

# TROUBADOUR

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



Center Section — Announcing the publication of **To Catch A Wave:**  
**New and Selected Poems by Emmett Jarrett**

Advent 2015

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## EMMETT'S ONGOING IMPACT ON OUR LIVES

by Ellen Adams

On October 9, the St. Francis House community celebrated the 5th anniversary of Emmett Jarrett's "heavenly birthday." We decided to celebrate his life and work by publishing a book of his poetry entitled *To Catch a Wave*. Most of the poems have not been previously published and are about his ministry in New London. A few of the poems were published before but are included because they point to the work he would do when he came here.

Some of the people who come to St. Francis House now never met Emmett, but his presence is still here. So much of what we do and how we do it were influenced by him. This summer the Tuesday Study Group which has been part of the life of St. Francis House from its inception 15 years ago took time to reflect on how knowing Emmett continues to make a difference in our lives and work. They were Carolyn Patierno, senior pastor of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation in New London and the past chair of the Homeless Hospitality Center; Russ Gundlach, retired Baptist minister and one of the people who leads Morning Prayer at St. Francis House; Janet Minella-Didier, an SFH board member and Peace Pilgrimage participant; John Nelson, pastor of the Niantic Community Church; Glennys Ulschak, retired chaplain of Lawrence & Memorial Hospital in New London and Peace Pilgrimage participant; and Cathy Zall, pastor of the First Congregational Church in New London and Executive Director of the Homeless Hospitality Center.

Carolyn mentioned that you did not have to earn Emmett's respect. He felt it was a God given right. You knew when he was pleased with something you did and when he was disappointed and thought you could do better, but he still treated you with respect.

Russ talked about the fact that Emmett was a scholar and a teacher. Janet said she had asked him questions on a variety of topics and he not only answered her but always recommended a book he had read on the subject as well. John talked about how clearly Emmett was able to state his positions but that he was willing to listen to others' opinions as well. Russ reminded us that he expected us to support our ideas with facts. His questions helped to clarify your thoughts. Even if you continued to disagree with him, you knew it wouldn't affect your relationship with him.

Emmett was a man of prayer. Glennys talked about his getting up early on the peace walk to make coffee and sit in silence and commune with God. Here at St. Francis House, we do centering prayer every Tuesday at 11:30 and many of us take the time to meditate every day. Emmett said Morning and Evening Prayer daily whether at St. Francis House or on vacation. After a few years, he redesigned the Morning Prayer service. He included a reading from the principles of the Third Order of the Society of St. Francis and the reading of the saint of the day from Robert Ellsberg's book, *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets and Witnesses for Our Times*. We continue to use this form of Morning Prayer with some modifications, Monday through Friday. The principles remind us of who we want to be and how we want to act. They give us a tool to measure our behavior by, to see if we are living our faith as we wish or whether adjustments need to be made. The stories of the saints show us that God has called a huge variety of personalities to do all kinds of work and that we cannot exempt ourselves from service by claiming we are not "holy" enough.

The service also includes two readings from the Bible and a psalm with a time to reflect on what has been heard. Emmett felt the gospel message was central to a Christian's life. We use African Method of Bible Study each week. We reflect on what a passage is saying to us personally and what it is saying to

the community gathered. Emmett and Anne used this method to discern coming to New London and opening St. Francis House. We continue to use it to discern how we are to be neighbors in this community.

Emmett was a priest in the Episcopal Church and that impacted many of our lives. Celebrating the Eucharist was central to his ministry. Russ said that the thing he remembers most about Emmett was when he came to the hospital to pray with him before surgery. He was always prepared to anoint the sick and dying, to hear confessions and offer spiritual direction. Many of us remember his sermons.

