stood to the right of the entry portico is gone. We hated to see them go.

will create a unified and pleasing visual impact upon arrival, but also transform that space, activating it as a place to sit and relax, inquire, converse with a friend, rather than a patch of ground you pass to and from your car, the woods or the labyrinth.



*Left: The pine trees, ca. 1983, questionably planted as privacy bushes.  
Right: Why you don't use pine trees as privacy bushes, ca. 2023.*

But the truth is their majesty was tipping into the despotic. Tree roots crept under Guest House's foundation and threatened to buckle up under it. Some penetrated underground pipe and conduit systems, causing difficulties with evacuating water and waste. And they had grown to such a height that we feared a strong wind or snowstorm might topple them onto the building and cause major damage.

Never fear...we have a plan! The buildings and grounds committee has been in consultation these past months, mulling over beautification ideas that

We haven't finalized a design, but we know it will include some flowering trees and native undergrowth, as well as benches and a rock feature or two. And it's being conceived to include the land to the left of the portico too, so that our façade will all be of a piece, all of it welcoming visitors in a new verdant embrace.

And yes, we'll be raising funds for this, though we are not yet ready to launch that campaign.

*(Continued on page 6)*

### GIVING CORNER

## Join the Guest House Legacy Circle

*Create a Legacy for the Future of Guest House*

Guest House is 15 years old this year! You and all who have and will come here are the legacy of Guest House. Some of you have attended one retreat, some many retreats. Some have donated once or often over the last 15 years, or never at all. But all of you who are reading this know Guest House and the special nurturing and holding space it creates to support your work. All of the GH Family – you our guests, the staff, the leadership, and board – hold the vision that Guest House will continue to support transformational work for many years to come. You can help to realize that vision – make a legacy gift to Guest House.

**DONATE TODAY**  
[guesthousecenter.org/give](http://guesthousecenter.org/give)

Living and working in the pandemic for three years was an enormous challenge for Guest House. Thanks to your extraordinary support we made it through and are stronger than ever.

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Essential Contemplations

After three years of resilience, we are now feeling a sense of rebirth and rejuvenation. Here's what some great thinkers have said on these subjects.

.....

*"Turn your face to the sun and the shadows will fall behind you."*

—Maori proverb

.....

*"Real health is the will to overcome every form of adversity and use even the worst of circumstances as a springboard for new growth and development."*

—Daisaku Ikeda

.....

*"Inner transformation is primarily a death and rebirth, the death of an old identity and the birth of a new one, on a deeper level of reality...it is the discovery of the Personal Essence which is actually felt by many students as the birth of who they are."*

—A.H. Almaas

.....

*"In Buddhism, rebirth is part of the continuous process of change. In fact, we are not only reborn at the time of death, we are born and reborn at every moment."*

—Peter Della Santina

## GH News

### THE FOLKS WHO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN

The last 3+ years have seen some new faces join the team. We've got the group photo from our last staff holiday party and a few headshots of everyone else below. Thank you to you all for making this a wonderful place to be and to work!

*(Continued on page 5)*



1st row: Theresa, Ruth; 2nd row: Saralyn, Sal; 3rd row: Rich, Michelle, Marianne; 4th row: Mike, Keith, Travis; 5th row: Michaela, Charlie, Deb, Mark; 6th row: Alan, Rabin, Scott, Tony.



