

TROUBADOUR

The Newsletter of St. Francis House, New London, Connecticut



Christmastide 2011

Vol. 13 No. 2

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FOOD

by Paul Jakoboski, TSSF

Our food sources have radically changed in the past fifteen years. Dairy farms that used to populate the rural areas by the hundreds are now gone with a very few exceptions. Small and medium size farms have become overgrown through lack of use and, in numerous areas, such farms have been replaced with housing developments and retail outlets.

Our “supermarkets” now have aisles of frozen, prepared foods made by industrial food producers who are intent on profits. We can no longer trust the product labels. We have to insist the food industry show us the true contents and manufacturing practices of consumable items. Consumers are increasingly concerned and suspicious of the quality of food they are eating and feeding to their children.

Our health care needs and costs have increased dramatically during the same period. A relatively new development is the food recall. Products found to be contaminated and causing numerous cases of illness are removed from shelves and returned to the manufacturers. The Center for Disease Control estimated in 2010 that 48 million people became ill and 3,000 died from food borne illnesses each year. These statistics do not reflect the increases in diabetes, obesity, and many other poor nutrition related conditions that are at epidemic levels in our community. Just as these changes have rushed upon us without our seeing the effects, our dynamic food system is continuing to change.

Local, regionally produced products are rapidly growing in popularity. Organic is preferable to the liberal use of chemicals and pesticides. Small and medium sized farms are critical for regional food security. Local, small farms provide safe, quality products for consumption and need to become our primary source of food. Along with the food products these farms produce, they contribute in significant ways to the well-being of our communities by improving the local economy and providing jobs.

The opportunity for value added industry is waiting for young entrepreneurial spirits to create new products utilizing the locally produced food. This will create more jobs and contribute to making the community self-reliant. While we bemoan the practices and ethics of large transnational corporations, the best antidote is self-reliance. We need to support and inspire community members to become empowered with the “can-do” values of a vibrant local community, where making a “fast buck” is discouraged, and people invest for long-term community gain. We will teach and mentor those willing to work for higher values in a cooperative manner that underscores the sacred respect for creation. To respect creation is to commit to knowing what our money is supporting.

Whenever we spend, even a penny, we are investing in that product or service. By investing in a product or service we are accountable for the outcomes of that investment. If we buy products made by industrial polluting processors, we are supporting them. If we buy local farm products, we are supporting the health and well-being of our community. If we buy products made by indentured servants, slaves or laborers in abusive situations, we are accountable for injustice.

If we invest in Fair Trade products, or products that have verified manufacturing and labor practices then we are accountable for supporting those investments. We make choices every waking moment. These choices are critical to the quality of life we live and the quality of the community in which we each live.

Our choices are also the very substance of our relationship to God. Scripture tells us time and again that the reasons we do something are as or more important than the things we do. God knows what is in our hearts. If our hearts have become hardened to the “realities of this world”, we put slavery and profits before concern for people. We purchase without considering those that suffered to make the product or the consequences of investing in companies that profit from making God's beautiful creation a more miserable place. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

There are many individuals who could start small enterprises that would assist this community to become self-reliant. They need our encouragement, resources, and love to help them realize those values and opportunities. Join us in working toward a cooperative, self-sustaining, and just society.

Paul Jakoboski lives and works at St. Francis House. From 2001 to 2011 he was director of the Gemma Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, the primary food bank in New London County. He has served on the Advisory Board for FRESH New London, on the New London County Food Policy Council and is advisor to the Food Hub Development Task Force.



CLARIFICATION OF THOUGHT: FOCUS ON OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

by Ellen Adams

This fall we have been having a series on Trans/forming the Economy of New London County. Every other Friday night we gather for prayers and soup followed by a presentation and discussion to help us clarify our thoughts.

I led off the series by talking about God as Householder. The Greek word for economy is “oikonomia.” “Oikos” means household and “nomos” means law of management. We discussed the four components of a political economy – power, property, work and consumption and four descriptions of God as Householder – creator, protector, provider, and model. The group assembled was asked a series of questions designed to highlight the differences between the Bible’s interpretation of economy and the prevailing attitudes present in our society today.

