

## **THE STORY: Flashes of Creative Spirit**

For many years, MoonTree waited in simple surroundings for a group to gather around the "Loose Parts" of her to become available to eager participants...to those interested in creating a space for others to put their hand to making what was in their souls. For... our prime conviction is that this is how the Earth will heal herself.

The group gathered, coalesced, felt itself committed and began to open its old doors to strangers, neighbors and friends.

The first attempts to follow a commitment to the creative spirit in whomever we met led to:

- three workshops with clay,
- building a clay oven,
- erecting a cob cottage ,
- creating a tree house,
- conducting a contadora doll workshop
- conducting several Aldo Leopold bench workshops
- providing spiritual companionship to ministers
- planting and burning prairies

Today, eager to expose the creative spirit to those around us, we move to Put Art Where People Are, and so in the last year, seven local artists, neighbors of ours, exhibited their works in the Ministry Center 's large public dining room.



**Steven Weiner, Tom Rzepka-Artist & Sisters, Loraine Wojcik-Artist, Sr. Marguerite**

### **ART EXHIBITS FOR LOCAL ARTISTS**

7 local artists exhibits

50+ visitors for each exhibit

Visibility for each artists

Beauty surrounding those eating

## **THE STORY: Voice of Possibilities Arises in Our Midst**

Last year, the President of Heartland Artists **Guild** of Plymouth, Indiana experienced a serious illness, Vera Tiani-Shuppert, MoonTree elder, stepped up to assume a co-director leadership role for the group.

Vera, as a member of the Plymouth Community, for years has listened to and observed the needs of Plymouth and found that exposure of the Artist's guild to the general public was wanted. Even as the **Guild** was struggling, Vera proceeded to help find a more visible site for their gallery, promote an exhibit of children's art which attracted over 200 viewers, and write for and receive a grant to Heartland to provide studio space for workshops and individuals. She has also begun the collaboration of MoonTree Community and Heartland Artists.

## **The Story: The River Sings**



**MoonTree Elders: Vera Tiani, Becki M Moore & Dan Shuppert**

Several Plymouth Citizens have given priority to ensuring the citizens of Plymouth recognize and value their Yellow River. To this end they have organized and conducted, over the past 2 years, a day-long festival highlighting the River.

Two MoonTree members participated fully in planning and carrying out this endeavor for the past two years, namely Dan and Vera Tiani-Shuppert.

2008 saw more MoonTree "Elders" Becki Moffett-Moore and Sr. Mary Baird, participate in the event by a joint booth with Heartland Artists and Flat Lake Watershed Group. In addition, MoonTree heard by phone in 2008 that the Yellow River Festival was in financial stress. The festival needed \$400 to enable it to meet its payments. MoonTree contributed this amount to the Festival group out of its money From RECYCLING.

### **THE IMPACT:**

MoonTree recycled 141.3 tons of metals in 2007-2008. Marshall County benefited by not having the landfills nearby inundated with this tonnage. The Yellow River Festival benefited by receiving some of the money from these recycling efforts.



### THE STORY: Widening the Table

In November of 2007 the Evangelical Ecumenical Women's Caucus 2008 Annual Conference invited MoonTree Elder Sr. Mary Baird to present a workshop on "Sacred Longings" in which she incorporated the "Art of Possibilities" and "Conversation Cafes". The jist of the workshop was to encourage courageous conversations in each person's religious community back at their home base.

### THE IMPACT:

This conference was attended by women and men from over 20 states and the following came in emails from several attendees:

"Thank you so much for pulling together the materials for the workshop. Several people have made a special point of thanking for the experience.

And the learning will continue to nourish my spirit and mind."  
Rev. Janet Lundblad, Chicago

"I felt that I learned a lot about bringing up issues in a positive way—and I was more than a little humbled by realizing that I hadn't been paying attention entirely to good things that were already happening." Linda Williams, Chicago

### THE STORY: Lightening the Load

During 2008 and 2009 the Ministry Center replaced their 75 year old boilers with Geo-Thermal Heating and Cooling. The old pipes, radiators and valves had to be removed for the new to be installed.

MoonTree saved the Marshall County community landfills from the onslaught of 141.3 tons of metals by moving these 283,697 pounds to the salvage yards.

### THE STORY: Sculpting Our Own Hermitage

Beginning in 2005 MoonTree began to work together and gather people from over the Midwest to work on a natural building project. This effort, over a long 3 years, would produce a thatched, strawbale and cob building to be used as a place for prayer, a hermitage. Since it's completion on October 18, 2008, it has been visited by over 100 people. Who might be attracted to work on a natural building project such as this and why?

- An architect, a city building managers from Ann Arbor,
- An intentional community member from Wisconsin, with 2 mentally challenged men.
- Boy Scouts,
- A number of Roman Catholic Sisters,
- Several Indiana University students,
- An Oberlin College graduate with a natural building business in Chicago,
- A naturalist from the SB city parks,
- A PhD student from Notre Dame,
- 3 teenagers and their therapist uncle from Ann Arbor,
- 2 guidance councilors from Plymouth,
- A fine arts potter from South Bend,
- A chemical engineer retiree from Saginaw,
- A Mission Integration Director
- An auto mechanic
- A Licensed Registered Nurse
- A truck driver
- A Retreat/Conference Center Director
- ...and many others totaling about...100 persons

### THE IMPACT:

The persons attracted to the cob hermitage project were from varied communities and occupations. The knowledge and skills they brought back to their communities only serves to widen the prospect for more sustainable housing in the future. The impact upon the visitors to the PHJC Ministry Center cannot really be tallied. For the first open-house

as the building was beginning, over 75 persons came in one afternoon just to see the process. Throughout the 3 years of building, visitors came from all over the U.S. There was no record kept of these visitors.



**Participants in first cob building workshop 2005**

(I am awaiting info on the use of the EEWC logo. If we can't use it we will have to use this pic.)



**Thatching the cob hermitage: MT Elder--Dan Shuppert, Thatcher--William Cahill, Earthen Finisher—Anna Wolfson.**