Ben

Brian

Carol

Liam

Matthew

Sonia

# Earth Day at GH, 2023

May Sarton once said, *Gardening is like poetry in that it is gratuitous, and it cannot be done on will alone. What will can do is make time in which to [garden]... what it can do is create the space necessary for achievement, little by little.*

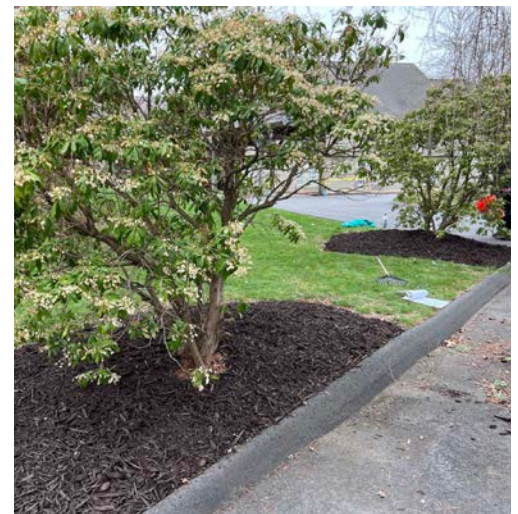
**W**hen it comes to our annual Earth Day spring cleanup at Guest House, it is true that Will alone won't do it. Some kind of love is needed, love of Guest House, love of being of service, love of working in concert with others, love of getting one's hands dirty and seeing what can happen, little by little.

Love and Will achieved much this spring as 18 volunteers gathered on Earth Day to pull weeds, deadhead plants, divide and transplant countless daylilies, some of which found new homes in front of a recently uncovered stone wall. Volunteers also spread 125 bags of mulch, transplanted a tree, and cut back shrubs. As they do every year, the volunteers replenished the herb garden outside the dining room, so Alan and the other chefs can use these herbs in preparing meals for guests. And the soil in the herb bed was enriched with compost from kitchen scraps so past meals can nurture future meals.

Thanks to everyone who participated. Volunteers gave over 100 hours of steadfast and mindful work, and donors gifted a total of \$2,210 to support the cleanup and Guest House. In addition to the benefits to Guest House, what might have been tiresome chores – cutting back vines, carefully laying mulch around delicate plants – became occasions for practice. As Dogen said, *"Use your own hands, your own eyes, and your own sincerity. Working with your sleeves rolled up is the activity of a way-seeking mind."*



*1st row: Mike Bower; 2nd row: Hadley Perry, Barbara Rosen, Anneliese Zausner-Mannes, David Walker, Elisa Giannantonio; 3rd row: Andrew McMartin, Emily Neustadt, Sarah Tremaine, Noell Goldberg, Dorothy Cochrane, Nancy Joly, Sandy Rutkauskas, Bernie McGale. Off camera: Steven Jacob, Cary Walker, and all our generous donors!*



*Mulching and cleaning!*

# Join the Guest House Legacy Circle

*(Continued from page 1)*

Having survived the last three years, it is clear what is required to ensure that Guest House will thrive, not just for the next three years, but for a long time to come. We must strengthen the long-term financial foundation of GH to meet inevitable crises and challenges, to continue to grow and adapt to the ever-changing world and always keep our doors open.

The Guest House Legacy Circle was started five years ago to address this longer-term need, to encourage those of us who love Guest House to provide now for her future when we are gone. This is done by including Guest House in your estate plans now and creating your legacy for GH. Most of our board members, past and current, and others have joined The Circle. We understand that many of you love Guest House but cannot afford to reduce your current income or assets now to make a larger or perhaps any gift to Guest House. However, making the plan now to leave a gift – small or large – to Guest House after you have passed is a way to express your appreciation now for the future and will help ensure that many will be able to come here for a long time.

Including Guest House in your estate plans is easy. There are three simple ways to make a legacy gift from your estate now to be distributed when you pass away:

## **1) NAME GH AS A BENEFICIARY IN YOUR WILL.**

Add GH as a beneficiary in a new will or through an amendment to your existing will. You can list the gift to GH as a percent of the remaining assets after other designated donations, or as a fixed amount.

## **2) NAME GH IN YOUR IRA OR OTHER RETIREMENT PLANS.**

Contact the administrator of your retirement plan and add GH as a percent of the IRA assets, or as a fixed amount. There is a tax advantage of designating a gift from your IRA or other retirement plans. A gift to GH at your passing, from your IRA, will also qualify for a deduction to inheritance and income taxes. This way your heirs may inherit more.

