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Koinonia Honored with Peace Award

by Amanda Moore

At the annual Peace Colloquy in October, Community of Christ President Stephen Veazey said, "Peace is always completed in community, not within individuals alone."

And it's not completed in just any type of community, he went on to say, but a sacred community, where "we find the presence of repentance, forgiveness, speaking the truth in love, hospitality and reconciliation, the tender trust of knowing and being known, and the assurance that our friends in the community would lay down their lives for us."

Through our shared life and consistent service to others, through the birthing of several organizations, through perseverance during particularly difficult times—both the 50s and the 90s—God continually places his gracious hand of blessing upon us and continually calls us to sacred community, a demonstration plot for God's kingdom.

On Oct. 3, we received the 2008 International Peace Award, honoring our faithfulness to this calling, our witness as a signal community of justice and Christ's peace. We could never fully express the depth of our gratitude for being recognized with this award. The committee shared that experts in the field consistently named Koinonia first among outstanding intentional community in the

"God continually places his gracious hand of blessing upon us and continually calls us to sacred community, a demonstration plot for God's kingdom."



Koinonia Stewards Norris Harris and Bren Dubay received the International Peace Award, which includes a \$30,000 honorarium and a bronze peace sculpture mounted on a walnut base.



Pictured: Bren Dubay, Norris Harris, Stephen Veazey. Photo by Amanda Moore

nation. As an honoree of this award, Koinonia joins a list of such distinguished individuals as Jean Vanier, Ela Gandhi and Jane Goodall.

The award includes a \$30,000 honorarium, a bronze peace sculpture mounted on a walnut base, and is given in conjunction with a two-day Peace Colloquy. This year's colloquy, "Signal Communities: Hope of Zion," began with keynote addresses by Stewards Norris Harris and Bren Dubay, followed by an inspiring live performance of the musical, "Cotton Patch Gospel." Fourteen Koinonians made the 1,000-mile trek to attend the colloquy in Independence, Mo., where, through small groups and workshops, we had opportunity fellowship with people from all over the world.

In a workshop I helped lead, we discussed community decision making and conflict resolution. I quickly let the group know that Koinonia didn't have all the answers. When asked what causes conflict at Koinonia, I listed over 20 things, just off the top of my head. The

list ranged from worship style to hygiene, from food preferences to how we would transport the peace award home to Koinonia; the irony—a peace award causing conflict—wasn't lost on the audience. The room exploded in laughter. Nothing appeared on the list that couldn't also be true for any church, family, or group of friends living together.

The difference, though, is that as a sacred community, we intentionally seek to work through these things, attempting to display the tender trust of Christ, who opened his inner life and emptied it into the fellowship of disciples, the koinonia. We do this, we pour our lives into the koinonia because we believe in his life and in his death, Christ was showing us that it's through pouring our lives into the sacred community, through true koinonia that God's shalom, God's peace and wholeness, will one day become the world's peace.

Thank you for this honor. We are grateful, humbled, and we are inspired with renewed zeal. To listen to Norris' or Bren's speech and to learn more about the International Peace Award, visit www.cofchrist.org.

Striving to Provide a Holistic Education

by Nichole Del Guidice, Jimmy Foglio and Seth Schroerlucke

After countless hours spent in preparation and prayer, on August 4, we took a big step in fulfilling our desire to found a Koinonia-based school, expanding our home school tutoring program.

We now have three tutors, 12 students, a Pre-K program, and opportunities for the students to study many unique subjects and skills in addition to their academic curriculums. The students also share in the daily life of Koinonia adults, and practice Koinonia's five pillars—prayer, work, study, service and fellowship.

Ida and Kellan Prendergast make up the Pre-K program, inspired primarily by the work of Dr. Maria Montessori. Through games and other exercises, we study numbers, letters, arithmetic and writing, and assist them in the

movement toward independence.

The older students spend their mornings focusing on academics and their afternoons on an array of alternative classes. We begin each morning with a time of centering, or focusing our thoughts, often through prayer, a quiet game, sharing, or music. Then, depending on the day, we study Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, and Physical Education.

After sharing lunch in the dining hall with the Koinonia community, the students engage in a variety of activities as they study community building, practical skills, and attend various electives, some offered by community members and friends. Community Building allows them to explore their role in community and see how we are all connected,

both here at Koinonia and beyond, through such things as working on the farm or visiting a neighbor. The students learn from one another in Practical Skills, baking bread, making jam from blueberries, and exploring other useful crafts.

A few of the electives that we have offered are Ethics and Spirituality, Fantasy Football, and Public Speaking.

The students also benefit from the variety of talent found at Koinonia. They've learned woodworking with community novice Nashua Chantal, constructing birdhouses and using power tools. They're becoming more limber, practicing yoga each week with local friend Marisol Pomeroy. Another local friend, Cecilia Tuck, meets with the students weekly to share her knowledge of the beautiful

"We begin each morning with a time of centering, or focusing our thoughts, often through prayer, a quiet game, sharing, or music."

Spanish language, which is muy excelente. Apprentice Adam Gulledge helps with higher level math and the students are learning Kung-Fu with community novice Ana Navarro.

A highlight for the students has been in constructing a sweat lodge, to correspond with the Native American unit in Social Studies. With the help of Nashua, the students designed and built the lodge, which everyone is welcome to use.

We are excited for the rest of the year to unfold and cherish the opportunities we will have to make a difference in each other's lives. The students bring so much energy and spirit to Koinonia, lifting it by their presence. As always we appreciate your input and prayer.

Committed for Life

by Amanda Moore

In April, David Castle became a Steward, making a life-time commitment to Koinonia. And on Sunday, August 17, he fulfilled that commitment.

Doctors discovered a cancerous mass in David's lung sometime late spring. After undergoing a 20-day radiation treatment, the cancer was not contained. By August, David was too weak for chemotherapy. Though the outlook was grim, David and his wife Ellie held fast to the joy that so richly permeated their life. Over 100 friends came to David's memorial service.

Afterwards, in true David fashion, we rode in the wagon to Picnic Hill. We sang hymns as we placed the marker where, buried inside the Steward bowl he received in April, David's ashes will rest.

