As Network for Peace through Dialogue Ends Its Operations, We Pass Along Some Useful Dialogue Practices

After 30 years we will conclude formal operations on December 31, 2016. We will celebrate our contribution to peace-building at an evening gathering on November 7, at Marymount School. This will be a free event; all are welcome to join us as we give thanks for all that has been.

We are very proud of all that we have accomplished in our mission to contribute to peace-building. Our work has supported, served and influenced grassroots people both locally and internationally. Hopefully what we have learned over these three decades will serve as an inspiration for future peace-builders. We are pleased that the records of Network for Peace are being catalogued at the Schlesinger Library of Harvard University and are already available to peacebuilders and researchers. They will stand as a legacy of our work.

In this, our final newsletter, we leave you with the Dialogue Practices which we have used in all of our programs in the recent years. We encourage you to use them and share them.

—Virginia Dorgan, RSHM and Kathleen Kanet, RSHM

**DIALOGUE PRACTICES**

**Listen for Understanding** with equal respect for each person present.

**Speak from your heart as well as your mind** and only when you feel sincerely moved to make an honest contribution from your own experience.

**Suspend judgment**, letting go of any need to be right or have a right answer; try to suspend certainty.

**Hold space for differences.** Embrace all points of view. Change the “but” to “and.”

** Remain open to all outcomes.**

**Slow Down.** Let there be spaces in the dialogue.
From the Director

As we reflect on these 30 years, we know that we have led the way for many of you, young and old from around the world, to grow in awareness and understanding of peoples and issues. We believe that we have contributed to peacebuilding, pled for justice, and are proud of our programs, conferences, forums, Living Room Dialogues, etc. We are particularly grateful for the 24 Board Members who have stood with us, the 41 Staff who grew with us and all of you who participated with us and supported the work. A great thanks goes to Peggy Ray who has, in addition to producing this Newsletter since 1996, offered her steady guidance at our weekly staff meeting during most of that time.

We will not be far away. We will continue to work with the many with whom we have collaborated. We may even continue to gather people in the 93rd Street living room that so many of you know.

Here is how to see the listing of our records at the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University. Go to www.Hollis.harvard.edu; in the white space type “Network for Peace through Dialogue” and currently three entries show up: 1) Records of Network for Peace through Dialogue, 1984-2015; 2) Dialogue Newsletters and 3) CIL/USA. We are gathering more documents at this time.

All of these materials are "on site" in Cambridge, MA, and not on-line. However you can see the list of files and also you will be able to see our website through their online link.

Pictured at right are Maisha Todd, and Fiona Murray, two wonderful staff members who have brightened our lives for the last four years while doing excellent work. They will remain dear to us along with the other staff members and interns who have graced our office over the years.

To quote Dag Hammarskjöld:  
For all that has been, thanks, for all that will be, yes.

— Virginia Dorgan, RSHM

Coming Up

Final Celebration for the Network  
Monday, November 7 – 6:30-9:00 pm  
Marymount School,  
1026 5th Avenue, NYC  
Free  
RSVP to reserve your space

Living Room Dialogues  
September 21,  
October 19, and  
November 16  
240 E. 93rd St. Apt 3H, NYC  
Please bring a snack to share.  
RSVP

Phone number for all reservations  
212-426-5818
Then and Now: In the first year of this newsletter, 20 years ago, a number of articles discussed the problem of the “sustainability” of life on earth. Today we at the Network are still confronted with this issue, more urgently than ever. Our final project as we conclude the formal work of this organization has been “Our Common Ground,” a focus on changing the way we regard our relationship with the earth, from a stance of domination to one of understanding ourselves as one part of the whole earth community. The following articles — one excerpted from a 1996 issue and one illustrating part of our recent work — reflect 20 years of concern with our relationships with one another and with the planet.

Sustainability & Sweet Add-a-Line
By Connie Newton

When the word “sustainability” came into common usage at the Earth Summit in Rio it roughly meant that the basic needs of human beings and the earth need to be assured in order to sustain life on the planet. As the word evolved, it has come to have ecological, economic, social, and ethical components.