## **3) NAME GH IN YOUR SAVINGS ACCOUNT OR LIFE INSURANCE PLAN.**

Contact your bank or other institution that holds your savings account and add GH as a beneficiary.

There are other more complex ways to include GH in your estate planning. We recommend you consult your attorney or accountant for other options. Thank you! This 15th anniversary year is the time to celebrate our history and fund the future of Guest House!

Please contact [friends@guesthousecenter.org](mailto:friends@guesthousecenter.org) for further information or to let us know if you have already named Guest House in your estate plans. Thank you!



## **Beneficiary Information**

Ten Directions, Inc.  
dba Guest House

318 West Main Street  
Chester, CT 06412

Tax ID: 20-3692127

# GH News

*(Continued from page 2)*

## ALL SPRUCED UP

Scores of physical improvements to Guest House have happened since the Covid shut-down in 2020. With the future uncertain, improvements and updates were slow at first, with spending highly restricted. During the incremental return and rejuvenation, from 2021 to today, there were many more. Here's a sampling of only the more visible ones. If you're curious about deeper infrastructure, talk to Facilities Director Rich Kerrigan!

- Removed all wallpaper, painted, and updated furnishings throughout the third floor
- Painted the lines in the recently replaced parking lot
- Installed acrylic guards at the front desk and buffet
- Installed stone walkway from the entry portico to the East Wing
- Dismantled, rewired, replumbed, reframed, refloored, replaced wallboard, updated electricity to the kitchen's dish room
- Removed/replaced damaged ceiling panels, rewired, improved lighting, and repainted sun porch
- Reshingled the main entry portico and Parmelee House roofs
- Re-fenced, expanded, and added motion-activated solar lighting in trash and recycling collection area
- Uncovered old stone wall just past the tennis court along south end of our forest; rebuilding in progress! Go see!

## CURB APPEAL

If you build it, they will come, goes the old saying. However, a qualification: If the sign beckoning you in looks weathered and unattractive, it might remind them of the Bates Motel and they'll drive on by. That was the situation with our old sign, which had been painted one (if not several) too many times and had begun to dimple and crack with moisture. We've been wanting to replace her for a very long time, but have been pinching pennies.

Finally, however, this winter we retired and replaced her with a sign that will have more staying power. The new version has a bright, clean "come on in" vibe, with fresh, gleaming white posts and a graceful oval shape sporting our name, lotus logo and address. It's made of more resilient, low-maintenance materials, so it won't age, bubble and crack like the old one did, or require regular repainting. You can't miss her now, as you drive east or west on Main Street. And that's the point.



## DECK CHECK

Guest House's giant maple tree, one of her most treasured features, watches over our beloved three-tiered deck, which has just been beautifully refinished! A professional crew was brought in to give it a thorough powerwashing, sanding, and re-staining it so we can all enjoy its sleek new look for years to come.



*(Continued on page 6)*

## A New Landscape

*(Continued from page 1)*

We recently completed Phase One. That entailed removing the trees, pulling out the stumps, sinking an electric box into the ground (instead of hiding it behind a rock), re-grading the land for better drainage and planting new grass seed.

Buildings and grounds envisions three more phases, which will evolve as we finish getting estimates on the various alternative approaches and materials. As it stands at publication, Phase Two will involve building a long narrow deck along the façade under the French doors of first-floor guestrooms in the north wing, with steps leading down to a greenspace (under which run the various pipes and conduits we want undisturbed by tree and plant roots).

Then comes Phase Three— basically the implementation of rock features (we're entertaining two ideas or the possibility of combining them). Phase Four culminates the process with plantings. We're agreed on a mixture of flowering trees and bushes that will provide winter interest.