Anne Scheibner gave us copies of Wendell Berry’s, “Seventeen Rules for a Sustainable Community” to read for the second session. We also discussed his additional propositions about global thinking and the sustainability of cities summarized in his book, Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community. These rules included supplying local needs from local sources first (and then exporting products to nearby cities), developing properly scaled value-adding industries and making the community able to invest in itself and being mindful of how pollution is usually overlooked as a cost of production. Other considerations included being aware of the economic value of neighborly acts and being aware of the interconnectedness of rural communities with community-minded people in nearby towns and cities. Embodying these principles will insure the sustainability of our common wealth and an economy that will always be more cooperative than competitive.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Our old friend and Friday night regular Grace Post-Panko needs transportation once every six weeks for her chemo treatments in Providence. If you can help even one day or one way, please call St. Francis House at (860) 437-8890. Thank you very much.



Joanne Sheehan of the War Resisters League led the third session on economic conversion. The federal government has invested billions of defense dollars in the local economy for more than a century. Most of this money has come through Electric Boat (founded in 1899 and now part of General Dynamics) and the Navy Base both located in Groton. Submarine production especially has provided a false sense of job security in the region. Joanne gave examples of how EB over the years has fostered dependence on company transportation systems thereby discouraging the need for regional public transportation and on very narrow skill sets in the work force making transferring to the civilian sector difficult. The group talked about whether submarines could be used for other purposes such as ocean exploration, tourism and education or if EB could build different ships e.g. hospital ships. For genuine economic conversion to occur, infrastructure would need to be strengthened including education, transportation, health care, and tax incentives for sustainable small businesses.

Paul Jakoboski shared six "Slow Money" principles at our next session. These ideas about keeping money circulating locally by having businesses and banks locally based grew out of the realization that money spent in chain stores and then transferred to national banks immediately exits the local economy. The 20th century was the era of "buy low /sell high" and "wealth now/ philanthropy later." The 21st century will be the era of "nurture capital" built around principles of carrying capacity and local stability.

Our thoughts on the local economy have been clarified by this series. Many of us found a context for these ideas from the film "The Economics of Happiness", part of the fall SECT Peace and Justice Network Film Series. (4 stars for this film.) Our involvement in the Occupy New London movement also helped us meet new people and look at things in new ways as we conversed and made new posters to express our thoughts. care of the commons, sense of place and non-violence. We must learn to invest as if food, farms and fertility mattered. We need to

connect investors to the places where they live, creating vital relationships and new resources of capital for small food enterprises. We discussed investing our assets within a 50 mile radius to develop and support local farms and businesses. Let's celebrate the new generation of entrepreneurs, consumers and investors who are showing the way from "making a killing to making a living."

There are three more sessions in the series. Tim Murney from the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board will talk about "Green Jobs"; Peg Moran will focus on sustainability and substantial local agriculture using her case study of Stonington and Rep. Diane Urban and Sen. Andrew Maynard will discuss Employment and the Future of Work.

We will reflect more on our renewed understanding of the nature of work in our next *Troubadour* and further develop what we will learn in the winter-spring Clarification of Thought series.

Ellen Adams is an Episcopal deacon and member of the St. Francis House board. She lives in Norwich, CT.



SAVE THE DATES !

WINTER-SPRING 2012 CLARIFICATION OF THOUGHT

Work and the Future of the Earth

**February 10, February 24,
March 2, March 16, March 30.
April 13, April 27, May 11**

**FIESTA: SUNDAY, JUNE 3
Williams Memorial Park**

E-Mail UPDATE from Mike Izbicki who lived with us for a year prior to his discharge as a Conscientious Objector from the Navy in March, 2011:

Things are going pretty well for me right now. I've started my phd in computer science at the University of California Riverside. It's something I've always wanted to do. Studying the way a computer "thinks" tells us a lot about how people think, and what it really means to be human. I'm hoping my research helps us become more human with each other.

I really like my new church so far. I rode my bike past it one day on my way to campus and decided to check it out. It turned out to be a Brethren church, one of the peace churches that branched off the Anabaptist movement. They have two pastors: One is a pacifist who incorporates nonviolent resistance into his sermons. The other is not a pacifist, was a major in the Army, and incorporates medal of honor stories into his sermons. It's an interesting dynamic that encourages lots of difficult but important conversations.