Emmett was a disciple of Christ. He took that discipleship seriously. He practiced his faith intentionally. One of the principles that Emmett was committed to was nonviolence. The St. Francis House community began to witness to peace every Saturday with Cal. We continue this practice. Emmett helped plan and participated in the No Fear Zone that area peace activists staged during the government's Mock Terror Attack in New London. He traveled to witness for the rights of prisoners held in Guantanamo and was the spokesperson for his group in court. He and Eric Swanfeldt, a member of the Uncasville Methodist Community, were joined by others on three peace walks. They talked with people all over New England about their views and hopes for peace. Nick Evento from All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation and Glennys came to lunch at St. Francis House to tell the members of our community about their peace walk to Newtown. Nick talked about how the previous peace walks had influenced his decision to make the walk and how knowing Emmett had influenced his experience on the walk.

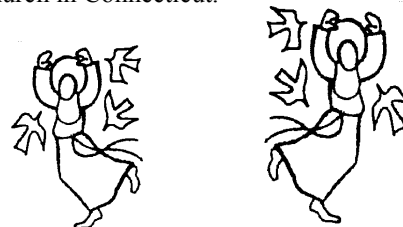
When the City of New London shut down our Social Service Department, Emmett was instrumental in bringing the leaders of the other churches together to respond in practical ways to the needs of the homeless. Cathy said that Emmett was not a detail person, but he knew how to inspire those who were and they worked together to get the job done. Cathy talked about the fact that he would admit that sometimes the work was very hard but also believed that "the kingdom can't be stopped." He helped others deal with the suffering/freedom paradox and helped them to keep going when things didn't look good. Carolyn talked about how she still relies on the good counsel that he gave her over the years. Their relationship allowed her to be braver and take more risks.

Emmett enjoyed life. There was always a feast once the work had been done. He enjoyed cooking and eating and drinking. He liked dancing and reciting poetry. He enjoyed sitting around and visiting with friends.

He used his poetry to process what he knew and to share that knowledge in a concise direct way that still captured the depth of his life experience. The sign at the labyrinth at the Voluntown Peace Trust which was dedicated in Emmett's memory in 2013

says, "Sing Alleluia and keep on walking." And as his old friend and poet colleague, Dick Lourie says in the preface of *To Catch a Wave*, "I miss Emmett Jarrett." So say we all, even as we celebrate and give thanks for his life and ministry.

Ellen Adams is a member of the Anchor Team and an Episcopal deacon now serving at St. Paul's, Willimantic. She is co-chair of the prison ministry committee of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.



## BROAD STREET BLUES

by Anne Scheibner

In June another wall came down. This time it was the wall between the dining room and the Hermitage. We have thought about doing this over the years to make it easier for guests (especially in winter) to come from the Hermitage to Morning Prayer, meals, etc. But we had thought it was probably not feasible.

As always when considering a new potentially major construction job, we called in our old friend and master builder Ted Olynciw who does wonderful work with Homeless Hospitality in identifying and rehabbing transitional housing. So we now have an open space into a much larger kitchen unit and an insulated and therefore more soundproof door between that room and the Hermitage sitting room.

This means real privacy for Sr. Barbara Hobbs who comes monthly to continue her ministry of spiritual direction and others who use the Hermitage for retreats. It also makes the loveliest room in the House much more available to members of the SFH community for small meetings and as a reading room. The outline of St. Mary Star of Sea on the hill two blocks away resembles that of an English cathedral while our meditation and vegetable gardens and woods behind our parking lot frame the southern view.

Janice Syedullah, a member of the SFH board and (not so) retired librarian and Janet Minella-Didier, board member and retired school teacher with a yen to be a librarian, have been hard at work cataloging the St. Francis House library. Getting the library ready to be dedicated next spring is part of the celebration in honor of the 5th anniversary of Emmett's death. The poetry, literature and Franciscan spirituality parts of the collection are in the Hermitage to make those resources easily available for visitors and those on retreat.

Taking the chapel wall down two years ago has transformed the way we do supper for Clarification of Thought nights. Instead of having two groups—

one in the dining room and the spill over in the chapel— we now have everyone gathered around collapsible long tables which get flipped up after Evening Prayer and then down in time for Clarification of Thought discussion at 7. It also means we can host film nights since the television set is in the parlor and drawing back the vertical blinds between the parlor and the chapel doubles the space available for group events.