David warmed our hearts and fed our spirits with his jokes, his affirmative spirit, and his affectionate smile. He has been a blessing to us since his arrival 10 years ago. We sorely miss David's presence, but we trust that just like Clarence and so many of our other dear friends, David's spirit will continue to guide the life we live here on the farm. Though we could never fully convey the significant role David played in our life at Koinonia, here are a few meager attempts to share with you a glimpse of David's spirit:

David was a teacher and spiritual director to all of us, even in his last weeks. The last Tuesday we gathered to sing, he simply sat and listened. Then he reached for his Bible. As he read to us, his eyes tripped over words, and he stumbled to pronounce them. After a few painful minutes, Ellie gently touched his hand, saying, "Do you think that's enough?" He waited, then responded, "I think that's enough. I'm finished," and closed his Bible. It was as if he knew his role of teaching and directing us had just ended, and hoped he had done enough to point us in the right direction. —Amanda Moore, Apprentice

My wife and I were exploring being a Quaker, so I approached David, a former Quaker minister, with some basic questions. In a gentle, silent confidence, David handed me one of his "Get Out of Hell Free" cards, and shook my hand. It was the only interaction we would ever have, but in his card and the way he approached me, I found the gift of love and a philosophy with which I have always agreed, but never could have put into words. —Jimmy Foglio, Neighbor

David gave me several rocks over time....they all had words on them. "Courage" "Strength" and each time one would land in my hand, it was the time I needed that particular energy. Nice things about rocks, they are solid friends, just like David! —Jo Knox, Steward

I was one of many who visited David the night before he died. I stood still next to the hospital bed, and in my arms Kellan waved and whispered "Bye" and watched quietly.

Since that day, I have felt a sense of urgency, but I also feel a slowing, an easing into the realm of the Spirit as David's presence fades. David's vision was one of his greatest gifts, and I have a renewed sense of resolve and determination to carry forward the vision for Koinonia that he invited us to share. I thank God for allowing my path to cross with David's, and for the many gifts that will continue to multiply as we pass on these stories and memories for decades to come. —Sarah Prendergast, Steward

If you have any memories, thoughts, or stories about David, we would love to hear them. Please send them to info@koinoniapartners.org.



David was a great teacher, and even taught us the best way to enjoy chocolate.

"I'm a Certified Maybe" by David Castle

The love boat has smashed against the daily grind. The doctor said, "He has a cancerous soft mass on his right lung." Thud! Thud! This trauma calls for serious exploration. Upset the apple cart, throw out the calendar, prepare for the unknown, call the family, alert friends, and pray.

Since a physical "episode" this spring, I have been under a doctor's scrutiny. Amid many tests and to put it in layman's terms, "You need to have your head examined," and to no one's surprise there was nothing there. "Your lungs have a soft spot." Thud! I was hoping my heart might have a soft, tender spot, but in the lungs—that sounds

too much like curtains.

So, I look at Ellie and she looks at me from the perspective of 58 years of marriage. Gratitude runs deep, and I say "You're beautiful." Memories exude!

No one knows the will of God well enough to know what time one has left. But, if one is going to reflect on one's end time, you have to do that while still alive. Marlo Morgan says that breathing does not tell you whether one is really alive. It only tells us when the body is ready for burial. (Still, that breathing factor is kind of important.)

"Die young and as late as possible." I'm young at heart and slightly older in my

Joy to the World

by Ellie Castle

It is with a heart overflowing with gratitude that I try to express how helpful your presence at the service of remembrance at Koinonia, your many cards, e-mails, and phone calls have been. Some of you knew David for a long time, while others met him only briefly, but you all caught the essence of his life and lifted up those qualities that made a difference in your life. We all miss him, but are trying to live out what he taught and showed us. Thank you all. God is so good!

At the Service of Remembrance for David in Iowa, the pastor proclaimed that this was the first funeral he ever had for a gang member! This ominous beginning was soon clarified to reveal that he was referring to David's originating the Joy Gang.

While working at a group home for teens in 1996, David became concerned about low morale among the staff and began

recruiting members for the Joy Gang. All one had to do to be a member was to accept a free card that encouraged them to spread joy. Such quotes as "Don't let reality wreck your day," "A smile is the shortest distance between two people," and "Don't be caught with your humor down," described what Joy Gang members were to demonstrate.

To his amazement, this simple challenge took root and became so popular that thousands of people in these 12 years are card-carrying members—waitresses,



David and Ellie, captured in joy and in love lasting beyond time.

nurses, friends, family, visitors, students, etc. He was even enrolling Hospice staff the last week of his life.

So if you are a Joy Gang member, keep the joy flowing, and if you wish to join the gang, I would be glad to send you a card.

Joy to the world—what a legacy!

Castle Fund

A long-held dream of David and Ellie's was to construct a building at Koinonia to assist in the daily ministries. We're currently raising money to construct this building—the Meeting House, which will include a new kitchen, dining hall, guest housing, classrooms, and a space for larger gatherings. Before David died, we began the Castle Building Fund to help raise the money to make this dream into reality. We'd love for you to help us with this by supporting the Castle Building Fund.



On Picnic Hill, this plaque marks where David's ashes will be buried once his body is returned from Emory University, where he donated it for research purposes.

With a Passion to Teach

by Nichole Del Guidice and Seth Schroerlucke

When we decided to come to Koinonia, we were spending a lot of time thinking and talking about education, about what is essential, how people learn, what they learn, and why they learn it. We were brainstorming a potential school, one focused on developing the whole person, the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual self.

As our internship progressed, we began to hear others speak of a shared vision for a community school at Koinonia. Several families were already home schooling their children with the primary home school tutor, Emory Cortese, until she left Koinonia last spring. It seemed the perfect time to begin to rethink and reorganize what Koinonia's home school program could be.

Then we met Jimmy Foglio, a middle school teacher, who desired to become more involved with Koinonia and also in alternative education. Soon, several families were attracted to this idea. Together we studied the Georgia standards for education and gathered information on Montessori, Waldorf, and other forms of holistic education. Through reading, conversation, and reflection, we formed a vision for the program.

In the summer, we met with the students and their parents to create individualized curriculums based on their interest and goals. We see ourselves as guides in the learning process, helping the students find and answer their own questions. This independence is also exhibited in our home school meetings once a month in which the students discuss and decide on ways to create a better learning environment and

express ideas about ways to make it better.