Here are some of the definitions we generated in a 1996 Living Room Dialogue in Colorado.

Sustainability is .......
...recognizing our interconnection with other people and the earth (like the natural cycles of water flowing, evaporating, condensing into rain -- not like the North American Free Trade Agreement).
...living within your bioregion (i.e., can you eat its food? Use its water? Dispose of its wastes? Be self-sustaining?).
...appropriate housing/building materials and design (like adobe, strawbale, earth berm, solar, using recycled materials).
...technologies for meeting folk’s basic needs (using windmills, solar cookers, active & passive solar designs, hydroelectric power).
...converting military/space technology into technologies to meet everyday needs.
...using water and other resources at least twice before disposing of them (e.g., saving greywater like bath or shower and using it to water house plants or garden).
...affordable housing, jobs with living wages, access to healthy food, water, health care and education.
...changing our definition of progress, development, modernism, GNP, growth, consumerism as ways to measure ourselves and our society with indicators that include community health, security, and adequacy of basic human needs.

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Reflections on Our Common Ground
By Peggy Ray

Since 2014 we have had 12 living room dialogues focusing on our relationship with the earth. We began by asking people to tell a story about their personal relationship to the earth. The stories were lovely. Here’s one example:

“I was a dirt dauber like the bird that likes to nuzzle itself into the dirt. As a child I liked to have my hands in the dirt and constructed whole towns out of mud. My grandmother used to make everything from the fruits of the earth which fostered a strong conscious relationship with the land.

“Growing up in an extended family fostered the belief that we all rely on one another and on Earth. This belief and the belief in the importance of all God's creatures lead to my decision to become a Franciscan. One day recently I surprised myself by talking to a three-toed pigeon I saw on the street.”

In the next dialogue, we asked: What is your relationship to the earth in your daily life? After this evening, more people began to save kitchen scraps for composting and became even more aware of recycling. Some were already buying locally grown food and participating in community gardens. Here is a sample of the stories told:

“I grew up on a farm in the South and spent a lot of time outdoors with my brother. There are so many stars at night you never see in New York. We grew food for the family in a garden at the side of the house. I learned how dependent farming is on the weather. I do believe in re-cycling and I take a lot of pains to do it, for example slicing the plastic toothpaste tube to get everything out of it. I reduce the number of tubes I use that way and recycle the plastic. Earth can't accept all the trash we leave. I

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(Continued from page 3—Sustainability)

What would you add to help define sustainability?

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Connie Newton was a board member from 1993 to 2002. Today she is putting ideas about sustainability into practice. In a recent email, she told us:

“...20 years later, I'm living in Guatemala with an appreciably more sustainable lifestyle than when I lived in Denver, Colorado. I have no need for heating or air-conditioning because the climate of Panajachel on Lake Atitlan doesn't require more than sweaters in the morning and evening...except an occasional fire in the fireplace. The wood comes from trimming trees and shrubs on the property.

“Water comes during the rainy season (May thru October), filling the nearby river and recharging my well. Shower water is heated with solar panels. Drinking water gets purified in a giant 4 gallon clay jar (like a beverage dispenser) invented by a Guatemalan and called an "ecofilter". The inventor charges more for the filters to home owners and less to people who don't own their homes. He also donates them to schools.

“The bees haven't told me where they are hiding their honey, but they are doing a fine job of pollinating and multiplying things in the garden where I grow herbs, lettuce, tomatoes, arugula, artichoke, and asparagus. I recently flunked growing amaranth but I may try again. I'm not living off the grid by any means, but I have friends who are. We all find ways to shift 'sustainability' from a definition to a lifestyle.”

(Continued from page 3—Our Common Ground)

use cloth bags when shopping. There is a lot to see of nature in New York if you open your eyes to it, a lot of flowers. I like to walk down a block where people are very serious about growing things in their window boxes, fixing them up with the changing seasons. They also decorate their stoops.”

In the third dialogue, we began to examine what changes we will have to make in our lives if we are to live in a way more in tune with the earth.