In addition to work on the library and the development of the Hermitage, we have also been hard at work in making good on my essentially deathbed promise to Emmett that we would republish his poetry. What I did not know until I started looking in his files this past spring, was that he had a basically completed manuscript entitled *To Catch a Wave*. This manuscript consisted of new poems especially focused on his time here in New London, life at St. Francis House and his work with our homeless neighbors. He had also wanted poems from his “Greek period” in the 1960s republished. And over the years in his various parish placements there were poems that foreshadowed his commitments here as well as poems previously published in the *Troubadour*.

So using our new model of project development at St. Francis House, we developed a team. Jim Coleman, retired English professor and coordinator of the poetry jam part of our annual fiestas, has served with me as co-editor. Emmett’s old friend and poet colleague Dick Lourie not only agreed to write the preface but also gave careful scrutiny to the texts. Grace Post Panko provided invaluable proofing assistance on the final drafts. And our indefatigable board member Rick Bellows who is— as was Emmett — a Franciscan Tertiary provided untold hours and heart and soul to the project in keeping the master copy up-to-date and overseeing the production process.

In the midst of getting the manuscript of *To Catch a Wave* ready for publication, however, I got a callback after a routine mammogram. Three days later I had a biopsy and four weeks and a second opinion later, a mastectomy. That was the end of August. No chemo or radiation. The prognosis is good and everyone has been great in providing meals, transportation and telling me to slow down and to give myself time to heal. That has been the hardest part since I was expecting to bounce back after a maximum of six weeks rest and recuperation! Instead of being able to see how many phone calls/projects/conversations I can pack into 3 hours, I now have to pick 3 things a day— including Morning Prayer as one of them— so as not to feel wiped out.

One of the hardest parts for me of my diminished energy was not being able to play the clarinet on the front porch this fall. Playing on the porch is my own form of the blues made up of snatches of my father’s big band music, hymns and spirituals. I’ll know “I’m back” when I start having the urge and

the energy to play again!

It’s good to be back even part-time and working on getting the poetry book and this edition of the *Troubadour* out—finally! But another hard part of letting go of things I couldn’t do was not being able even to think about going to England for our old friend Ken Leech’s funeral. Ken was a regular visitor to St. Francis House. His lead *Troubadour* article in 2002 can be found on page 23 of *Broad Street Blues* entitled “From One St. Francis House to Another.” The original St. Francis House for Ken was located at 84 Cable Street in East London. Ken’s seamless approach to social justice and prayer were undergirded formatively during his residency there during the late 1950s.

Ken’s book *Soul Friend* is a classic in spiritual direction literature. His voluminous writing in anti-racism and social justice arenas was/is awe-inspiring. His urban ministry efforts started with youth homelessness in the 1950s and ended with his work as community theologian at St. Botolph’s and his work with the Muslim community in the changing neighborhood of London’s East End. He was in great demand as a speaker on both sides of the Atlantic.

One of my favorite Ken Leech stories is of the woman who came up to him to say how much she had enjoyed his talk on spiritual direction and how terribly embarrassing it must be for him to be confused with that Other Ken Leech who wrote about all those social justice issues. We will miss him.

### Ken Leech: Priest, Community Theologian, Friend

June 15, 1939 — September 12, 2015

In the leaflet, *Action for Revival* (1974), he wrote:

If spirituality and prophecy are not held together, both must decay. There must be contemplation and resistance, holiness and justice, prayer and politics. For our vision is of a God whose holiness fills heaven and earth, and who has called all people into freedom, justice and peace within his new order.

*Almighty and Ever Living God, we give thanks for Ken Leech's life and ministry. Our pilgrimage at St. Francis House, New London, has been immeasurably enriched and enlivened through his friendship and presence and the ongoing witness of his writing. We pray that he may go from strength to strength and continue his intercessions for us as we continue the journey that your Commons may be realized more and more on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*

Sent from the Community of St. Francis House,  
New London, Connecticut, U.S.A. for the wake.