This home school program is our joy and our teacher. Each day we are challenged to discover and meet the needs of the students. It is a work in progress for all of us. Together we, the tutors, students and parents, stretch and grow into our new roles and environment. In many ways, it is another experience of community.

We are continually amazed by the students' creativity and intelligence. We are inspired by who they are and who they are becoming. It is our hope that one day this program will evolve into an alternative school, a school that promotes peace and wholeness.

Below, the vision we hold for the home school program:

- *Instilling a reverence for life and an integrated spirituality*
- *Knowing and valuing one's self and respecting others*
- *Understanding and engaging in one's relationship with their community and society as a whole*
- *Developing one's morality and an awareness of personal and social responsibility*
- *Empowering persons to see and move towards their potential*
- *Fostering a love of learning, a pursuit of knowledge and the ability to think critically*
- *Encouraging the development of creative and practical skills*
- *Collaborating with parents to foster their child's learning*

Sacred Community: The Building of a Tender Trust

by Bren Dubay

"What happened this week for which I am most grateful? What happened this week for which I am least grateful?"

These two questions are often heard around the farm these days. One of my most favorite times of the week is when I meet with the interns in what we call a spiritual companion group. A candle is lit; we sit in silent prayer and, when we are ready, each of us, in turn, speaks quietly. We share something from the week that has been particularly life giving — a consolation — and we share something from the week that has been particularly difficult — a desolation.

We are practicing "the examen," a spiritual exercise St. Ignatius of Loyola introduced centuries ago. We believe that God reveals himself in our daily experience and in these revelations gives us a direction for our life and lives. It can be difficult in this busy world to take the time to listen. Spiritual companion groups help us to quiet ourselves and listen.

It is not only the interns who meet in a spiritual companion group, but the whole community — apprentices, novices, partners and stewards. Every other week, groups of 4 to 6 of us spread out around the farm. Each of us has either entered into a covenant, making a life-commitment to God and the koinonia—these are the stewards—or we

are in a time of deeper exploration to discern if God is calling us to enter into such a covenant. Being together gives us the opportunity to support one another in the journey and the discernment.

This is a prayerful time, open to laughter and tears, discussion and reflection, and listening and speaking mindfully and intentionally. We've learned that we must be intentional in seeking to live a life of prayer, work, study, service and fellowship with one another. It doesn't happen easily in the midst of the American culture where "work" tends to trump all other activities, relegating even prayer as something to be done in a few sporadic moments here and there.

Why all this companionship? It helps us live a peaceful rhythm. Meeting as spiritual companions gives us over and over again the chance to "turn it around"—this is what "repent" means—and to find balance.

In a recent talk, Community of Christ President Stephen Veazey spoke of the sacred community as a place where we find the presence of repentance, truth and "the tender trust of knowing and being known." Spiritual companionship is a way to dive more deeply into our shared life. For me, it is like going thirsty to a cool spring lake and drinking long from it. How refreshing it is! Buoyed by these companionships and strengthened from this time together, we go forth to better serve God and God's people.

A Brief Reflection by Bren Dubay

"He's beginning to tell us goodbye."

I remember thinking this so clearly last spring. I stopped breathing. It was Dave's turn to give the lunchtime devotion. For years, I had watched Dave, then 84, work circles around those half, even a quarter of his age. And always, he worked with joy. At lunch that day, the joy wasn't gone, but I knew something was different. He was gentle with us ... he always was ... and he told us that he was going to be

rewriting his job description just a bit, that his body was sending him a message. He grinned a familiar joke he had told us before "I'm young at heart, but slightly older in other parts."

When the Jordans and the Englands founded Koinonia, they envisioned it as a demonstration plot for the kingdom of God. To me, this means we are to give flesh to Jesus' ideals. It isn't about being perfect. We certainly are not that. It's about striving to live the Sermon on the Mount, not simply to recite it.

Dave gave flesh to Jesus' ideals. When you looked at him, you saw someone who earnestly strived to live the Sermon on the Mount. And his life was such a gift to us — it demonstrated for us how to live. His death, also, has been a gift to us — it demonstrated for us how to die.

When Dave no longer could come to the dining hall, to the office, to the chapel, we went to him. At most of the afternoon prayers (5 p.m. Monday through Friday), we sing. It was a Tuesday, and we all piled into his living room. It was packed. And we lifted the roof with song. Dave sang with us, talked with us, joked with us and smiled and laughed with us. He was taking care of us far more than we were taking care of him.

The next Tuesday, he could no longer sing nor talk much, but he could still smile and he certainly managed to squeeze in a joke or two. He read from the Psalms. That was the last day I saw him awake. On Sunday, his spirit left his body.

Dave's gentle goodbye profoundly affected this community. It brought us closer together; it unified us in a way that had not happened before; it made us a family. Our life of prayer, work, study, service and fellowship was a gift to Dave, not a struggle. And he showed us how it could be the same for us.

In the "Cotton Patch Gospel" Musical, Jesus says, "Your assignment is joy." Dave, I like to think about you arriving before God giving that grin of yours, saying like Jesus in that same musical, "I passed."

You sure did. We miss you, buddy.



The Substance of Faith

-an excerpt, by Clarence Jordan

While I admit that love is the greatest of the abiding things mentioned by Paul when he speaks of faith, hope, and love as abiding—the scarcest of these is faith. Though we like to carry around a pocketful of coins on which is inscribed, "In God We Trust," we actually put our faith more in the material upon which this is inscribed than in the God to whom it pays tribute. ...

What is this faith? Let me tell you that faith is not theoretical belief. I would go further and say that faith is not a stubborn belief in spite of all evidence. That is not faith. That is folly. Faith is not belief in spite of the evidence but a life in scorn of the consequences.

Now in Hebrews 11:1, the author gives a definition of this kind of faith of which he's speaking. He says: "Faith is the activation of our aspirations, the life based on unseen realities. It is conviction translated into deeds. In short, it is the word become flesh." So long as that word remains a theory to us and is not incarnated by our actions and translated by our deeds into a living experience, it is not faith. It may be theology, but it is not faith. Faith is a combination of both conviction and action. It cannot be either by itself. ...

Why, then, is it so difficult to have faith? Why is faith so scarce? I think the clue to this is simply fear. Faith and fear, light and darkness, are incompatible. Fear is the polio of the soul which prevents our walking by faith. ...

