

Spring 2009 – State of the *CO.MUNITY Project* Address – from Jeanne Marie Sutherland

Founding Executive Director – Jeanne Marie Sutherland

Director of Program Development (focus Girls Initiate) – Britta Reida

Director of Program Design – Stephanie Foy

Steering Committee:

Davide Cordes

Crispin Boulter

Darlene Jenson

Fiscal Sponsor – Third Sector New England (TSNE) pending funding

CONTENTS:

Summary of past year's activities, including: accomplishments, collaborative efforts, team development and business. Agenda for coming year. Future goals.

Spring 2008 – Focus on collaborating with Boys To Men New England (BTMNE) to help them launch their first program. We had open houses, radio interviews, 2 movie premieres (*Journeyman*) with speakers (Dr. Absatz in Connecticut and Mark Morey in Brattleboro). CO.MUNITY Project began development of a sister program to BTMNE, Girls Initiate Collective (GIC). GIC also had a radio interview and premiere movie (*Girls Rock!*). GIC had a visioning retreat with facilitators and consulting team members (Jeanne Marie, Selena Gallen, Michelle Apland, Britta Reida, Richard Dror, Wendy Webber, Mary Zebrieski). Jeanne Marie and Crispin Boulter looked at land as possible site for programs. Jeanne Marie met with Kroka Wilderness School leader Lynn Boudreau about girls coming of age program.

Summer 2008 – BTMNE had their first Rite of Passage Adventure Weekend (ROPAW). Crispin participated in ROPAW. GIC tested the waters with introductory programs and continued program development. Jeanne Marie attended Country Dance & Song Society camp to learn Morris Longsword (a team focused traditional dance as part of Empowerment Arts modalities). Jeanne Marie provided a program for the Peace Camp (Quaker Meeting School) assisted by Cara Benedetto.

Fall 2008 – After ROPAW, boys and mentors (including Crispin) continued with follow-up year long mentoring groups (J-Groups). Jeanne Marie apprenticed with Andy Davis (music teacher) in the school to assist with Morris Sword dance (Oct. - March 09). Britta took grant writing course at Keene State.

Winter 2008-09 – Britta comes on board as Director of Program Development focusing on GIC (grant writing and beginning Girls Circle programs).

Early Spring 2009 – Stephanie Foy joins team as Director of Program Design. Britta trained as Girls Circle Facilitator and received certification. Britta to lead Girls Circle group beginning in May at the Marlborough, NH library. BTMNE holds open houses to promote 2009 ROPAW and new J-Groups. Jeanne Marie trains with Heart of Change (Wendy Webber / Beatrice Blake) to learn Focusing paired up with nonviolent communication (NVC). Jeanne Marie initiates NVC-Focusing practice group and develops curriculum with Beatrice.

Agenda for 2009:

Grant writing and fundraising: Britta and Jeanne Marie are putting together research to support grant writing. Stephanie has agreed to do a fire walking event to promote programs (we will work on curriculum for that and plan for early Fall event).

Program Development: Britta and Jeanne Marie will continue to work together to support Girls Circle. Stephanie and Jeanne Marie will work with coming of age girls and their families to create a program for Summer 2009. Stephanie, Britta and Jeanne Marie to meet with Selena Gallen and Michele Apland with program goals when necessary. Jeanne Marie working with Andy Davis and Erik Schmitt to put together a pre-teen camp (Sword Team & Play) for August. Begin collaboration with CDSS (Andy Davis & Ethan Hazzard-Watkins) toward the youth community building event for Spring 2010, FOLK (Festival of Local Kids).

Goals for 2009:

General goals include continued fundraising and promotion. Our business infrastructure goals will be met by our fiscal sponsor, TSNE, as we obtain funding. Our program development goals for this year take form in two ways: *CO.MUNITY FOLK*, to tap into schools and youth organizations; and *CO.MUNITY Garden*, to grow our up-and-coming youth community.

CO.MUNITY FOLK: By collaborating with schools and youth organizations, we create programs and events to foster team building skills, youth leadership and cross-cultural community. We give teachers and youth leaders incentives to mentor their students / participants (i.e. by promoting their programs). We provide “kits” that give youth a framework to help them plan and work together as a team for participation in an event (i.e. FOLK-Festival of Local Kids- event where kids participate in an arts presentation.) We provide support in the form of skills training modules on team building and we provide ongoing consultation. Goals for each youth group are as follows: Work together as a team; With the mentorship of teachers, youth leaders and CO.MUNITY staff, the youth team will “design, develop and decide” their arts presentation; There is a focus on win / win instead of competition; “Folk”, in its broadest sense, means that everyone can do it. So focus on inclusion instead of individual talent; Have fun, make new friends, celebrate diversity.

CO.MUNITY Garden: By doing camps and afterschool programs for pre-teens, we plant the seeds and nurture relationships for our coming-of-age youth programs. Adolescents are often reluctant to join in activities unless they are connected, either with their peers, with a particular interest, or with the program leaders. We can engage them before they reach that independent stage. Our goal is to plant seeds for future programs with theme focused or modality focused opportunities (i.e. arts, wilderness or adventure based programs). For Summer 2009, Jeanne Marie's organization M3PLAY will run a camp for 9 – 12 year olds, *Sword Team & Play*, co-facilitated by Andy (teaching Morris Longsword dance) and Ian (teaching fencing). Using Adventure Leadership games and initiatives, this camp will also begin skills training in nonviolent communication, team building and power sharing decision making with curriculum developed by Jeanne Marie. This program is intended to continue into the Fall with an afterschool program and weekend community events to share their new skills at the Farmer's Market and Gallery Walk. During these events, we will continue to invite other kids to have an introductory experience with the intention of future enrollment.