I dislike how difficult it still is to talk to people about being a conscientious objector. It's not difficult for me, but for them. Almost everyone gets flustered, and I suspect this reinforces their notion that the military is always justified. I feel like I could be communicating much better, but I just don't know how.

On a lighter note, I have a Greek and Chinese roommate who make me awesome foreign food every night. (But still not as good as St Francis House was!) In return I'm making a Thanksgiving dinner for all the foreigners in our computer science department next week. Hopefully it's edible. Mike

THE FRANCIS FUND FOR SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT: MAKING A BEGINNING

by Anne Scheibner

With the devastating local impact of the current worldwide banking and production system only too visible in recent years, our initial effort to be part of the solution rather than the problem is coming into better focus. In 1999 when we borrowed money from Equity Trust to buy St. Francis House and then again when we bought Victory House next door, our loan agreement stated that when the loan was repaid that part of those funds would be earmarked for use in SE Connecticut. By 2007 when we "burned the mortgage", however, we realized that we were interested in developing a loan fund that could be of assistance in New London and other urban areas in the region as well as developing a connection with local farming endeavors. This is when the idea of developing a regional loan fund in partnership with Equity Trust which is based in north central Massachusetts really began to take shape.

What was most attractive to us about the idea of a partnership with Equity Trust for at least the initial start-up period of our proposed regional fund is that it lets us avoid the organizational development needed for any new 501(c) 3. We also felt that we would benefit immensely from an experienced loan review committee on the Equity Trust side after we did both detailed advance work and whatever follow-up Equity Trust might advise. We are ready to engage in serious capacity building in our area, but we recognize that it will be a steep learning curve!

FIRST LOANS: The executive director of Equity Trust, Jim Oldham (a 1977 graduate of New London High School, as it happens!), suggested we should make some initial loans and then begin developing serious outreach on both project lending and finding new local investors both individual and faith-based. So that is what we have done. Four loans have now been made: The first was a loan to help save Alice Acres Farm in Gales Ferry from foreclosure. The second was a \$10,000 bridge loan to the Homeless Hospitality Center of New London for transitional housing for homeless veterans. The third was a loan to the Community of Hope associated with Pleasant Valley Church in Groton

for the down payment on a property in Groton to be developed as sober transitional housing for women coming out of addiction treatment and/or prison. The fourth loan is again to the New London Homeless Hospitality Center. This loan will cover immediate rehab expenses for converting an existing church and rectory into a new homeless shelter and office space.

PRINCIPLES of THE FRANCIS FUND: One of St. Francis House's founding board members, the Rev. Ed Rodman, suggested early on in our conversations about the purpose of the fund that we should take seriously what it meant to have "the mark" of St. Francis House on our work. What did it mean for us to commit to developing such a regional loan fund, i.e. how would this fund be distinguished from traditional secular loan fund models? Community loan fund are able to loan to those in marginal situations who would not qualify for traditional commercial bank loans. Equity Trust can do so because the principle of making credit accessible to persons or organizations with known character and commitment but without commercial credentials is the charitable or social justice intent of their 501(c)3 status. But what is distinguishing about the Francis Fund? We will certainly discover the details of this endeavor as we proceed but some principles need to be articulated from the beginning:

