

Murray Grove Association Retreat & Renewal Center

Annual Report 2021

Message from the President of the Board

Murray Grove called to me in many ways. First as their liaison from the Unitarian Universalist Funding Panel. Murray Grove’s appeal to build a symbolic Hand-In-Hand ship to mark the coming of John Murray and Universalism to America appealed to me. Then BLUU (Black Lives Unitarian Universalist), of which I was then a board member, held its annual meeting at Murray Grove. The welcome we received was warm and wonderful. I was moved by the joy expressed by the past president, Dominick DePinto, the past director, Diem Jones and the happiness and laughter we experienced there.

I joined the board of the ship Murray Grove in August of 2020, much as those early voyagers on the Hand-in-Hand did, not knowing what was to come. It required courage and commitment from everyone as Murray Grove was deep in the throes of the pandemic. What jumped out at me - and has sustained me, the board and the whole organization - is a powerful force of maturity and spiritual growth.

The pandemic brought uncertainty to this retreat center: physical, financial, community and spiritual challenges. There have been major staff and board changes and a huge loss of business, as people have been reluctantly, but smartly, avoiding group gatherings. Murray Grove pivoted to virtual program platforms – even running our Coming of Age youth workshop virtually.

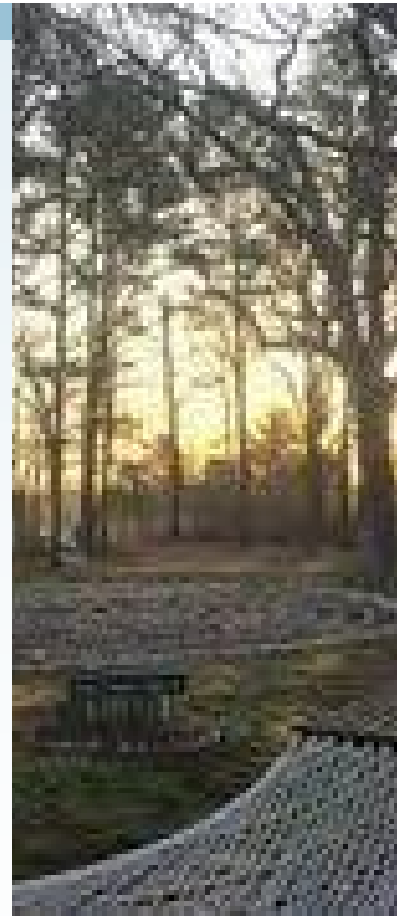
In June, the Board stepped back from the daily challenges and wrestled with Murray Grove’s essential purpose and created this Vision Statement:

Murray Grove: Building a future of justice and kindness for all.

And this Mission Statement:

Murray Grove is a retreat center inspired by the concept of radical hospitality. It serves people of diverse backgrounds both in person and on-line providing opportunities for rest, renewal, inspiration and growth. Murray Grove supports people to create a world of greater kindness and justice.

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Homecoming Goes Hi-Tech!
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Staff and Board Transitions

Every person that serves Murray Grove, whether as a staff member or a board member leaves their mark, and for that we are grateful. This year we thanked the following individuals as they departed from MGA:

Evelyn Bennett (Staff)

Sonja Hardaway (Board)

Diem Jones (Staff)

Rabbi Marc Kline (Board)

Karen Meredith (Staff)

Bonney Parker (Board)

Geraldine Valecillos (Staff)

As we move forward, we are excited for the energy and passion new members of our team bring. In 2021, we welcomed:

Crystal Cassella (Staff)

Parker Hubbard Cohen (Board)

Lynda Smith Lombardi (Staff)

2021 Camping in the Grove evaluations:

"The people here are awesome and funny" "It is Swag" "It is awesome!!!!" "It is the best sleep away camp" "It is awesome and fun and accepting of whoever you are" "It is an inclusive camp that everyone can go to!" "The pool is cool ♡"

Program Updates

While COVID again threw a wrench in Murray Grove programs, in addition to a limited number of small private retreats and opening our campgrounds for family fun, we offered just a few, but very impactful, programs:

Coming of Age — Led by religious educators Tracy Breneman and Meagan Henry, 21 youth and 17 mentors from six congregations participated in this virtual workshop weekend in which they learned the history of Murray Grove, completed a "spiritual journey" interview, explored writing prompts for their personal credos and had fun interacting with youth on the COA path along with them.

Camping in the Grove — Our intrepid team kept a dozen campers in our youth camp busy and safe for a fun week of discovery and joy.