***Stay tuned! Rejuvenation is on the way...***



*Before the stump removal and regrading*



*After, almost grown-in.*

## NEWS

## GH News

*(Continued from page 5)*

### DUMB LUCK (AND GENEROSITY)

A big thank you to the members of Diamond Heart Retreat Group 5! They pooled some funds earlier this year and purchased 10 pairs of dumbbells, some foam rollers, and a kettle bell for our gym. Drop by the next time you are looking to feel the burn!



### BRILLIANT BARBEQUE

Chef Mark Spruill took first prize at a local Grill Master competition. He prepared BBQ Chicken, Jerk Chicken, Beef Brisket, Pulled Pork, Collard Greens, Yellow Rice with Peas, Potato Salad, Coleslaw and Baked Beans for the judges. Congratulations Chef Mark!



## Giving Is Easier than Ever!

**DONATE TODAY**  
[guesthousecenter.org/give](https://www.guesthousecenter.org/give)

**Become a Monthly Sustainer** Your donation will be automatically paid every month until you say otherwise. Go to our website's giving page, select your monthly contribution, and click "subscribe" to sign up. It's simple, and it gives Guest House a dependable base of support throughout the year.

**Join the Guest House Legacy Circle** For many of you who love Guest House but cannot afford to reduce your assets or current income now, planned giving offers a means to support Guest House in a significant way after your death by naming GH in your will or as a beneficiary of your IRA, savings account or life insurance. Please contact us at [friends@guesthousecenter.org](mailto:friends@guesthousecenter.org) to learn more.

# Land Acknowledgement

Last year, we posted an acknowledgement of the indigenous peoples that occupied the land Guest House rests on. If you are curious, please go visit it in the front lobby. Earlier this year we were moved by one of our first-time retreat groups, Samaya III, and their own acknowledgement, so much so that we wanted to share it here.

Guest House Retreat and Conference Center acknowledges the indigenous **WANGUNK PEOPLE**, “*The people at the bend in the river,*” and other Algonquian-speaking peoples who stewarded through generations the lands and waterways of what is now the state of Connecticut. We honor and respect the enduring relationships that exist between these peoples and nations and this land.

## ABOUT THE WANGUNK PEOPLE

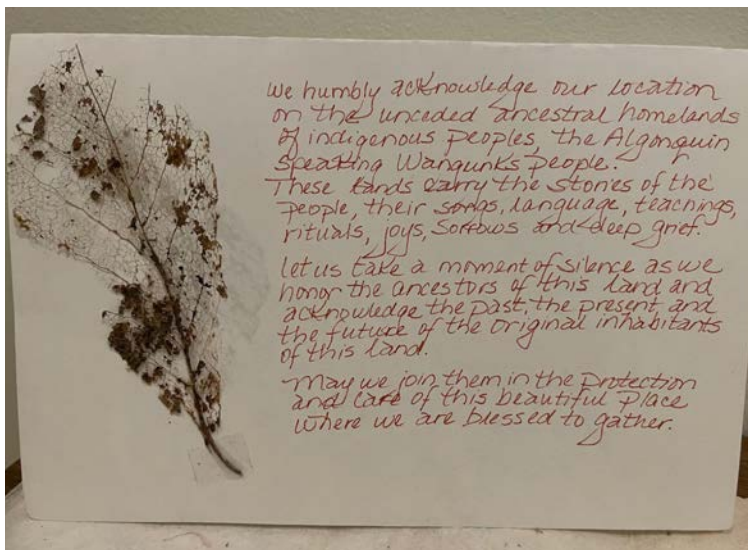
Name Variants: Wongunk, Wongum, Mattabesett, Sequins, Pyquag, River Indians, Middletown Indians

Tribal Associations: Podunk, Suckiag, Tunxis, Mohegan, Quinniac, New Hartford, and Brothertown

Villages: Cockaponset, Coginchaug, Cossonacock, Hockanum, Machamoodus, Mattabesec, Momacok, Naubuc, Pocowset, Pyquag, and Suckiog