The purpose and function of fear is self-preservation. Its danger is when it performs its function too well, like an overactive gland. Fear's ultimate enemy is death, and fear can be brought under control only when it is convinced that this archenemy has been abolished... If we are going to be triumphant over fear, we must have an assurance of triumph over death.

The clue, then, to the triumphant faith of the early Christians lies in the power of the resurrection. ... Fear no longer was overactive in them, they could go everywhere, saying, "We must obey God rather than humans. Kill this old body if you will. Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also." It was when Christ raised triumphant over death that fear could be put back into its proper place and faith could shine forth radiantly and powerfully....

When we are given assurance that this Jesus and the kind of life that he lived cannot be put out, that the light is still shining in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it, then we are freed from our fear. Then we can give ourselves to this God and say, "Let all that we have go, even this mortal life also."



From Vietnam to Koinonia: The Long Journey

by Jon Moody and Amanda Moore

• Jerry's desire to draw awareness to the needs of Veterans led him on a 18-month, cross-country bike ride. His desire for true contentment, God's peace, led him to Koinonia.

giving sermons in churches, talking to groups, calling attention to the needs of Veterans. When he made it to Washington, he camped at the Wall, despite laws against sleeping in national parks. At the end of October, he continued the journey feeling a real sense that it wasn't over yet, that there was more he was being called to do. Riding through Virginia, the Carolinas and most of the state of Georgia, he came across Koinonia in February.

When he rode onto the farm, he said it was like he was coming home. In the week he spent at Koinonia, Jerry found something the bike ride hadn't given him—contentment.

"On the road," he said, "I was happy—the happiest I've been in a long time. But [at Koinonia], I'm content. To me, the two are different primarily based on the direc-

tion. Happiness is primarily dependent on everything around me going right. Contentment is primarily dependent on everything inside of me going right."

He decided he wanted to explore life at Koinonia a little further, so he made plans to return for a fall internship. Jerry continued the ride, and headed north, but had second thoughts about finishing the ride after he got hit by a car in Nashville, broke his wrist in Kentucky, and nearly drowned in Missouri. He made some phone calls, and decided not to head west, but to return early to Koinonia for the summer internship.

Now an apprentice at Koinonia, Jerry understands his journey as one of contentment, an inward peace that can only come from above and from within.

"As Jesus said, 'In the world you're going to have trouble,'" Jerry quoted, "but I will give you peace, not as the world gives you. I'll give you a peace that passes all understanding.' That's the peace I find at Koinonia.

"Happiness is primarily dependent on everything around me going right. Contentment is primarily dependent on everything inside of me going right."

In spite of all the madness, the obligations—marketing, products season, all these different personalities—in spite of these things, Jerry said it's like he's in the eye of the storm; he's content.

For a few months, Jerry wondered if, by ending the ride, he had bailed out on the journey. But, finally, he realized that being at Koinonia is like still being on the bike trail. He's still meeting people, still learning, still engaging with those around him.

The journey continues.

Circle News



photo by Kathleen Monts

Mildred Burton proudly displays her certificate and medallion during a Circle meeting.

Circle of Friends member Mildred Burton received the Caretaker of the Year award for West Central Georgia Care-Net. As recipient of this award, Mildred received a medallion and certificate from the Rosalynn Carter Institute, seen in the picture here. Congratulations, Mildred!

Coming in November, the Circle will hold a Thanksgiving Candlelight Service, collecting food donations to distribute for Thanksgiving. For Christmas, the Circle will have their annual Christmas Party at Mom's Kitchen, in Plains, Ga., and then disperse Christmas gifts to our local homebound seniors.

The Joy of Sharing: A Sale to Remember by Jake Warren

The morning was colder than we thought. The skies had stayed clear as predicted, but morning dew covered the tarps. The tarps in turn covered the items we used at the first ever Koinonia Free Yard Sale. We were nervous; none of us had ever hosted a yard sale before, much less a free one, and we didn't know what to expect.

The idea for the sale came to us in the midst of clutter. A bunch of us reformed Spring 08 interns—now apprentices—cleaned Wittkamper one hot summer night in early July, and while sitting on the only spots we could clear on the sofa, we looked around at the overabundance and realized the irony of our situation. At Koinonia, we strive to practice radical sharing. We were

even going through a study session on simple living. However, somewhere along the line we had given and shared with each other to the point where we had actually accumulated more possessions than we had upon our first arrival. This abundance distracted us from the simple, Christ-centered life we were striving for. So we thought we'd do some closet cleaning and share with our neighbors outside the farm who were in real need.

We brought the idea to the community and planned that Koinonia would host a yard sale at the beginning of September. We would collect donated items from Koinonia and the greater Americus community, throw everything on the lawn without a price tag, and give any donated money to the Community Service Ministry, a local ministerial charity.

The plan seemed so simple, but up to the week before the event, uncertainty of the event's success weighed on my mind; it was a new, untested event, and we didn't really have anything collected. Like a kid in the doctor's office waiting for a shot, I closed my eyes and prayed for it all to be over.

But God decided to open my eyes instead. The week preceding the sale, item donations began to flood in out of nowhere,

and fellow community apprentice Adam Gullledge and I could barely finish unloading the truck before being called back into town for another furniture pickup. Community members pitched in with zeal. Our friends at the Fuller Center for Housing and Habitat for Humanity had spread word around Americus. Excitement built up in the neighborhoods. It seemed like this

thing, against all odds, was taking off.

The day of the sale was everything we hoped for—a great day filled with fellowship, sharing,

and melted peanut brittle (okay, we hadn't hoped for melted peanut brittle, but the blessings, man, they kept multiplying). I got to meet many people from the neighborhoods, folks with a deep connection to Koinonia who had stories to tell. To sweeten the deal, the sale ended up raising nearly \$400 without a single price tag.

I truly believe I saw God at work that morning. He took a situation I felt sure was going to be a disaster and turned it into something hard to describe.

The best that I can do is to say that I saw a koinonia that day.



Community apprentice Nichole Del Guidice points out items of interest in the yard sale.

photo by Jerry Nelson

Try On My lens

An editorial featuring the voice of a community member

What is Real? by Jo Knox, Community Steward

Reality is a word that cries out for an “s”...there is certainly more than one reality and they can exist in the same time line with each other. According to Quantum Physics, reality, when reduced to its smallest element, is simply a series of possibilities. Right on QP! I see the timeline I occupy as being in layers, sometimes touching mainstream, sometimes far away. An example would be the difference in reality and all its fixings that Bill Gates and his friends walk in and mine ... almost like being on another planet. Each one is interesting, worth experiencing while adding more possibilities for consciousness to explore.