### “Remembering Hiroshima”

This photo shows six members of the extended community of St. Francis House at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in downtown New London. This was the 70th anniversary witness to the United States dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan.

Anne is holding the origami peace cranes given to St. Francis House by the Buddhist Peace Walkers from the Peace Pagoda in Leverett, MA. This photo taken by *The Day* photographer Dana Jensen appeared above-the-fold on page 1 of the Region section on August 7.

### St. Francis House fig tree bearing fruit!

Emmett planted this fig tree in 2006 next to what has become the Meditation Garden. He asks whether it will bear fruit in the 2007 poem entitled “New London Poems.” (*To Catch a Wave*—page 113.)

Grace, Cal and Mike took figs from this year’s bumper crop to the cemetery both to eat and to adorn Emmett’s grave on October 9 along with flowers from the altar.

*But each one shall sit under their vine and under their fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken it.*

Micah 4:4



### Peace Vigils in downtown New London

Every Saturday and many weekdays you will find St. Francis House resident Cal Robertson (second from left) and Mike Hatt (left)— both Viet Nam Vets—anchoring Peace Vigils.

They are working to form a chapter of Veterans for Peace. Recently they organized Armistice Day and Thanksgiving Saturday vigils.

Here they were joined by Bud McAllister, a Hermitage guest & Len Raymond.

## ST. FRANCIS HOUSE 2015 ANNUAL APPEAL

Dear Friends:

This year has been rocky – as in “stony the road” – for all of us in so many respects. We participated in and helped organize a candlelight vigil following the Ferguson grand jury decision and as the New Year unfolded so did our vigils: reading Dr. Martin Luther King’s Riverside address in its entirety on April 4, welcoming the Buddhist Peace Walkers on their way to Washington, DC and New York for the Nuclear Disarmament talks, holding up our peace cranes at the 70th anniversary witnesses to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and a Veterans for Peace Armistice Day vigil on November 11.

On October 9 we celebrated Emmett’s 5th Heavenly Birthday with Eucharist in the chapel and figs from the St. Francis House fig tree taken to the cemetery. The publication of *To Catch a Wave* will help us continue to light candles of hope in his memory into the future. Please contribute generously so we can make the book widely available and order some for yourselves!

Our spring Clarification of Thought series on the Commons has taken root as an ongoing nurturing of that spirit of hope in the face of the terrible violence taking place so visibly in Beirut and Paris. Violence is part of the global crisis of economic inequity and neglect of the humanity of our neighbors – especially of our young people. The spirit of hope has animated our current Clarification of Thought series on “Amazing Grace: Decoding Whiteness in Contemporary America” which we undertook in response to President Obama’s eulogy in Charleston, SC following the killings at Emanuel AME Church. And we continue to learn and discern how to be present in this community through weekday Morning Prayer and African Method of Bible Study.

As always we depend on you to help us in our work and witness.

Thank you in advance for your ongoing faith and support.

Ellen Adams Hannah Gant David Gonzalez-Rice Len Raymond\* Anne Scheibner\*

*Anchor Team Members*





    

Cal Robertson Frida Berrigan Mike Hatt Jodi Johnson Grace Post Panko

\* *Cal's Team Organizers*

Danni Bellows Rick Bellows Frida Berrigan Reona Dyess Janet Minella-Didier

Marykate Glenn Margaret Rose Janice Syedullah Masud Syedullah

\* *St. Francis House Board*



The words of the poems dance across the page,  
the birds in the air dance above the clouds,  
the fish in the water dance among the waves,

love's dance.

from **Design: A Vision**, Herakleion, Crete, 1967



## Jubilee Publications is pleased to announce the release of

### What people are saying about *To Catch a Wave*:

Beautifully crafted, Emmett's poetry celebrates the sacredness of life in all its forms. Evocative and visionary—these poems inspire us to action. — Janice Syedullah, TSSF, Hyde Park, New York



- ◇ 123 pages including 3 pages of color photographs by Rick Bellows, TSSF.
- ◇ 40 poems previously unpublished; selected poems from *Wild Geese Flying South* (2005), *God's Body* (1975) and *Greek Feet* (1972)
- ◇ Complete text of "Design: A Vision" (Herakleion, Crete, 1967)

#### Stonington Poem

"Put away the sword,"  
techniques of meditation:  
useless instruments.