- 1) The Francis Fund is dedicated to providing financial and community support to persons and community organizations who are also committed to developing a sustainable and just regional economy. This includes local/regional investment in sustainable business especially cooperatives, affordable supportive housing and farms.
- 2) We are committed to seeing equity attained by African Americans, Latinos and other ethnic groups historically excluded from economic development opportunities.
- 3) We are committed to helping develop local instruments for long term access and affordability such as Land Trusts and cooperative business support.
- 4) We are committed to supporting the development of micro-lending through local faith-based and community groups which can support individual economic entrepreneurship for a just and sustainable regional economy.
- 5) We are ready to explore alternative forms of loan interest payments i.e. food production shares, crafted or manufactured products/barter, work in the community, etc. as alternatives to traditional cash interest payments.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Paul Jakoboski is serving as Francis Fund Administrator and who along with former SFH Treasurer Doug Barrett both have extensive business experience. Eunice Waller, retired school teacher and first African American woman mayor of New London has extensive non-profit board experience, Debra Pennuto who serves as director of Encuentros de Esperanza of the First Hispanic Baptist Church here in New London and I all serve on the Advisory Committee. Benny Jennings, former head of OIC, was also part of the initial conversations about the fund. We are looking to expand the Advisory Committee as well as to identify new investment opportunities and investor outreach as well.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND STAFFING: Funds are available to support the first three years of development locally. Interns will be able to live at St. Francis House and have room and board covered along with a modest stipend. When Emmett and I were the coordinators for the Episcopal Urban Caucus, Ed Rodman proposed that the administrative support budget of \$1,000 per month should go directly to St. Francis House rather than to the coordinators as staff. This was appropriate on several levels since the House was used as the administrative office space for the EUC and because so many people were involved in the actual work especially when we hosted the national EUC assembly in 2001. This is the basic model we propose for the Francis Fund since St. Francis House in general and Victory House in particular will be administrative and meeting space as well as staff housing. We look forward to this next experiment with truth!





THE FRANCIS FUND AT WORK IN SE CT

Our regional partnership with Equity Trust

In 2010 through our partnership with Equity Trust, we were able to make a loan available to help "Farmer Pete" Bargmann stabilize his new ice cream shop and farm production. Alice Acres is located in Gales Ferry across the river from New London.

Photos from the Alice Acres website www.cowsandcones.com





Photo by Dirk Langaveld

Above (from top): New London Homeless Hospitality Center Veteran's Transitional Housing bridge loan and recently purchased HHC shelter site. Below: Down payment loan for sober housing for women in Groton sponsored by the Community of Hope, Pleasant Valley Church.



ST. FRANCIS HOUSE INTERNSHIPS IN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Francis Fund for SE CT is seeking applicants for 2 to 3 internships to participate in developing a proactive community loan fund and county-wide economic development effort. Preferable length of time commitment - 2 years with option to renew.

Here is the work the Advisory Committee of the Francis Fund believes needs to be done. We do not expect any one person to have skills/experience/interest in all of these areas but rather than our trying to define an internship more narrowly we invite applicants to tell us the areas they are interested in and why they believe they could advance the work in those areas:

- * Seek out local persons with entrepreneurial spirit and good management potential to develop small business and/or cooperative opportunities. Help develop business plans. Help research various issues involved in start-up including site, customers, workers and benefits. Seek out other resource organizations.
- * Identify needs and opportunities which could lead to sustainable economic development and work for a variety of people.
- * Work with local farmers to identify value-added farm products and local markets for local products. Identify lending opportunities to support such development efforts.
- * Work with local farmers interested in assuring the availability of affordable farm land to future generations of farmers.
- * Identify opportunities for micro-lending and cooperative enterprises.
- * Give priority attention to identifying ways of supporting local economic development within the African-American and Spanish-speaking communities.
- * Develop ways of encouraging local investment by faith-based communities and socially concerned individuals.

The internships involve the opportunity to live and work at St. Francis House. Room and board included. Small stipend, health care, vacation time and other benefits to be negotiated based upon an individual's particular situation. Persons with extensive life and work experience in business and/or community work and those seeking experience in alternative economic development are welcome to apply as well as those just out of college and possibly high school for exceptionally mature and motivated individuals.

Please send us a 2-3 page statement on what areas listed above interest you and how you feel your background and interests would be useful in this work.

Send statement, resume and three references by February 1 to:

The Francis Fund for Southeastern Connecticut,
stfranchishousenl@att.net, Attn: Paul Jakoboski/Anne Scheibner
Starting time negotiable.

E-Mail from Robert Middeke-Conlin aka VISTA Bob who lived at St. Francis House during his year as a VISTA worker with the Homeless Hospitality Center **Subject:** A little update (Received September 17)

Dear Anne, Paul, Wendy, Bob, and all of St. Francis House's extended community,

OK, I lied, this is not a little update. It's been two months since I left St. Francis House and for me it's been a good but trying two months, a test of patience at the very least.....I had no job and was unsure in what direction I would go. Indeed, as of last week I had little success in my job search. I could somewhat (only *somewhat*) commiserate with the feelings of rejection and futility that plagued many of the guests I counseled at the Homeless Hospitality Center: I was rejected by the academic world I was part of for the last 10 years, had difficulty finding employment that I thought would use my skills and, when I did find something, so many people applied that I was lucky to get an interview.

