



MURRAY GROVE RETREAT AND RENEWAL CENTER



2020 Annual Report to the Murray Grove Community

April 2021

MURRAY GROVE THRIVED IN 2020

2020 was the Sestercentennial, the 250th anniversary of the first Universalist sermon in the New World given by John Murray in Thomas Potter's chapel on September 30, 1770. For a decade, Murray Grove prepared to celebrate our Universalist heritage and all that it has meant and continues to offer.

The Universalism Sestercentennial Celebration was presented over a 3 day weekend, October 3-5, 2020, as a virtual event. There were gatherings and presentations Friday evening, Saturday during the day and evening and Sunday. On Sunday the worship service was live streamed from First Universalist Church in Minneapolis, MN.

Our analysis shows that we reached people from 55 congregations in 25 states and Canada (including the congregations who streamed the service). People who registered for the weekend comprised 47 congregations in 24 states, plus Starr King School for the Ministry, Meadville Lombard Theological School and Harvard Divinity School. We'll never know exactly, but an estimated 1,000 or more people participated in the live streamed service on Sunday from First Universalist Church in Minneapolis.

Huge gratitude to the core planning committee (Joyce and Rev. Dick Gilbert, Rev. Liz Strong, Jay Kiskal, Rev. Barbara Coeyman, Rev. Mellen Kennedy, Bonney Parker and to all who participated in visioning this event over the past 8 years. Special thanks to the major presenters Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd, Mark Hicks, Rev. Justin Schroeder and to ALL who made the celebration possible.

We welcomed our new Executive Director Diem Jones. Following an extensive search, Mr. Jones was selected and began his work with Murray Grove two weeks before the pandemic required the organization to shut down all activities. (see his article page 3)

Programs went virtual. The staff jumped into the new world of producing Murray Grove programs synchronously – Coming of Age, Camping in the Grove and the women's retreat. Diem Jones created numerous virtual programs: Book Party at the Grove, Across the Faith, Music at the Grove, Grove Nutrition, Mind/Body/Spirit, Movement and Now Is Our Time.

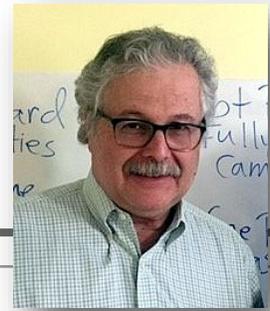
Facility Upgrades With spontaneous foresight the Murray Grove board decided on numerous facility upgrades that were carried out during the pandemic when guests could not be welcomed on site. The list includes: new windows, central air conditioning, individual door locks and new mattresses in both guest houses; a new oven and range in the kitchen; bathroom upgrades in the lodge and Weakley guest house; and a new, lighted sign on Route 9. Comfort for all guests!

The Hand in Hand A representation of the Hand in Hand was finally delivered to its home on the Murray Grove campus. Built and delivered by Amish craftspeople, flying a flag of Love, it provides a symbol of the origin of this historic site, a teaching tool about 18th century travel and a fun object for climbing, learning and play.

Proud Member of UUACCC



Message from the Murray Grove Association President



Dear Friends of Murray Grove,

This has been a year of tragedy, sorrow, and hope. My heartfelt condolences to all in our Murray Grove family who have experienced loss this year due to Covid. The pandemic has impacted Murray Grove in many ways. We had to curtail onsite retreats, gatherings, camps, and weddings, the bedrock of our hospitality enterprise. This resulted in a devastating reduction to our earned income. Our new Executive Director, Diem Jones, started his tenure at Murray Grove two weeks before the governor enacted Covid restrictions curtailing retreats. Our close-knit staff was forced to work remotely. Even the Board had to change their day long, onsite, board meetings into short, Zoom meetings. Yet amid all this turmoil, Murray Grove has pulled through and continues to serve.

To offset the loss of hospitality income, our wonderful supporters stepped up financially and contributed at the highest level ever recorded. I would like to give a special thanks to Rev. Carol Haag and the Development Committee for leading this effort. I'm also grateful for our continued association with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ocean County, who despite having to meet virtually, continue to be our reliable partner. This, in addition to a PPP grant from the government allowed us to maintain our staff without any layoffs. When we couldn't hold onsite retreats, Diem engineered Murray Grove Online, virtual presentations of music, dance, mediation, faith, and wellness. We were able to adapt our onsite popular programs such as Camping in the Grove and the Women's Retreat into effective virtual events. The 250th Anniversary Homecoming was converted to a fabulous virtual event and we hosted more participants than ever before.