Notice patterns of light  
on the water  
as the sun rises;

the gull that soars,  
banks its flight and  
sails around

the green mimosa tree  
to land and stalk across  
the grass in

stately, solitary  
procession to the shore.



### Dancing in the Street

People were dancing  
in the street last night  
(Anne called it "jumping")  
as The Reducers played  
songs of revolutionary  
hope on a stage behind  
the Soldiers and Sailors  
Monument in Union  
Plaza. Music of the New London  
School of Poetical Politics.  
People younger than  
my daughter and older than  
me were dancing to songs  
of our city, shouting whispered  
messages into the loud and  
fireworks-spangled night.

## Focus

I suck my life  
from the wounds  
of the dying  
Christ.

The best theology is poetry, and the best poetry is mystical. Emmett Jarrett's poems weave these together. His poems dance full of truth and warning and hope. I want to keep reading and I want to share these poems with everyone.

— Carl McColman, Lay Cistercian, Stone Mountain, GA

## Not Yet 6 A.M.

and already Broad Street is busy  
with commercial, automotive, and pedestrian  
traffic. Slightly crazed Vassily stops to  
ask if my seersucker bathrobe is a  
hospital garment. Already people come to  
Labor-Ready looking for workers, the Guida's  
Dairy truck pulls into the parking lot.  
Across the street the dentist's tenant  
walks his dog, a teenager barrels down  
on his bike ("No hands!") and homeless men  
begin their pilgrimage from shelter to soup  
kitchen to daytime hospitality looking  
for cans, spare change, a cigarette, a drink.  
Harry's red and white taxi, blue Port City  
cab, Peg Curtin's livery service slide by.  
Beneath the street I hear a heavy heartbeat.  
Angelus bells in my head ring the hour:  
"Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee."

For me Emmett did not "catch" a wave but rather "created" a wave of compassion, confidence in God's power, love for neighbor, and celebration of life that carried many of us to places we never expected to go. May these poems carry us all closer to the kingdom of God that Emmett confidently anticipated.

— The Rev. Cathy Zall,  
Homeless Hospitality Center, New London, CT

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- Five or more copies, shipping is included — and \$60 for each set of 5
- We welcome your reviews and comments for future issues of the *Troubadour* !



## Clarification of Thought Schedule

Fall - Winter 2015

*AMAZING GRACE: Decoding Whiteness  
in Contemporary America*

Sept. 25: President Obama's Eulogy and the Historical and Constitutional Context  
— The Making of Whiteness  
*David Gonzalez-Rice*

Oct. 9: Race & Gender / North & South  
*Mab Segrest*

Oct. 23: White Privilege: Working It Out  
*Laura Burfoot & Roberta Paro*

Nov. 6: Beyond Inclusivity  
*Anne Scheibner*

Nov. 20: Fear, Greed, Economics and the Creation of Racial Hatred  
*Patrick Sheehan-Gaumer & Hannah Gant*

Dec. 4: "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female—for we are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28  
*Reona Dyess & Len Raymond*

Dec. 18: What have we learned?  
How will/can "grace lead us home"?  
*Ellen Adams & Len Raymond*

**Each evening begins with Evening Prayer and  
Bible Study at 5:30; Supper at 6 and  
Discussion 7-8:30**



**SAVE THE DATES**

Winter-Spring Clarification of Thought

February 19, March 4 & 18,

April 1 & 15 & 29, May 13

## Exploring the Commons:

*A Conversation between Anne Scheibner and  
Hannah Gant on the 2015 Winter-Spring  
St. Francis House Clarification of Thought series*

*Anne:* When you proposed the topic of the Commons, I was both excited and skeptical. To me as a native New Englander, the Commons meant the village green – a carryover from England which meant the creation of a safe pasture for grazing animals. Of course, it also meant the end of the economic life of Native Americans with these and other "enclosures."