Throughout my lifetime, I have observed shifts in reality that resemble Teutonic plate action. Some has been called *“According to Quantum Physics, reality, when reduced to its smallest element, is simply a series of possibilities..”* of that movement revolution, technology, and borders. If we comfortable with the shifts, we can stay in everything else around us becomes uncertain and even frightening. All form is in movement according to its kind and together we create the conditions of our experience. It takes courage to allow our creative self to expand personal realities. Oftentimes we have to experience our own consciousness shift in order to prepare ourselves for change. We have human models that light the way for the rest of us and when we are ready, they come into our awareness.

In Koinonia, our reality is based on intentionally creating an environment that encourages love, joy and peace. It takes practice, trust, tolerance and a passionate desire to make it happen. Quantum Physics defines us all as particles sitting in a light matrix communicating with each other. So, we are already sitting in the light, we are connected and the words of Jesus take on a deeper meaning; “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

Permaculture: From Patterns to Details

by Sarah Prendergast

Permaculture is a word that seems to be catching on like wildfire at Koinonia. We hear it in conversations at the lunch table, in the office, and around the farm. We wrote about it in our last newspaper, in our e-news updates, and we’re hosting a Permaculture design course in February. But we know some major questions still exist, like: What exactly does Permaculture mean? How does Koinonia plan to use this concept to re-define and re-vision the plant, animal, and human life on our farm?



Chinese Cabbage; photo by Amanda Moore

Permaculture is a design system for creating sustainable human settlements that work in harmony with nature. It is about principles rather than rules or laws, a fluid concept that can be adapted to any type of climate, any culture or economic system. It works with nature, and tries to look at “problems,” such as invasive species or erosion, as elements of the solution.

One of my favorite Permaculture principles

is “Design from patterns to details.” In June, a team of Koinonians did just that as we welcomed Permaculture Designer Chuck Marsh for a consultation and planning session. It was an intense and inspiring three days, as Chuck masterfully guided our brainstorming sessions into organized lists of needs, resources and priorities. We talked about every aspect of community and farm life we could think of, and after the first day we had narrowed it all down to four major areas to focus on: Agriculture, Built Environment, Education, and Economics. For each area we identified a set of needs and goals.

By the end of the third day, we had come up with a 50-year outlook for Koinonia and a set of goals, including plans to expand our schooling and education efforts, enrich our “soul” cultivation, increase soil fertility, create and implement energy-efficient building designs, and become more economically self reliant. We’ve identified steps we need to take this year in moving toward these goals.

In setting the 50-year outlook, we took what appeared to be a tangled web of human interactions—the desire to nurture our spiritual life, to practice environmental stewardship, to be productive in our work, to help meet the needs of the surrounding community, and to increase our service to others—and came out with a clear idea of where we were headed and an organized plan of how to get there. The experience proved to me that Permaculture includes all elements of a system, from the grass and weeds in the field, the houses we live in, to the social life of the community, our prayer times, even our business and marketing plans. Our interdependence with the land, with God, and with each other had been made clear, and I have a feeling the best is yet to come!

We invite you to embark on this journey with us and share in the abundant harvest. If you want to find out more about what Permaculture is doing for us, and what it could do for you, we invite you to visit the farm and talk with us. Or better yet, sign up for our Permaculture Design Course.



Koinonia: Called to Community and Service since 1942

Although Koinonia returned to its original vision in 2005—to live as an intentional community modeled after the early Church—we continued working to structure a pattern for membership.. At a Covenant Worship Ceremony held on April 24, those of us called to this way of life publicly proclaimed our commitment—to our Creator, and to this koinonia.

During the ceremony, the stewards, those committing for life, read aloud the very same vows that full members took in koinonia’s early days and signed a set of covenants to guide their life here. At that same service, eight people became apprentices and four became partners.

The clear vision that founders Clarence and Florence Jordan and Martin and Mabel England had for Koinonia was realized in 1942. What wasn’t clear then, however, was the structure for how people joined the koinonia and progressed to full membership.

In 1951, after years of struggling with this, members wrote a pledge to be proclaimed aloud and signed by all those called to full membership. It was the first time anything like it was put into writing.

The pledge reads as follows:

We desire to make known our total, unconditional commitment to seek, express, and expand the kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus the Christ. Being convinced that the community of believers who make a like commitment is the continuing body of Christ on earth, I joyfully enter into a love union with the Koinonia and gladly submit myself to it, looking to it to guide me in the knowledge of God’s will and to strengthen me in the pursuit of it.

In October, we held the first Rite of Transition Ceremony, welcoming our first four novices, and honoring David’s life, stewardship and commitment to Koinonia. In our chapel next to the covenants stewards signed in April, we placed a marker, reminding us that although his body is absent from us, his spirit continues in the koinonia with us.

Each April, we will hold a Covenant Worship Ceremony, where new stewards make their vows and new partners are welcomed. Rites of Transition for those exploring and discerning the call to the Koinonia—those becoming apprentices and novices—happens various times throughout the year. Come celebrate with us at these ceremonies as we seek to demonstrate God’s kingdom.

Come Walk with Us

There are three ways to come and walk with us for a while: As a neighbor, a visitor, or a community intern.

Neighbors stop by for pecans, chocolate, study sessions and friendly conversation. They join us for lunch, potluck, chapel, special events or even kickball.

We welcome **visitors** all year round. Whether joining us for prayer, work, study, service, fellowship or retreat, we love hosting visitors. Our guest housing accommodates groups and families as well.

The **intern** program lasts roughly three months, introducing the individual to the prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship of the community.

If neighbors, visitors, and interns want to explore the possibility of joining the community long-term, they petition the community. If affirmed, the individual becomes an **apprentice**. The apprenticeship lasts at least nine months. The apprentice, prays, works, studies, and serves with the community, but unlike interns and novices, apprentices do not have a defined program.

After completing the apprenticeship, a person—again by petition and affirmation—may deepen his or her involvement in the community by becoming a provisional member, called a **novice**. A novice spends a minimum of one year to prayerfully listen and discern if she or he is being called long-term to this way of life.