Since we weren't hosting guests onsite, we took the opportunity to make some needed upgrades to our facilities. New windows and central air conditioning have been installed in both guest houses. Door locks have been installed in all guestrooms along with new mattresses and bedding. A new oven and range have been installed in the kitchen. The bathroom in the Lodge has been renovated and renovation work has started in the Weakley guesthouse, resulting in renovated bathrooms throughout the facility. We also have a new, more easily navigated website. Thanks to those who contributed to the Sestercentennial Fund, a 26 foot facsimile of the Hand in Hand now greets guests and will eventually become a playground for youngsters.

Despite all the activity and improvisation, everyone here at Murray Grove misses having you come and enjoy the peace and restfulness Murray Grove offers. It's been too lonely here. There are promising signs that we will be able to host retreats again. The vaccine rollout is coming along, and the governor issued guidance allowing summer camp again and our outdoor camping sites are already being booked. Despite the promise, this will still be a challenging year. Even if we can book retreats this summer and fall, our annual income will be drastically reduced. We will have to again rely on our wonderful family of donors to help us through. I am confident that Murray Grove will not only survive this crisis but will thrive in our 251st year.

Thanks again for your support.

Dominick DePinto, President



**Murray Grove Retreat
& Renewal Center
Staff & Caretakers**

Diem Jones, Executive Director
Evelyn Benton, Chef/Operations Coordinator
Deb Wilczek, Bookkeeper
Lisa Arcoleo, Development Coordinator
Geraldine Valecillos, Administrator
Kathy Hermansson, Housekeeper
Kathryn Nevins, Housekeeping
Caroline Tomko, Housekeeper
Mike Park, Handyman
Lynda Smith, Caretaker & Kitchen Assistant
Craig Hanlon, Caretaker & Kitchen Assistant
Othello Walik, Caretaker & Kitchen Assistant
Elke Valladares, Financial Business
Management Consultant



A Special Thanks to Lynda Smith!

As our senior Caretaker/Host, Lynda has served Murray Grove for 5 years. Lynda's onsite presence, her welcome to visitors and guests, and her enthusiasm for Murray Grove are infectious. She is the face of Murray Grove to all who come onto the campus.

**Here's how
to reach us!**

Murray Grove Retreat & Renewal Center
PO Box 246
Lanoka Harbor NJ 08734
Phone: 609-293-5558
www.murraygrove.org

431 Us Hwy 9 at Church Lane
Lanoka Harbor NJ 08734
murraygrove@murraygrove.org

***From the
Executive Director***



Dear Friends of Murray Grove,

I am honored to have been chosen to lead Murray Grove and serve as it's Executive Director. I began, in late February, with an understanding of the programs and operations; however, all of our worlds began to transform with the advent of the pandemic, less than two weeks after my start date. The challenge was clear – how can we continue serving our community, while keeping our doors closed?

We continued with our facility upgrades, added a menu of online programs, installed a tribute to Hand in Hand and embarked in converting our core programs to virtual formats...indeed a challenge we could not have undertaken without your support.

A year of challenge, a year of grace and a year of building upon the foundation gifted to us by John Murray, Thomas Potter as well as scores of elders and descendants.

My background in the arts prompts me to champion expand our programs to reflect and include the diversity of cultural bridges amongst us. Stay tuned for literary & arts programs that reflect our mission.

What we build can only reflect the principles of our faiths, kindness, justice and love as with your continued support we will raise the beacon of light from these hallowed grounds to serve you, your family and our growing community. I look forward to the shifts and pivots we will embark upon to the shine the gem we have all grown to love and embrace....Murray Grove.