251st Anniversary Homecoming — In partnership with UU Faith Action NJ; Black Lives Unitarian Universalist; Salvation and Social Justice; NJ Institute for Social Justice; the Racial Justice Task Force of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton NJ; and NJ Social Justice Remembrance Coalition, together with the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice, we hosted "Rise up for Justice, Renew in Peace" — a virtual 3-day gathering with nine featured speakers and workshops. Rev. Michael Tino preached a live Sunday service from Cone House. Our thanks to the New York State Convention of Universalists for support of this important event.

Murray Grove Online — We launched a series of free online programs by three prominent, global, presenters in their respective fields; Francesco Garri Garripoli, Dr. Carol Penn and Rev. Terry Chapman on: Movement/Qigong; Mind, Body, Spirit and Now is Our Time, respectively. Each has produced three short videos which were posted on our social media and our web site. These programs were designed to inspire, engage and empower our global Murray Grove Community.



Lynda planned a super successful Summer Bazaar featuring artisans, community nonprofit organizations and local businesses.



Caring in the Grove

During COVID, volunteers and staff reinvigorated Murray Grove’s Hospitality Garden. Every other week, there was an open invitation to join in two-hour gardening sessions extended to MGA guests and community members to enjoy peaceful gardening as a release from the tensions of the time. The result? A garden filled with love.



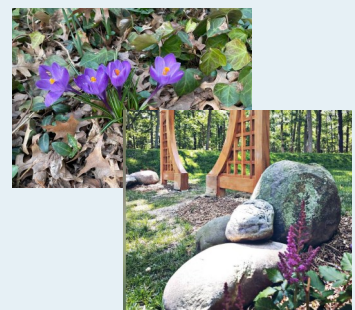
Meet Kathy Hermansson



For just under 20 years, visitors to Murray Grove have been treated to rooms lovingly cared for, decorated and cleaned by Kathy Hermansson, our head housekeeper. Kathy is a steady influence on our staff, maintaining a history of people, events, and changes that no one else holds.

We know Kathy to be a kind-hearted woman, dedicated to her family, including her husband, children and grandchildren. Kathy is equally committed to Murray Grove, her colleagues and our guests. Each personalizing notion found in our guest rooms was thoughtfully purchased and placed by Kathy. She thinks about the impression each of the rooms on our property will make on arriving guests. And her ‘green thumb’ is evident throughout the campus during the spring and summer.

When you’re on campus be sure to say ‘hello’ to Kathy, and pass along our thanks for all she does.



Laurel Amabile
 Jay Atkinson
 Arnold & Julia Bradburd
 Richard Bromley
 Parker Cohen
 Deb Dagavarian-Bonar
 Dominick DePinto
 Carol Fern Culhane
 Ted & Jane Fetter
 Seth Fisher
 Julie Gale
 Joyce & Richard Gilbert
 Shirley Giles
 Robert Gregson
 Louise Gross
 Carol and Carl Haag
 Mark Hicks
 Craig Hirshberg
 Mary-Ella Holst
 Susan & John Hook
 Colleen Huckabee
 David Hunter
 Joseph & Helen Kiskel
 Gerald Lee
 Elaine McConnell
 Kerry Mueller
 Charles & Jean Nelson
 Barbara Nevius
 Gary Nissenbaum
 Tom Owen-Towle
 Bonney Parker
 Alma Penn
 Guy Quinlan
 Tracy Robinson Harris
 David Sailer
 Nadine Sapirman
 Ron & Patricia Schaeffer
 Donna Simonton
 Vanessa Southern
 Richard Speck
 Marian Stuart
 Carol Taylor
 Janet Tillman
 Kate Walker
 Ned Wight
 Norma Winther
 Karen York

President's Message continued

Maturity and spiritual growth were expressed in major outreach to and collaboration with six other organizations serving similar missions. Homecoming 2021 "Rise Up for Justice: Renew in Peace" provided a large message of the continuous intersectionality of justice.

As we launch into 2022, Murray Grove is served by a small but strong board and an incredibly dedicated and loyal staff. We embrace the challenges of justice and equity for all marginalized people and provide conduits for youth, young adults, LGBTQ+, and all ages to be welcomed, to rest and renew and to engage in this important work.