*At Harbor Park in Middletown, Connecticut, a large stone sculpture of a stylized man's head serves as a tribute and remembrance of the Wangunk's history in the region.*



*Art created by Jillian Froebe, artist and faculty member at Samaya III: The Discipline of Authentic Movement Retreat, May 2023. Land acknowledgement made in recognition of the Wangunk native people and their descendants.*

# Friends of Guest House 2022 Honor Roll

## Thank you all!

Amy Ablove	Robert Fierman	Barbara Lesko	Richard Rowley
Towne Allen	Judith Flanders	Carl Loeb	Michael Rubenstein
Rosanne Annoni	Ilka Giges	Isabelle Lorans	Margaret Rubick
Jorge Arango	Abbie Goldberg	Vern Ludwig	Diane Sacks
Elizabeth & Ray Archambault	Jed Goldberg	Gregory Marchini	Leslie Sahler
Paula Backus	Noell Goldberg	Henry Marshall	Terry Saracino
Bob Ball	William Goldberg	Cynthia Martin	& Paul Strasburg
Jill Berman	Ben Goldman	Michelle McDonough	David Schulz
Matthew Brannagan	Eduardo Gomez	Nancy Meneely	Duncan Scribner
Peggy Braun	Paul & Rosemary Gordon	Melanie Michaels	Amalea Seelig
Terri Bristow	Anne Gottlieb	Deborah Miller	Josie. Sentner
Jane Bronson	Parvati Grais & Cory	Meg Miller	Beth Shapiro
Byron Brown	Greenberg	Harold Mindel	Anne Singer
Laurie Brown & Michael	Joy Gurrie	Monique Morimoto	David Slade
DiLorenzo	Sandra Hamilton-Golub	Bonalynd Mosteller	Elizabeth Slayton
Tabor Butler	Laura Hansen	Neil Moylan	Mary Stepanian
Marlene Caffi	Nurit Harari	Thomas Muraco	Henry Stindt
Carol Carbon	Robert Heald	Don N. Shaw	Sarah Tremaine
Betts Cassady	Grace Holland	Helen Newman	Olaf Unsoeld
Jeff Charno	Barbara Houston	Suzanne Noble	Aleta Vail
Lauraine Chestnut	Diane Ingram	Melissa Nuwaysir	Meg Vandergon
Janet Choi	Waltraud Ireland	& William Walls	Peter Vandermark
Leah Chyten	Goldie Isaacs	James O'Hern	Ann Viviano
Nancy Closs	Joey Jacob	Paul Ohanesian	Marcia Wakeland
Dorothy Cochrane	Karen Johnson	Kostas Oikonomou	David & Cary Walker
& Michael Bower	Nancy Joly	Wendy Osborn	Neshama Waller
Michael Cody	Steve Jones	Laurie Ososky	Jay Walsh
Jeff Collins	Peggy Joyce	Annie Owen	Avie Waters
Brooke Conley	Stephanie Kenen	Mercedes Pacheco	Barada Weisbrot
Diane Crawford	& Richard Stover	& Gregory Knight	Michele Weissman
Ken Crocker	Penelope Keyl	Cathy Palmisano	Jennifer Wheeler
Daphne Cruze-Zug	Tammy Kirby	Helga Paulsen	Allan Whiteman
Ralph Curcuru	Tracy Kirshenbaum	Hadley Perry	Aileen Wiglesworth
Jill Davey	Julia Knight	Jane Perry	Lisa Wolfe
John Davis	Susi Korda	Margie Phillips	Jane Wulf
Julia Dengel	Kima Kraimer	Bernadette Prue	Lilian Zwyns
Ann Diller	Michael Landgarten	Marlene Reisman	AmazonSmile Foundation
le Clanche du Rand	Dorothy Landry	Donna Ries	Robet Foundation
Sara Ellison	Anne Laney	Rashmi Ripley	Anonymous Donors (3)
Jerry & Mary Ann O'Halloran	Laurie Leonard	Barbara Rosen	

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