Diem Jones, Executive Director



3500 Email
Contacts

1959
Facebook
Followers

Murray Grove Association Board 2020

- Antonia Bel Delgado
- Dominick DePinto, President
- Sonia Hardaway
- Rev. Suzanne Henshaw, Secretary
- Rabbi Marc Kline
- Bonney Parker, Vice President
- Rev. Samuel Prince
- Patricia Radtke, Treasurer
- David Sailer
- Ron Schaeffer

Calendar of Events 2021

Coming of Age –March 12-13

Camp in the Grove—Grades 4-7, August 1-6

Senior Camping in the Grove—Grades 8-10, August 8-14

Homecoming—Rise Up for Justice, October 1-3

Women’s Retreat-November 5-7

Free Online Programs

- Book Party at the Grove
- Music at the Grove
- Across the Faith
- Grove Nutrition
- Mind, Body, Soul
- Movement (Qigong)
- Now is Our Time

Fond Farewells to:
 Dominick, Sonia and Ron who depart from the board having completed their terms of service. They helped to guide Murray Grove through The challenging year of the COVID pandemic.

And Welcome to:
 Antonia, Marc and Samuel who joined the board in 2020.





Our Deepest Gratitude to All Our 2020 Donors

Murray Grove Association Honor List of Unitarian Universalist Congregations 2020

Congregations responding to the Annual Appeal

Community Unitarian Church of White Plains, NY
Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist Community, NJ
First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, DE
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Southern Delaware
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Princeton, NJ
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South Jersey Shore, NJ
First Universalist in Minneapolis MN

Sestercentennial Participating Congregations

Congregation of Wyoming Valley, Wilkes Barre, PA
First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, Ashby, MA
First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Francisco, CA
First Universalist Church of Brooklyn, PA
First Universalist Church of Santa Paula, CA
Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, OH
UU Congregation of Monmouth County, Lincroft, NJ
UU Church of Muncie, Muncie, IN
UU Ocean County Congregation, Lanoka Harbor, NJ
UU Church of Olinda, Ruthven, Ontario, Canada
UU Congregation of Queens, Flushing, NY
UU Church in Reston, Reston, VA
UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY
UU Society of South Suffolk, Bay Shore, NY
UU Church at Washington Crossing, Titusville, NJ
Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware, Lewes, DE





Grants

Fund for Unitarian Universalism
New York State Conference of Universalists
Pennsylvania Universalist Convention



Sustainability Pledgers

Amabile, Laurel
Boyer, Charles
Bradburd, Julia and Arnold
Branum, Phyllis M.
Chatlos, J. Calvin
Costanza, Gail and Peter
Culhane, Carol Fern
Dagavarian-Bonar, Deb
DeBeer, Liz and Wardell, Ted
DePinto, Dominick and Hirshberg, Craig
Ellis, James
Fetter, Jane and Ted
Gilbert, Richard and Joyce
Giles, Shirley B
Gregson, Rob
Haag, Rev. Carol and Carl
Hardaway, Sonia and Olaino
Henshaw, Suzanne
Hoffman, Cori and John
Hook, John and Susan

Hunter, David and Mueller, Kerry
Jacobson, Betty J.
Jarocho-Ernst, Chris and Virginia
Kline, Marc and Bernard, Lori
MacDonnell, Susan
Nelson, Charles and Jean
Panzetta, Anthony and Malloy, Kevyn
Parker, Bonney
Pascoe, Chelsea
Perry, Ann C. and Allison, Mark S.
Pollack-Johnson, Linda and Bruce
Radtke, Pat and Doug
Sailer, Anne and David
Schaeffer, Ronald and Patricia
Sturm, Christine and Jim
Tanner, Robin Alderman
Tillman, Janet and Speck, Richard
Tomlinson, Denice and Jeff
Wight, Ned
York, Karen

Annual Fund Gifts

Bowling Fundraiser

A. Molly Company
Anonymous
Mondo Melodies Productions, LLC
Palena, Ilene
US Lawns Of Ocean County

Camp Support

Campbell, Colin and Rehbein, Jennifer
Erbaugh, Elizabeth B.
Hardaway, Sonia and Olaino
Howe, Ted and Burke-Howe, Kathy
May-Ortiz, Jennifer L. & Burden, Andrew
McCourt, Colleen
Patel, Tuli & Kuriyan, Vikram
Preuninger, Barbara
Snively, Jennifer and Tom
Steinert, Kari
Weiss, Eva Rogals and Mark

Coronavirus Appeals

Archibald, Cameron
Baker-Hallowell, Diane
Benson, Linda and Schuman, Russell
Brown, Pamela
Christiana, Karen
Cosgrove, Kathleen and Parker, Harry
Dagavarian-Bonar, Deb
Fontneau, Peter
Gietz, Gloria
Gilbert, Richard and Joyce
Giles, Shirley B
Gregson, Rob
Guenther, Maxine Forster & Bob
Henshaw, Suzanne
Hoffman, Cori and John
Hook, John and Susan
Horvath, Vi
Infante, Patricia Hall
Jacobson, Betty J.