*Reverend Samuel Prince,
 President of the Board, MGA*

Celebrating our 250th Anniversary

The 250th celebration of Universalism is now almost two years past, but your generosity of support is forever. The plaques pictured below have been installed in the Fireside Room of the Murray Grove Lodge to express our gratitude for your gifts. They will be a reminder to all who visit or stay at Murray Grove of the deep and lasting roots of Universalism and the wonderful people who helped to celebrate its 250th anniversary. Contributors' names appear to the left and below the photo on this page.



First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, CA
 First Universalist Church of Santa Paula, CA
 First Universalist Church of Brooklyn, PA
 Universalist Society of Southern Delaware

With Our Thanks To Our Annual Fund Donors

Beacon Unitarian Universalist Congregation
in Summit
Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation at
White Plains
First Unitarian Congregational Society Brooklyn
First Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hunterdon
County
Minneapolis First Universalist Church
Shore Mosaics
New York State Convention of Universalists
Unitarian Universalist Funding Program
Pennsylvania Universalist Convention
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton
St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education
Unitarian-Universalist Church, Washington Crossing



Messages from Camping in the Grove

Laurel Amabile
Amazon Smile Foundation
Linda Benson
Linda Bonk & Richard Brown
Julia & Arnold Bradburd
Richard Brewer
Jef Buehler
Judith Carluccio
J. Calvin Chatlos
Parker Cohen
Kathleen Cosgrove
Gail & Peter Costanza
Deb Dagavarian-Bonar
Linda Dahdal
Liz DeBeer & Ted Wardell
Dominick DePinto & Craig Hirshberg
Doyle R. Dobbins
James Ellis
Elizabeth Erbaugh
Natalie Fenimore
Carol Fern Culhane
Jane & Ted Fetter
Sarah Fischell
Douglas Ford
Linda Foshee
Bonnie Gilbert
Shirley Giles
William & Amanda Gillum
Cheryl Green
Louise Gross
Ken Haag
Rev. Carol & Carl Haag
Sonia & Olaino Hardaway
Heim Family
Barbara Heisler
Susanne Henshaw

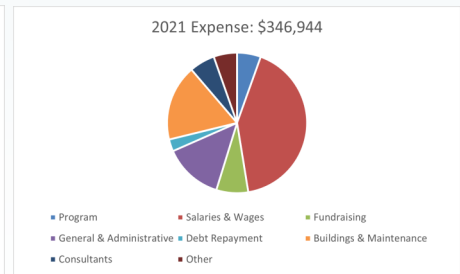
David Hoffman & Sharon Copeland
Cori & John Hoffman
John & Susan Hook
Cameron Howe
David Hunter
Betty J. Jacobson
Chris & Virginia Jarocho-Ernst
Diem Jones
Jay Kiskel
Don Low
Karen Nalbhone
Charles & Jean Nelson
Avadhesh Nigam
Susan Oldroyd & Lance Miller
Claudene D Oliva
Jay Pacitti & Lara Campbell
Ilene Palena
Bonney Parker
Joanie Parks
Chelsea Pascoe
Nancy Pietrulewicz
Paul & Nancy Pinson
Linda & Bruce Pollack-Johnson
Pat & Doug Radtke
Donna Renfro
Anne & David Sailer
Louis & Nadine Sapirman
Ronald & Patricia Schaeffer
Donna Simonton
Christine & Jim Sturm
Rev. Robin Tanner Alderman
Carol Taylor
Jaco ten Hove
Janet Tillman & Richard Speck
Denice Tomlinson
Liz Tortorella
Joseph Toy
Lisa & Kevin Trayner
Cathy Vandegrift
John & Wendy Venezio
Michael Waas
Lynn Whitney
Ned Wight
Keith Wilson
David Winther
Karen York

About Us

Murray Grove is a Universalist gathering place inspired by the concept of radical hospitality. We provide the time and space for rest, renewal, inspiration and growth through in-person and online programming. We are housed on 20 acres nestled in the NJ Pine Barrens, and are available year-round for overnight accommodations for up to 40 people in our guest houses and 35 more in our campground seasonally. Visit our website "All Events" page to learn how we support people to create a world of greater kindness and justice.

Financial Stewardship

Murray Grove Board and Staff take the stewardship of the generous gifts given by individuals, congregations, foundations and other organizations seriously. We are a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit registered with the office of the Attorney General as a charitable organization in the State of NJ. Gifts are accepted by check, credit card, via online donations, and in the form of stocks and securities. If you would like to make a legacy gift to Murray Grove, please contact Barbara@MurrayGrove.org.



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PLACE
STAMP
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