If so, the person may be invited to pass from provisional membership to full membership, becoming a **steward**. One becomes a steward because one feels called by God to this way of life. To show this, the steward freely, joyfully, and lovingly commits to the set of covenants held by Koinonia.

For those interested in supporting and being a part of Koinonia’s mission and vision through a role focused more on their work on the farm rather than through stewardship, we invite them to become a partner. Partners are full members and sign an annual letter of agreement.



photos by Amanda Moore

Prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship guide our life together.

Joining Hands, Walking in Faith

by Bren Dubay

We walk in faith. In the last issue of Koinonia Farm Chronicle, we announced the Joining Hands Capital Campaign with a goal of \$2.5 million. And now, a few short months later, we are told that the country and the world are in the biggest financial melt down ever seen by humankind. I repeat — we walk in faith here at Koinonia. We didn't give up in past hard times—in the 50s, when the bullets were flying and the economic boycott was choking us, nor in the 90s, when spiritual and financial crises sent us spiraling. We've kept going for 66 years, and we'll keep going now. Just as we know you will.

We've got people to serve, buildings to repair, equipment to update and a new building to construct, — we call it the Meeting House. It will be a terrific asset to the work we do. It will bring under one roof many of our hospitality and educational projects and activities. We'll have meeting space for larger groups so we can expand our offering of conferences, workshops, seminars, and classes. We'll move our library and archives into a climate-controlled space to better preserve their contents. And the building will include more housing for visitors and even a new kitchen and dining hall.

In August, an anonymous donor pledged a \$50,000 challenge gift to be matched dollar for dollar for the construction of the new building. Thanks to all of you who have already responded to this challenge. To date, we've raised nearly \$34,000. We're so close! And thanks to all of you who will send a gift designated for this purpose. We'll let you know when we meet the goal.

We thank you for supporting the campaign in anyway you can. We're more than halfway to the goal of \$2.5 million. Give us a call at 229-924-0391 or go Online to www.koinoniapartners.org to find out more information.

Bulletin Board

- We're excited about this second issue of *Koinonia Farm Chronicle*. Currently, we plan to publish two issues a year, but the challenge is fitting it into our budget. Would you be willing to help? If everyone receiving this issue sent just \$1.00, the cost would be more than covered.
- We'd love to send you our monthly e-mail updates. Send an e-mail to news@koinoniapartners.org or visit www.koinoniapartners.org.
- Do you have old records of Clarence Jordan talks? Any notes or printed material from Koinonia's early days? If so, we'd love to receive copies. E-mail us at info@koinoniapartners.org or write to: Koinonia Farm Attn: Archives. Thanks for your help in this treasure hunt!
- This coming year, we hope to do a major overhaul of our mailing list. All we need is your help. Please send corrections and Amanda will see to it that the changes are made. E-mail info@koinoniapartners.org or call 229.924.0391.
- Wish List: 18,000 newspaper subscribers; 17,000 people ordering products; 1,200 Adopt-a-Tree sponsors; a dozen really good interns; frequent flier miles; a tractor and a wood chipper, in good repair; enough smiles to last all year.

Planned Giving: Continuing the Koinonia Vision

By Joseph L. Lapp, Mennonite Foundation

"We seek a new spirit...a spirit of partnership with God and people everywhere."

Koinonia was founded as a humble attempt to discover anew the meaning of being part of the kingdom of God. What a vision! Such a vision is not realized without a committed heart and an intentional life. Today Koinonia continues the original vision by practicing peace, sharing with others, treating all with dignity and justice, living simply, and being good stewards of God's gifts.

When you send a donation to Koinonia or purchase products, you assist in the ongoing operation of the daily programs of Koinonia. But what about the long-term vision? Is the vision of Koinonia only for day-to-day operations, or does the vision extend into the future five, ten, twenty-five years, or more?

Planned giving is the way an organization such as Koinonia can anticipate future program growth. Your current support is important, but for sustaining the long-term vision, planned gifts are vitally important.

So what is a planned gift? In practice, a planned gift may simply be the develop-

ment of a charitable gift annuity or remainder trust, which creates a charitable gift expectancy (future income) that will mature at a specified time, such as the donor's death. Or a planned gift may simply be a paragraph in a Last Will and Testament or Living Trust that says: "I give, devise, and bequeath to Koinonia Farm, of Americus, GA, ten percent (or whatever percentage you choose) of my estate for its general purposes." Though planned giving does not provide immediate funds for Koinonia, these gifts will provide support for Koinonia long-term.

The Mennonite Foundation, Inc. provides assistance to Koinonia and their donors who wish to develop planned gifts such as gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, charitable bequests, or who wish to do more comprehensive estate planning to benefit the ministries of Koinonia. We provide assurance to donors and to Koinonia that the long-term financial commitments to the donor will abide by all legal and tax requirements.

If you are interested in discussing opportunities for developing a planned gift or other gift opportunities, please contact our development office at 229-924-0391 or e-mail info@koinoniapartners.org.



Koinonia Products Catalog

The annual catalog is in the mail! Recently, Koinonia intern Jan Porter-Hirsche found a copy of the 1969 catalog with this description. Almost to the letter, it's as true today as it was then:

"Koinonia was founded in 1942 as an effort to bear witness to Jesus' teachings on peace, brotherhood/sisterhood and sharing. Its influence has been felt in all parts of the world. From the very beginning, Koinonia has been self-supporting. Its primary source of income at present is from the sale of products listed in our annual catalog. By buying them, you not only get high quality merchandise, but you help to provide much needed employment for about a dozen of our neighbors."

Koinonia is not merely 575 acres in southwest Georgia. It is not only a business, but a brotherhood/sisterhood, and you are our partners. If you have not received your catalog, give us a call at 229-924-0391 e-mail products@koinoniapartners.org. Thanks for your purchases and for your friendship.