It's difficult to follow and trust God when your future is uncertain. It's hard because you are at the mercy of your fellow man when following God. This is an uncomfortable position to be in, one that seems to lack any certainty until after all is in place and support has arrived. Then again, nothing is really certain except God's grace, is it? I am reminded of the sending the twelve in Matthew 10, specifically verses 9-10: "Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food..." The short of this, as I understood it in my situation, is to trust my community, to put my burden on them as I seek my place and to serve. This is hard because I have always been self-reliant, a bit of a loner at times. I applied to job after job, to several research and writing positions. And in my interviews I would get very far along, often to a test of my writing. I know I write well, that I am a pretty good researcher, so it hurt every time I was rejected. I was getting to a point where I was wondering about my call as a writer and researcher. I was concerned with myself and forgot that others were in my boat as well, skilled, smart people who need a job equally as much as I did. I also forgot to pray for others as time wore on.

This is what many at the Hospitality Center face. And while I was out of work for only two months, some have been out of work for years. Good people, skilled people, people who cared for their communities and found themselves at a complete loss of support, unsure of where to go for aid or too proud to ask for help. I remember one man in particular: A very skilled carpenter with over a decade of success he could no longer find work. One month passed, then two, then a year and more. He went through his savings, lost his home, everything, and found himself at the St. James shelter on the night of the snowstorm that shut down New London in January. I advised him, gave him direction, helped him put together a new resume and sent him on his way. He took my advice, searched for a job as I taught him, and the very next day he had five replies and interviews. I'll never forget his statement the next (and last) time I saw him: "I never did drugs, don't drink, I didn't do anything to deserve this!" Nobody deserves homelessness. But the winds of trouble come anyway. And, strangely, along with these winds can come wings of support, but only in the community and only if you trust and accept the community.....

My life has been one of independence and a lack of community; I have always felt an outsider. In my wife I find support and love each day and a sense of belonging, to be sure, but at St. Francis House I felt a true part of the community. You've helped me learn how to accept and embrace my community and that is important. I realized last week I'd forgotten to pray for others, lapsed into my old ways of self-reliance. My pride was getting the better of me. So, I set aside an hour a morning to pray, I refused to pray for myself and reconnected to St. Francis House through a reread of *Broad Street Blues*.

Yesterday I received an offer to research in France at l'Université Paris Diderot, a full scholarship, transportation and housing included. The rejection and helplessness has been swept away all of a sudden with this offer, confidence has returned. I attribute this provenance to the prayers of my community on my behalf, including St Francis House's, not my own self-absorbed prayers for myself. My next step is clear, but I must rely on others to prepare the way for me to start work in France on November the 2nd. Trust in my community again! I continue to pray for you all in my morning prayer. I continue to volunteer and now have an opportunity to volunteer in another continent. I continue to write, and am composing a book on homelessness and volunteerism. The world seems bright here, may it be bright with you all as well. May God be with you all in your work and lives.



BROAD STREET BLUES

by Anne Scheibner

President Obama came to New London in May to give the commencement address at the Coast Guard Academy. When President Bush or Vice President Cheney visited during the American invasion of Iraq, St. Francis House served as the SE CT Peace and Justice Network's organizing site for vigils in front of the Academy. This time we were part of gathering over 200 signatures for a full page Open Letter to the President in our local newspaper, *The Day*. We also helped organize a walk around the city to the various sites being affected by federal budget priorities: cuts to low income housing (marchers pushed shopping carts to symbolize homelessness), public education (marchers in cap and gown tried to present a copy of our Open Letter rolled up like a diploma to the President at the Academy), AIDS and local health care clinic (people dressed in medical coats assisted hobbling elders) and continued spending on submarine production in Groton. At the end of the three mile walk we distributed peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and apples to everyone at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in view of the General Dynamics sub building site in Groton to embody the theme of Food not Bombs. We also stopped at the court house and Frida Berrigan of Witness Against Torture spoke while flanked by orange-garbed Guantanamo prisoners. The last stop was at Bank of America to ask why Bank of America was not paying taxes and saving homes instead of foreclosing on them. Outside the marchers sang *The Banks are Made of Marble*.