Kay, Linda
McConnell, Elaine
Meredith, Karen
Newland, Paul and Day, Mary Carol
Palena, Ilene
Palmer, David and Luann
Paulson, Robert
Phetteplace, Bob
Pierce, William
Rhoads, Christine
Sammler-Michael, Edward Scott & Anya
Schaeffer, Ronald and Patricia
Scherfen, Anneliese and Brown, Matt
Scott, Faith Grover
Silver, Dan
Stevens, Teresa
Trayner, Lisa and Kevin
Winther, David and Annette

Continued Page 7



Lisa Arcoleo Birthday Appeal

Baggarley, Andy
 Benton, Evelyn
 Bock, Richard and Claire
 Brown, Pamela
 Ford, Douglas
 Gribble, Paula
 Low, Don
 Pietrulewicz, Nancy
 Severance, Art

Giving Tuesday

Anonymous
 Benton, Evelyn
 Buja, Chris and Melanie
 Buja, Rosemary
 Dieterich, Charles B.
 DiGenno, Thomas
 Evanini, Jamie and Keelan
 Firespring Foundation
 Givesource
 Fischell, Sarah and David
 Haag, Rev. Carol and Carl
 Hendry, Ruth
 Hook, John and Susan
 Kelleher, Jennifer
 Kiskel, Joseph and Borland, Helen
 Kiss, Gabor
 LaBonnie, Melissa
 May-Ortiz, Jennifer L. & Burden, Andrew
 McAnerney, Lydia
 Morse, Mia
 Nalbone, Karen
 Parks, Joanie
 Penn, Alma
 Pizzi, Geraldine

Radtke, Pat and Doug
 Roots & Wings Drum Choir of UUCMC
 Sammler-Michael, Edward Scott & Anya
 Sinclair, Dorothy
 Sinclair, Lisa
 Tippins, Colby
 Toye, Joseph
 Winther, Norma
 York, Karen

Hand In Hand Replica

Andrea Perry Lerner
 Anonymous
 Benson, Linda and Schuman, Russell
 Bonney Parker
 Brown, Laura Beth
 Culhane, Carol Fern
 Frost, Claudia
 Hofbauer, Joelle and Hursch, Herbert
 Ochsner, Michele
 Pennsylvania Universalist Convention
 Rev. Carol and Carl Haag
 Sprowls, Tracy
 UU Church of Athens and Sheshequin
 York, Karen

Sestercentennial Commemorative Campaign

Alexander, Julie and Gale
 Amabile, Laurel
 Atkinson, Jay
 Bradburd, Julia and Arnold
 Bromley, Richard
 Cohen, Parker
 Culhane, Carol Fern
 Dagavarian-Bonar, Deb
 DePinto, Dominick and Hirshberg, Craig

Fetter, Theodore and Jane
 Fisher, Rev. Seth
 Gilbert, Richard and Joyce
 Giles, Charles
 Giles, Shirley
 Gregson, Robert
 Gross, L.W.
 Haag, Rev. Carol and Carl
 Hicks, Mark
 Holst/Quinlan, Mary-Ella and Guy
 Hook, Susan
 Huckabee, Colleen
 Hunter, David and Mueller, Kerry
 Kiskel/Borland, Joseph and Helen
 Lee, Gerald
 McConnell, Elaine
 Nelson, Charles and Jean
 Nevius, Barbara
 Nissenbaum, Gary
 Owen-Towle, Tom
 Parker, Bonney
 Penn, Alma
 Sailer, David
 Sapirman, Nadine
 Schaeffer, Ronald and Patricia
 Simonton, Donna
 Southern, Vanessa
 Strong, Rev. Elizabeth
 Stuart, Marian
 Taylor, Carol
 Tillman, Janet and Speck, Richard
 First Unitarian Universalist of San Francisco
 First Universalist Church of Santa Paula, CA
 Walker, Rev. Kate
 Wight, Ned
 Winther, Norma
 York, Karen



Leave a Legacy of Love

Generations before us established Murray Grove, others sponsored rebuilding the Weakley and Friedrich guest houses after the hotel burned down. Still others save Murray Grove by arranging the preservation of land as part of the Edwin B. Forsyth.