Making a Gift to Koinonia - Reply Form

- ☐ I would like to subscribe to the bi-annual newspaper, \$5 a year.
- ☐ I would like to receive: (monthly e-mail updates, annual catalog.)
- ☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$_____ to be used where most needed.
- ☐ Enclosed is a gift of \$_____ that I would like to be directed specifically to (name project or fund):
- ☐ Castle Building Fund
 - ☐ Meeting House
 - ☐ Adopt a Tree, orchard upkeep
 - ☐ Bakery renovations
 - ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Please contact me about planned giving opportunities.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Country: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Credit card information, if applicable: check one: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Number: _____ Expiration date: _____

KOINONIA FARM PERMACULTURE DESIGN COURSE

*Course includes all fundamental elements of
Permaculture Design as well as hands-on projects
with optional Certificate Track*

February 12-21, 2009
with optional day on Feb. 22

Tuition \$750

Includes instruction, materials, dorm-style rooms & meals

*\$50 discount available when you bring a 2nd person

*\$50 discount for camping

Work exchange discount available

Class will be held at Koinonia Farm, an intentional Christian community in peaceful rural Georgia whose mission includes "embody(ing) peacemaking, sustainability, and radical sharing." Featuring instructors Chuck Marsh and Patricia Allison of Earthaven Ecovillage, with Bob Burns, Isabel Crabtree & guest speakers.



For more information contact:

**Sarah Prendergast 229.924.0391, sarah@koinoniapartners.org
or Isabel Crabtree 828.252.4930, georgiapermaculture@gmail.com**



Students, teachers and friends with visitors from El Salvador.

photo contributed

POEMS

HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

Have you seen me?
I lost me 3 days ago in the
woods.
I miss me.
If you see me,
please tell me.

Sol Pomeroy
12 years old

NICKY

I have a teacher, Nichole.
And she is mature but not old.
And from where she lives,
She gives and she gives.
And clears away gross mold.

Grace Lyman Barner
10 years old

Insects are Beneficial!

by Ben Thornburgh (12 years old)

You might have heard that insects are little worthless critters that carry diseases around, but I can tell you one thing for sure; that is wrong. Did you know that if spiders went extinct, humans would die in just a few weeks? There are many insects that help keep the earth healthy, clean, and alive. We benefit from their strengths, and they rely on us to help keep them here. Pesticides not only kill insects, but also other plants and animals, so if you're about to spray, take my advice and put down the bottle.

You may be thinking: "Nasty little Lady Bugs! They are trying to take over my garden!" Guess what? They are eating aphids that try to kill your garden. This is just one of many, many different insects that are helpful to the earth. You may think that honey bees are worthless critters that go around and sting people, but they help pollinate the earth. Without honey bees, the earth wouldn't last very long at all. Ground Beetles can be found all over the world. They have a very large variety of preys that are also pests. If I were you, I would go ahead and stop killing insects ... that is if you want the world to last.

Insects: Friend or Enemy?

by Adrian Navarro (14 years old)

-An excerpt from Adrian's book in progress:
"Insects of Koinonia"

As a young entomologist at Koinonia Farm, studying insects has been a delight and an adventure. I have watched these beautifully colored insects day in and day out, and just living among them is so interesting.

I believe that all insects have a divine purpose on Earth and should not be treated as pests or filthy creatures, but, rather, as our brothers and sisters, family. We were all put on Earth to benefit from each other's strengths and to help with each other's weaknesses. One example of this is the benefit we get from the wood burring insects who clean forests of dead, decaying trees. Other examples include the flies, dung beetles, and many others insects who feed on animal droppings. I thank them, for without them, we would live in a dung-filled world.

Insecticides and other forms of insect-killing chemicals really aren't necessary.

They kill many innocent, even friendly insects. They are harmful to the people, animals and the land near the sprayed areas. Even though some insects do damage trees and crops, is it really worth killing them with artificial means and with dangerous chemicals? Ask yourself this question and then remember that they are just like us, just trying to survive by eating and breeding.

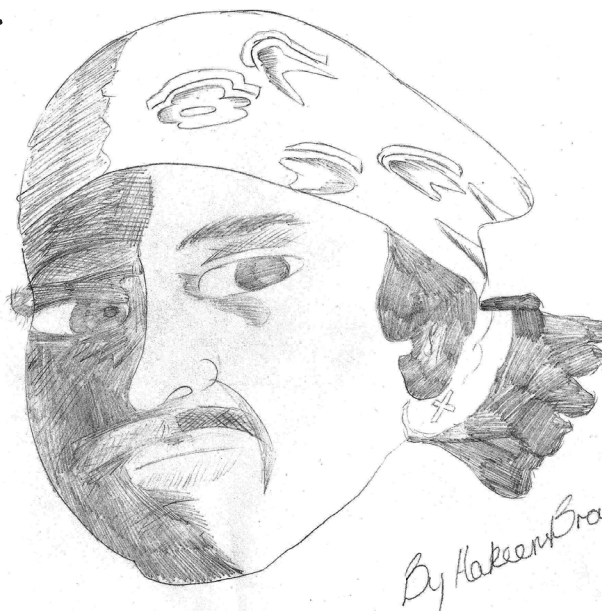
There are more natural cures to deal with insect proliferation. All we have to do is put a little research into it and see

which insects or other animals help control those that damage the food crops that we carefully

tend to and nurture. Mantises, lady bugs, ground beetles and tiger beetles are some beneficial insects that help gardens and crops stay healthy, naturally.

To conclude, I just want to remind you that insects are our friends, not our enemies. Love and take care of the nature around you and it will love and nurture you.

"I believe that all insects have a divine purpose on Earth and should not be treated as pests."



By Hakeem Brown, 12 years old



Kellan Prendergast, 2 years old



Eagle by Mary Thornburgh, 16 years old



Mask by Ana Laura Navarro, 11 years old

Porque Vine a Koinonia : Uno de esos llamados

by Ana Navarro

Mucha gente me pregunta por que vine a Koinonia. En breve: vine a Koinonia como respuesta a un insistente llamado del espíritu tanto mío como de mis hijos.

Siempre he vivido en grandes ciudades. Mi profesión como antropóloga cultural me ha llevado a viajar y vivir en estas ciudades. Sin embargo, después que nacieron mis hijos la ciudad comenzó a secar nuestros espíritus. La selva de concreto con su constante ir y venir, el ruido de fondo perenne, el aislamiento, la alienación de la naturaleza, el empequeñimiento del espíritu, el constante bombardeo del consumismo y el materialismo frenético nos tenían bastante cansados.