*Hannah:* And for people like me working on a very different economic paradigm the idea of the Commons has to do with exploring what we share and how we share it i.e. some of the topics we explored in this Clarification of Thought series: water, land & property, public education, taxes, and local-level shared resources like our parks, libraries, and cooperatively owned businesses, such as Fiddleheads Natural Food Coop across the street from St. Francis House.

*Anne:* From the kind of theological perspective we have used over the years here at St. Francis House, the idea of the Commons is undergirded by the understanding that God owns everything. I think it's very close to the Native American understanding of stewardship or the European concept of usufruct. I was taught in grammar school to think that Native Americans were just simple-minded to "sell" Manhattan for a bunch of trinkets. In fact, the joke ultimately is on us as Europeans to think that something as fundamental as the land could be sold at all!

*Hannah:* I think David Bollier's concept of commoning is especially useful. It's more verb than noun, Bollier defines the Commons as a self-organizing system by which communities manage resources (both depletable and replenishable) with minimal or no reliance on the Market or the State. Said another way, the Commons is our collective wealth including the gifts of nature, civic infrastructure, cultural works and tradition and knowledge.

*Anne:* For those of us in the Anglican tradition, that concept makes a lot of sense. Our Book of Common Prayer is rooted in the emergence of a Reformation understanding of all people having access to God. The idea of "common law" is rooted in the sixteenth century evolution of the idea that people had a right to the fruits of their labor i.e. the king did not own everything by divine right.

*Hannah:* On the other side of this exploration I have been struck by the irony of the so-called Tragedy of the Commons. Part of the rationale for privatization (more or less the opposite of Commons) stems from an analysis of the Commons as fundamentally ineffective because of inherent human self-interest. It



has been assumed as truth that people cannot be trusted to share without strong central oversight with the result always being chaos and a depreciating resource base. As a result private ownership and management by the State has been the prevailing operating system of the last century. Economists like Elinor Ostrom who won the Nobel Prize in 2009 have shown that effective economic development can be achieved through cooperation.

*Anne:* I think our series helped us develop this new lens or way of seeing the Commons as a much broader concept for reclaiming a lot of what has been lost and indeed is being lost. How we define what we share and how we share it is very tenuous. This is probably because our understanding of community is so tenuous at this point in American culture while individualism is rampant.

*Hannah:* But, the other side of this experiment in extreme privatization is revealing itself to be ecosystem collapse, global climate change, and fraying social systems. The viability of our resources is most definitely in question and privatization is part of the reason. Two higher truths are now being revealed.

One is that the Commons is inescapable. Much of the resources of the natural world that we depend on, like water and the fisheries, cannot be divvied up for individual ownership. Believing that they can be has meant we have had no system for managing the whole—call it the Tragedy of Privatization. We have no choice but to grow up and learn how to work together through stewardship to care for and regenerate our resources or perish.

*Anne:* I'd certainly like to agree with you on that one, but global capitalism as currently configured seems to be against us! Part of the joy of St. Francis House and similar communities around the country is freeing up our members — in our case both resident and non-resident members — to experience a freedom to use time and talent as part of that commons resource.

*Hannah:* But what's in our favor is the second truth— which many of us have maintained all along— namely, that there is a side of humans that is inherently generous. Self-interested behavior kicks in when we feel insecure about meeting our needs. But within a context that allows for everyone's needs to be met the prevailing orientation of most people is to share. The exciting potential of sharing is synergy—the magic that results from the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. The inchoate reality of synergistic relationships is our lifeline if we are to move into a way of being and doing in the world that is vibrant for all. We now have a word to describe the path we must walk to move from here to there: commoning.

*Anne:* And of course, those of us interested in exploring early Christian roots of community – koinonia or

participation/sharing – will find a similar bedrock through the exploration of the implications of baptism – commoning by a different name!

Note: Both Anne and Hannah recommend David Bollier's recent book *Think Like a Commoner* and Charles Eisenstein's *Sacred Economics*.