That stop at Bank of America and occupation of the plaza around the downtown Soldiers and Sailors Monument previewed our own Occupy New London movement. Starting on October 9, chosen in part in honor of its being the year anniversary of Emmett's death, that witness continued for two hours every afternoon through the week of the November elections. Conversations continue at two ongoing weekly vigils about how to develop actions around both banking and health care. Tune in again next spring..... But once again it was a phone call asking what St. Francis House was doing to embody the Occupy Wall Street movement locally, with the person who called then



coming to Morning Prayer and discussion at St. Francis House which provided the supportive base for sign pick up and sign making for the daily witnesses.

Emmett has been remembered in many ways throughout the year. In August the Islamic Center of New London invited St. Francis House members to be special guests of honor at their annual public Ramadan evening meal attended by several hundred people. We were presented with a beautiful copy of the Koran with commentary and one of the young people organizing the event spoke about Emmett's life and work.

On October 2 the St. Francis House board held a memorial service at the cemetery led by Margaret Rose who was Emmett's curate in the early 1980's in Boston. On October 9 Paul Jakoboski, SFH resident and board president, and Eric Swanfeldt, former board member who initiated the Peace Pilgrimages around New England in which Emmett so joyfully participated, led a pilgrimage from St. Francis House to the cemetery. Arthur Lerner who headed up the renovations of Victory House and now heads up FRESH New London said Kaddish and Temple Emanu-el donated 2 coffee carafes in Emmett's memory. Annie Brown, SFH board member who recently retired from the Howard School of Social Work and had spent the week on retreat at St. Francis House, played *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* on the recorder. The pilgrims then walked back to Williams Memorial Park for our annual Fiesta. Members of Youth Peace from Norwich Free Academy served food prepared by our friends from Pacifeasts. Rab Nawaz, a member of the Islamic Center who painted Victory House as a job and then offered to paint our chapel as a gift, came with his wife Bushra bearing a wonderful Pakistani dessert. Their middle school son Aswad played the saxophone. Our neighbors from the Drop-In Learning Center and War Resisters League had displays as well as St. Francis House and the Connecticut Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Owusu Slater, SFH board member and mainstay of the Biko Center in New York City, played his drum, and Dick Lourie, one of Emmett's early poet colleagues who played the sax at Emmett's fu-

neral returned to make more music in honor of the anniversary. Dick read a poem that he had written dedicated to Emmett and he, Dick Marks, former SFH treasurer from Silver Spring, MD, and I read three of Emmett's poems. Our friend and colleague Carolyn Patierno from All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation led the opening liturgy and the beautiful sun-filled autumn afternoon was filled with celebration.

Another celebration in early September was the dedication of the Peace Garden at the Voluntown Peace Trust in honor of Viet Nam veteran Cal Robertson's life and witness. Cal has been a witness for peace here in the New London-Mystic-Groton Sub Base area for 25 years. Every day he spends hours at these sites holding various signs including Martin Luther King's mantra "Non-Violence or Non-Existence." It was a glorious day in Voluntown also and Cal's mother and many friends gathered in the peace garden which was created inside of the stone walls on the foundation of the barn which was burned by right-wing militia in 1968.

We had a variety of visitors this year including two young people who had been working at the soup kitchen of Haley House in Boston and needed a long weekend sabbatical before returning to school. We also welcomed Sam Opol, Episcopal priest from Uganda for a 3 week retreat in the Calvary Hermitage attached to St. Francis House so he could complete some research and writing. Canon Robert Brooks came to our Tuesday Business lunch for what we thought would be a session in practical liturgical/lectionary advice. It turned out to be an eye and soul opening tour of early Christian formation. We are now joyfully absorbing this wider perspective as we seek to grow into our life as a community of faith no longer having an ordained person in residence.