YOU can Lead a Legacy of Love too:

- ◆ Ensure further generations will come to know a thriving Murray Grove.
- ◆ Inspire your family, friends and fellow Unitarian Universalists as you set an example of generous support.
- ◆ Join the John Murray Legacy Society and be recognized for your commitment to the future of Murray Gove.

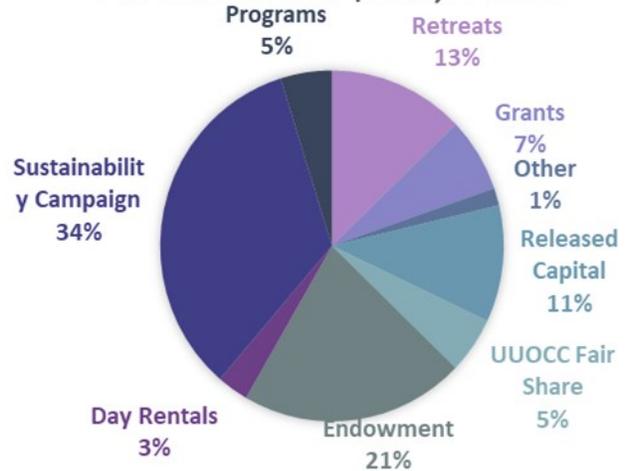
GIVING IS EASY

- ◆ Designation as part of your estate planning
- ◆ Bequest—gift through your will
- ◆ Contingent beneficiary of a retirement account
- ◆ Charitable gift annuity—receive quarterly payments for life
- ◆ Umbrella gift through the UUA umbrella giving program.

Participating in the John Murray Legacy Society ensures the continuation of your values in the world. You can help guarantee that the great Universalist tradition of LOVE will live on.



2020 INCOME \$369,113.00



2020 EXPENSES \$373,264.58



Tribute to Gary Nissenbaum

Murray Grove is blessed to have received top flight legal advice from a law firm that focuses on nonprofit law, including representing houses of worship. We honor and thank Gary Nissenbaum and members of his legal staff for their commitment to social justice and their pro bono service to Murray Grove.

In the fall of 2018, Gary Nissenbaum offered his help and that of The Nissenbaum Law Group on a *pro bono* basis to assist Murray Grove to gain more control over its endowment held by the UUA. For the next year Gary and members of his staff spent many hours looking into every detail of the situation. As a result, Murray Grove received the full amount requested from the endowment for all of the upgrades to the facility which were accomplished when the pandemic kept guests away from our doors.



Thank you & Farewell



Lisa Arcoleo. Lisa served Murray Grove for 7 years as outreach assistant, programs coordinator and Sustainability Coordinator. Her ability to keep track

of every detail, send warm letters of gratitude and her artistic sense have enriched Murray Grove's connections to guests, friends and supporters. We will miss her skills, her artistic presence and her love of Murray Grove.



Geraldine Valecillos. Geraldine served Murray Grove for 6 years as Booking Coordinator. In effect Geraldine was the voice of Murray Grove to the world. Ge managed the administration, calendar, events and bookings,

making sure that everyone who came to Murray Grove was welcomed. We will miss her abilities and her warmth and her love of Murray Grove.

THE WOODS @ MURRAY GROVE

In 2018, with the help of community service volunteers, the woods behind Cone House were cleared in specific areas to create several campsites.

Initially, it was only to be used for overflow bookings if our guest houses were full. But the following year, a marketing/reservation company was researched out and found to be a resource for renting the sites, at a nominal fee (5% of revenue), to anyone throughout the country through HipCamp.com.

The first year we had just a half dozen or so reservations all season. But, then in 2020, the pandemic created a whole new avenue for people interested in camping, and getting out of the house, safely.

Our first reservation came in March from a gentleman hoping to escape the virus in New York City. He found us on HipCamp.com and stayed for six weeks! Immediately after he left, at the end of April, reservations starting coming in and didn't stop until November of 2020!

We hosted groups virtually every weekend and some during the week throughout the summer, generating over \$10,000 from camping fees and exposing MG to hundreds of people who might not otherwise know about us.



Eagle Scout Project

Outdoor

Bulletin Board for Murray Grove visitors and campers

Thank you, Donovan!