Hannah Gant is a civic entrepreneur working to develop a number of Commons-based community businesses locally in Southeastern CT and more broadly through Metamorphosis. She has been in residence at St. Francis House for nearly 3 years.

Anne Scheibner has been trying for a long time to name what she does without success. She has lived and worked at St. Francis House for the last 15 years.

### Practicing the Commons

*Helping people work together to start mission-based businesses organized as cooperatives*

by Hannah Gant

It's been three years since I first came to visit Anne and Paul to learn about the Francis Fund for Southeastern CT. The Francis Fund is the partnership between St. Francis House and Equity Trust which provides a vehicle for local investment and lending to support and promote a sustainable, just, regional economy in Southeastern CT. At the time I was mid-way through an MBA program and was considering starting a loan fund in CT. I had ideas about ways to evolve the loan fund model to increase consciousness about individual economic power. So instead of starting a loan fund, I moved into residency in March of 2013 to work on the Francis Fund.

Over these last two years I have come to believe that access to capital through a loan fund is not the keystone instrument to help make or shift dynamics in a generative way. I began to develop new ideas for systemic capacity-building projects organized as co-operatives that could make strategic contributions to the vitality of community and place.

I like New London and have valued it as a place to get grounded and practice my craft. My ability to hear the ideas that have now taken shape as Metamorphosis, Spark, and ReInspire has been greatly aided by my time in community at St. Francis House. The first year of residence I held myself in ample solitude and space for reflection and exploration through time outside, journaling, body and energy work, yoga and qi gong, meditation, conversations, and the occasional book.

Last September I facilitated a design competition called Community Conspire in which people worked on community-serving ideas in small groups then shared and voted. The winning idea got the money from the door and my support to carry it forward, which included sharing money that I had inherited to seed its initial developmental stages. This has be-

come Spark Makerspace, a shared workshop that is a membership-based non-profit dedicated to increasing resourcefulness through sharing skills and equipment. Spark just moved into its first home in downtown New London in the old El 'N' Gee building at 86 Golden St.—5,000 square feet that will open in the New Year with a commercial kitchen, woodshop, 3D printers, digital media lab, and more.

ReInspire is a complementary endeavor also organized cooperatively but as a Benefit Corporation—a for-profit with a social mission. This began as a craft group at the Homeless Hospitality Center (HHC). I have been working as part of a team, feeling out the potential to breathe new life into community through developing ReInspire initially with an upcycling focus, making new things out of old things to develop products that create livelihood opportunities for all involved. Over time I have also come to understand ReInspire as holding my evolved sense of how to share money in ways that unlock gift culture dynamics. I call this community venture capital in which a pool of financial capital is held and stewarded by core members of the ReInspire coop and made accessible for community-serving ideas while also having available the shared resources of the talented people and physical infrastructure of Spark Makerspace. The mission-based businesses that develop within the cooperative community will share a percentage of profits to cycle back into the internal development pool. ReInspire is located half a block away from Spark at 13 Golden St. and has two storefronts, one to be a retail space and the other home to shared space for office, meetings, events, and classes.

Metamorphosis is a national collaboration I have initiated with people with whom I feel deep resonance. The five of us so far, spanning the United States, have named ourselves Imaginal Fellows after imaginal cells, which do the metamorphic work of breaking down the tissue of the caterpillar and building it up into the butterfly. I believe that humanity is entering a period of enlightenment and that the dissolution of human social systems and the climate crisis is not indicative of collapse as the dominant public narrative suggests but actually early stages of chrysalis formation. Metamorphosis will be publically launching next year as a series of projects, patterns, and stories designed to catalyze this awakening and aligning process.

What seems possible when feeling out the field of potential in New London and Southeastern CT is a rippling revitalization. New London is great and, as an economically depressed shoreline city in the rich state of CT half way in between Boston and NY, it's totally ripe for gentrification. My goal with the work of Spark and ReInspire is to build the skills and capability of local residents while building community muscle through ReInspire in ways that generate new community-serving businesses and shared working capital. I believe that this will enable the people of

this place to collectively buy and fix up property for common benefit and ownership so that both people and place come alive.