We ourselves did some visiting of other "intentional Christian communities" as part of this year's exploration of how to understand and renew our life at St. Francis House. We talked with Chris Allen-Doucot of the Hartford Catholic Worker about their experience with health care and non-profit corporation issues. We visited Mark Colville at the New Haven Amistad Catholic Worker and learned first hand about their life of hospitality in their neighborhood. We also travelled to the Pittsburgh area to visit the Community of Celebration in Aliquippa



after trading books on the story of our respective communities. They have reformed their corporate life to be explicitly monastic, but they have also reclaimed an entire city block including a funeral home which they have turned into lovely worship space looking out over the no longer separated backyards. Paul is now seriously looking for a rock fountain as a result of our visit! And their Fisherfolk CD done in South Africa was part of the musical celebration at our own Fiesta in the Park.

Paul, Wendy and I made a day-trip to Roxbury Farm in Kinderhook, NY for the joint celebration of the 20th anniversary of Roxbury Farm and Chuck Matthei's founding of Equity Trust. Many of the people present were part of Roxbury Farm's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program including busloads of people from Manhattan. One of their members spoke of their investment in the CSA as one of sharing the risks of farming at the beginning of the growing season; the weekly box of fruits and vegetables are free! It was a wonderful insight into how to de-commodify God's gift of food for us all. So we learned a lot from our friends both old and new and plan to continue this outreach initiative in the new year.

One final note on the life of the House. Wendy has been developing a relationship with the tribe of feral cats who have been living in the wooded area behind St. Francis House. She began feeding them and doing part of her morning meditation with them in the back yard. One of them, Blackie, turned out not to be feral and has become a member of the House along with Deckster (discovered as a kitten under a deck and adopted by Paul and Wendy). In cooperation with the Humane Society she has had four of them fixed over the last several months. As winter was approaching she decided an extension of hospitality was in order and using an old table from the basement she has constructed a sectioned residence for the cats. Names such as the Cat House and Kitty Condominium were considered and ultimately rejected. "La Casa de los Gatos" now inhabits a sunny corner of the parking area. We think St. Francis would be pleased.



SAINT FRANCIS HOUSE



2011 ANNUAL APPEAL

Dear Friends:

It's been a long year. Long in some ways good - we've learned to live even more in the present in many ways. The six month observance of Emmett's death fell on a Tuesday and was the occasion for reflecting on our eucharistic life together and that reflection continued with the celebration in October of our first St. Francis Day without Emmett. Morning Prayer and Clarification of Thought continue to be mainstays for both the residential and extended communities as well as our Tuesday Study Group with colleagues from other churches. We are feeling our way into how our prayer life and liturgical life anchors us for a joyful life of continuing work and presence in this city and wider region.

But that same ability to live more and more in the present means that much to our astonishment it is time for our annual appeal. Last year the outpouring of gifts in honor of Emmett's life and ministry meant that we didn't even have to send out such an appeal. And this year for the first time we are including the appeal as part of the *Troubadour*. This seems right because the preceding pages give you a more detailed idea of what we are feeling called to at this time in our life and how the life of St. Francis House is continuing.

It also seems right at this time to let you all know who the board members are who meet with House residents twice a year, engage in African Method of Bible study together and are an invaluable resource in our ongoing discernment concerning the life and work of the House. When we started this adventure in 1999 we had the board members on our letterhead: Ed Rodman; Linda Powell Pruitt, Dick and Karen Marks as well as Emmett and Anne. Because we were just starting, we had no local board members since the friends named above were willing to go with us on this journey and it did not seem fair to involve anyone else until we were clearer about what we were doing! We are grateful to everyone who has "helped us on the way." Now we have a much simpler no names letterhead so here is the new board elected in October: local members include Eunice Waller and Debra Pennuto both of whom serve on the Francis Fund advisory committee. Norm Faramelli serves as treasurer. Deacon Ellen Adams is secretary. Members are Annie Brown, Margaret Rose, Owusu Slater, Masud and Janice Syedullah.

We are blessed to be part of a great cloud of witnesses, and we count all of you as part of that "blessed communion, fellowship divine." The *Troubadour* is our means of sending news, greetings and, we hope, encouragement for your own lives and work in community in these times of continued witness, struggle and solidarity. We appreciate your ongoing support at this time more than we can say.

May the New Year be one of life giving discernment and growth for us all.

Peace and all good,

Paul Jakoboski
President

Anne Scheibner
Vice President

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