Mis dos hijos, Adrian & Ana Laura, comenzaron a inquietarse, y comenzaron



The Navaros: Ana Laura, Ana and Adrian, living out many of their dreams
photo by Amanda Moore

hablar de mudarse al monte, aprender a sembrar orgánico (sandía & fresas), tener contacto con animales silvestres y vivir con la belleza natural a nuestro alrededor. Por mi parte yo imaginaba vivir en una cabanita y continuar con mi negocio de diseño gráfico, expandir mi práctica del Reiki y volver a trabajar con la arcilla. En verdad creo que lo que estábamos describiendo era el llamado anhelante del espíritu a construir paraíso. Era el fuerte anhelo del espíritu de comulgar en la naturaleza, Dios, y de reno-

vase en el silencio, trascender y crecer.

Yo pensaba que quizás cuando mis hijos crecieran y tuvieran empleos podríamos juntar nuestros recursos y comprar un terrenito para comenzar a construir estos sueños. A insistencia de ellos comencé a investigar en el internet sobre siembra orgánica. Fui entonces que aprendí sobre las fincas

orgánicas a través del mundo. Fue muy emocionante. Llore frente a mi monitor, no podía hablar, mis hijos me miraban alarmados. Me sentí profundamente conectada con esta fuerza, este movimiento, supe que podíamos cambiar inmediatamente, no teníamos que esperar para vivir el llamado de nuestros espíritus.

Consulte con mis hijos que contestaron con brincos de emoción. Después de solicitar y entrevistarme con varias comunidades me pareció ver claro que Koinonia

podría ser ese lugar que nuestros espíritus nos habían estado mostrando. Koinonia era mucho más que una finca con un huerto orgánico. Koinonia tenía un lugar en la lucha por los derechos humanos en el sur, con una historia potente, inspiradora. Aquí nació Habitat para la Humanidad, una de las organizaciones que más admiro. Y estaban hablando de educación experimental, sustento propio, energías alternativas y sobre todo, espiritualidad y de recrear el Cielo en Tierra. El espíritu de honrar al mundo y su humanidad lo permeaba todo.

En Septiembre 8, 2007 llegamos para nuestro internado, en Enero continuamos como aprendices y recién en Octubre 8, 2008, al año exacto, comencé el noviciado.

Hoy veo como nuestros espíritus nos fueron llamando poniendo a cada uno de nosotros esas imágenes persistentes y el deseo de cambiar. Ahora estamos aquí contribuyendo en la construcción de esta visión y nuestros espíritus tienen finalmente el espacio para expandirse y crecer.

Mi consejo: Si tu espíritu te habla, escucha y sigue su llamado. Pues puede que te lleve al cielo en la Tierra.

Why I Came to Koinonia : One of Those Callings

by Ana Navarro

Many people ask me why I came to Koinonia. In brief: I came to Koinonia as a response to the insistent calling from my and my children's spirits.

I've always lived in big cities. My profession as a cultural anthropologist has allowed me to travel and live in these cities. But, after my children were born, life in the city began drying up our spirits. The concrete jungle with its constant coming and going, perpetual background noise, isolation, alienation from nature, belittlement of the spirit, constant bombardment of consumerism and frantic materialism made us weary.

My two kids, Adrian and Ana Laura, became restless and started speaking of moving to the wilderness, planting their own organic garden, being in touch with wild animals and natural surroundings. As for me, I could visualize living in a small

cabin while continuing my graphic design business, practicing reiki and working with clay. Truthfully, I believe we were experiencing the longing of our spirits to recreate paradise—the strong, spiritual desire for communion with nature, with God, for renewal through silence, for growth and transcendence.

I pushed the thought into the future, though, thinking perhaps when my children grew up we would be able to buy a little piece of land where we could make these dreams come true. But my children persisted with this vision, so I looked Online for information about organic farms. I discovered such farms all over the world! It was very exciting. I cried as I read about them on my computer screen. My kids looked at me and were puzzled. I felt profoundly connected with this force, this movement, as I realized that we didn't have to postpone living this life we were

called to live.

My kids got very excited about this, leaping with joy. After applying and interviewing with several of the communities, it became clear to me that Koinonia could be the very place our spirits were showing us in our minds. In addition to the organic farming, Koinonia had a place in the fight for human rights in the South, with a very inspiring and powerful history.

Habitat for Humanity, one of the organizations I most admired, was born here. Koinonians spoke of experimental education, of sustainability, of alternative energy and, most of all, of recreating the kingdom of God on Earth. The spirit of honoring the world and humanity permeated all.

On September 8, 2007, we arrived for an internship and in January, continued as an apprentice. Most recently, on October

A Novice Look

Novices spend a minimum of one year following a defined program of prayer, work, study and service. They meet regularly with a "clearness team" for help with discernment, and gather monthly for spiritual companionship. Novices engage in both individual and group study and commit to spend time in spiritual retreat, in community service, and to visit at least one other intentional community.

Through prayer, work, study, service and fellowship, the novice seeks to discern God's calling to full membership in the community as a steward.

8—one year after our arrival—I became a novice. Today, I see how our spirits were calling us by giving us those initial images and desires. Now we are here to be a part of this vision, and our spirits finally have a place to expand and to grow.

Therefore, my advice: Listen when your spirit talks, and follow its calling. It can lead you nearer to the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Koinonia Farm Chronicle

Editor in Chief:
Amanda Moore

Contributing Editor:
Bren Dubay

Production Editor:
Ana Navarro

Web site: www.koinoniapartners.org
E-mail: info@koinoniapartners.org
Ph: 229.924.0391
Fax: 229.924.6504
1324 GA Hwy 49S
Americus, GA 31719

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Baby geese, taken April 2008
photo by Amanda Moore

When you come to the farm, be sure to come by the barn! You'll see Clarence the bull, over a dozen goats, two pigs, and 60-some chickens. We might even have the heifer and calf by then. On the way to the barn, you might cross paths with some of the free-range chickens, the flock of geese, and guineas. Make sure to stay a good distance from the two hives of Italian bees—don't worry, they're marked!



All grown up, adult goose taken September 2008
photo by Amanda Moore

REIKI
At Koinonia

Reiki Level I Workshop
On Trust & Faith

Feb 28 & March 1, 2009

Out of town all inclusive weekend: workshop, materials, room & meal - \$190
Commuters: workshop & materials - \$145

For more information contact
ANA at 229.924.0391 or
ana@koinoniapartners.org