The Voluntown Peace Trust and St. Francis House have been engaged this past year in an exploration of the commoning work with property feeling out the potential to evolve the land trust model. I am motivated by the idea of the residents of a place working together by starting cooperative businesses that generate surplus shared capital to buy property that can be held in common, all the while sharing the know-how plus motivation to joyfully do the labor-intensive work of land and property stewardship. Part of the ongoing discernment in how to facilitate this emergence involves discovering the vocation of the Francis Fund.

## St. Francis House

### WISH

### LIST



Over the years we have used the pages of the *Troubadour* to share needs that we hope our readers can help meet. Many thanks!

- Vinyl covered table clothes for six and eight foot tables
- Good hammers, screw drivers and drill bits
- Someone interested in helping develop our Community Garden space on Cottage Street
- Someone interested in clearing out/consolidating our workshop/tool area
- Someone interested in helping Anne sort/ clear out boxes from library and office
- Someone interested in organizing a dump run

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE  
FOR YOUR HELP!



### Hearing Youth Voices Visit and Update

The last week in October Laura Burfoot, Yanitza Cubilette and Shineika Fareus of the core leadership group from Hearing Youth Voices stopped by Victory House for a visit. They came to give an update on their activities and have a discussion with Anne Scheibner who serves on their Advisory Board. They brought the above photograph and the following note:

Dear St. Francis House,

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! We quite literally would not be here without the support you have given us over the past 3 years. We are emerging as a powerful force for justice in our community and we are only getting stronger.

Thank you for believing in our work, in our vision, in our faith and in our strength. It means the world to us!!

With lots of love and gratitude,  
Hearing Youth Voices

Hearing Youth Voices started in the summer of 2012 as a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project and Anne was asked to be one of the initial fund raisers for the summer. Along with the Drop-In Learning Center, St. Francis House has provided practical support in the form of shared office space, initial 501(c)3 support, refreshments and a practice audience for their community forums and a full issue of the *Troubadour* (see Fall-Winter 2012 issue on our website). We also encouraged HYV's successful

application for the 2013 Linda Powell Pruitt Award given through City University of New York.

We asked Laura Burfoot — former SFH resident and part of the original HYV organizing team— to send us a brief update for this *Troubadour*: “Hearing Youth Voices is a youth-led organization that trains young people of color to organize, fight, and deconstruct systems of oppression in our community. We do this by developing youth organizers through participatory action research (PAR) projects, intensive political education workshops, and arts-based cultural work. Youth members and leaders identify issues, research solutions, and advocate tirelessly until the changes are implemented. We recently won our *We Want to Graduate Campaign*, with a newly-revised Attendance Policy for the New London Public School system. The policy change is the culmination of two years of work done by hundreds of New London youth; it effectively addresses the credit loss due to absences issue that students had identified as a major roadblock to graduation. The new policy provides students and families supports and interventions, rather than punishments, when students are absent. It will affect the more than 3,000 students and families enrolled in New London Public Schools. Throughout the campaign, HYV trained and developed over 40 new youth leaders; these leaders have proven that they can make meaningful change in their schools and community.”

We wish HYV continued success in changing students' lives and public education in New London and our continuing to discover our role as allies!



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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

Ellen Adams, "Emmett's Ongoing Impact on Our Lives"

Anne Scheibner, "Broad Street Blues"

2015 Annual Appeal

Clarification of Thought schedule: "AMAZING GRACE:  
Decoding Whiteness in Contemporary America

Anne Scheibner and Hannah Gant, "Exploring the Commons"

Hannah Gant, "Practicing the Commons"

Hearing Youth Voices, Update

Centersection: *Jubilee Publications*  
*announces the release of*  
*To Catch a Wave: New and Selected*  
*Poems by Emmett Jarrett*



**Annual St. Francis House Christmas Party**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27**

**5:30** Evening Prayer **6-8:30** Festive Buffet  
Bring a favorite food, song, poetry, story to share