To open the evening, we viewed a short cartoon available on our website entitled “Man.” In the cartoon, a creature resembling a human male is welcomed to the planet and soon begins to act as if it belongs only to him. He violates other creatures and uses his creative power to manufacture tons of stuff that soon becomes a garbage heap. In the end, however, he is destroyed by his own self-indulgence.

We then asked: What are a few material things you absolutely have to have? What are a few things you could do without? Some items people said they needed were: heat in cold weather, comfortable shoes, clean water, refrigeration, a kitchen stove, a word processor, “my computer and phone!!!”, access to a car, silence, relationships — “What I need most is friends!”

Some things they could do without or needed less of were: extra clothes and cosmetics, cars, meat, tropical fruits, extra CDs, entertainment TV.

Full reports of all the dialogues can be found on our website.
Network for Peace through Dialogue (formerly the Center of International Learning) was begun in 1985 by sociologists, theologians, and educators from Germany, the Philippines and the United States united by their world view and wanting to participate in transformative change. The Center was to provide ongoing learning, analysis and collaboration between people of the Northern and Southern hemispheres. There were two specific goals: to promote democratic processes and to work toward de-militarization. The following listing of the international workshops of the early years demonstrates the topics of investigation as well as the diverse locations of the work. In 2006 emphasis was redirected to the need for dialogue in this country.

- 1988 - U.S. Bases in the Home Land - Manila, Olongapo, and Angeles City, Philippines
- 1989 - Fascism & Traces in Modern Society - Berlin, Germany
- 1990 - Economic Conversion & Grassroots Participation - Rocky Flats, Colorado, USA
- 1994 - US branch initiated its Living Room Dialogue series on differing cultures and critical social issues and its Communities in Dialogue program and its newsletter
- 1996 - What Do People (We) Need? - Accra, Ghana
- 1997 - Models for a Life Phase after Employment and Family Work - Frankfurt, Germany
- 1998 - A Society for All Ages: Aging in Dignity in a Sustainable World - New York, NY
- 1999-2002 - US Branch then organized in the United States its first international program culminating with a conference
- 2002 - Neighborhood by Neighborhood: How can we build a sustainable world? New York, NY
- 2003 - USA branch began its youth program "Crossing Boundaries: Youth in Dialogue about the Rights of the Child" linking on-line youth groups internationally who engaged in its curriculum on the Rights of the Child
- 2003-04 - Security: How can we all have it? International Dialogue
- 2004 - Established its continually updated website and implemented web-based international dialogues
- 2005 - Began its on-going on-line dialogues on critical issues facing all of humanity
- 2006 - USA branch changed its name to Network for Peace through Dialogue, and believing that dialogue is a vital process of making and keeping peace re-wrote its mission statement to read: The Network for Peace through Dialogue creates opportunities for individuals and groups to engage in constructive conversations in an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect.
- Confronting Concerns I-Harlem youth identify concerns, hold workshops
- Developed and promulgated "Elements of High Quality Dialogue"
- Confronting Concerns II-Harlem youth continue interviews, hold workshops
- 2007 - Held its first Dialogue Conference that gathered more than 100 participants for an acclaimed day and a half meeting
- 2008 - Leadership Institute. Selected youth learned workshop facilitation skills and led workshops for youth and adults
- 2008 - Began a Dialogue Facilitators Networking Group to assist practitioners of dialogue and to promote the theory, practice and skills of dialogue.
- 2009 - Held a second national Dialogue Conference.
- 2011- Addressed the issue of “modern slavery” resulting from the trafficking of persons, particularly women. Produced a booklet on the subject that was used to generate dialogue in a number of different forums.
- 2014 - 2016 - Created a project called “Our Common Ground” in which we explored our relationship to earth and raised consciousness about it.
CELEBRATE

Join us for a party as we close the Network as a formal organization.
Marymount School, 1026 Fifth Avenue, NYC
Monday, Nov. 7, 2016  6:30 – 9 PM
No charge – it is a celebration of our accomplishments.
RSVP – 212-426-5818