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## In Transformation of the Soil

by Nichole Del Giudice

Koinonia gardens lie just southwest of the main campus, abutting pecan orchards to the north, the old cow barn to the west, and a small fruit orchard on the south side. Koinonian Brendan Prendergast manages the gardens and cares for the animals and fruit trees. Fredo Jackson—a fellow intern—and I help Brendan in the mornings and some afternoons. After Chapel we walk toward the garden. The peach and pear trees have just begun to blossom dotting our horizon with glinting pink and white flowers. I feel we are at the beginning of something beautiful, something beyond my scope of imagining. I daydream back to the Jordans and the Englands walking this land for the first time in 1942.

It's still cool in the mornings, so we work quickly to warm up, sharing in labor and conversation. We are in the process of fixing up our nearly-full greenhouse, fencing the existing garden and adding to it the two acres used in peanut production last year. We try to do as much as we can by hand to reduce our impact on soil structure and fertility. This week we're building hives for the bees to arrive soon and sheet mulching beds for the strawberry crowns that just came in. Sheet mulching is a permaculture technique, one of many techniques we're

implementing on the land. Permaculture, from 'permanent culture,' is a design system for creating sustainable environments. In *Introduction to Permaculture*, a book we often turn to for guidance, Bill Mollison writes of permaculture, "It is a philosophy and approach to land use which weaves together microclimate, annual and perennial plants, animals, soils, water management and human needs into intricately connected, productive communities."

I am discovering how applicable and essential this way of thinking is on the farm. Brendan salvages containers to collect rainwater and we dig 'swails' to capture run-off for the blueberries we are propagating. Each facet of the farm is incredibly interconnected—the health and vitality of one part depends on every other part. This is a lesson we see mirrored each day in the intricacy of human relationships at Koinonia. Diversity, another foundational concept for this community, is also crucial for the health and longevity of the land. With this in mind, we are making a shift from a predominantly vegetable plot to include trees, soft fruit, and perennial herbs and flowers. In being conscious of the long-term effects of our actions, we hope to create an ecosystem that will feed and sustain itself.



Nichole plants Chinese Cabbage in our organic garden, thinking of the wonderful dishes our community will enjoy when it's harvesting time.

photo by Amanda Moore

We have an ambitious season ahead of us and, thankfully, many willing helpers. We look forward to supplying the produce for our community's kitchen and bringing our fruits and vegetables to a local market this summer. As much I look forward to the strawberries and Tuscan kale, my greatest pleasure comes in witnessing the harmonics between the land and the people at Koinonia. It truly feels like a demonstration plot.

## Koinonia Announces Joining Hands Capital Campaign

by Bren Dubay

*We live simply at Koinonia and share with one another, our neighbors, and our visitors. It often feels like the parable of the loaves and the fishes: we wonder how we can possibly manage this or that, then a way opens. I love it.*

Much is old and patched around here—we joke that it adds to the charm. The truth is, though, that many of them can't hold anymore. So we are launching a capital campaign to raise funds for some of the major work. The goal is a stretch for us—\$2.5 million—but the good news is that we have already raised \$1.35 million in gifts and pledges.

The campaign is divided into four areas: current ministries, a new building, capital improvements, and a reserve fund. Because it is important that we first of all be servants to all, we have earmarked \$800,000 for the

expansion and enhancement of our services to others.

With all our visitors, groups, neighbors and community activities, we have long needed a meeting space and kitchen facilities that can serve a larger group. So we're planning to build what we're calling The Meeting House. It will come in two phases: Phase one, estimated to cost \$600,000 includes the kitchen, dining hall, library and archives, and meeting space. Phase two will come later, adding classrooms and housing for guests. The Meeting House will be "green," furthering our dream of serving as a demonstration for sustainability and care of the earth.

Recently, while celebrating Ellie Castle's 80th birthday, the Castle children Shari, Rick and Gretchen, announced the David and Ellie Castle Fund. All the money

currently raised and all that is yet to be raised for this fund will be designated for construction of The Meeting House. So far gifts and pledges total \$101,800. What a beautiful way to honor Dave and Ellie.

*"It often feels like the parable of the loaves and the fishes: we wonder how we can possibly manage this or that, then a way opens. I love it."*

For capital improvements, we seek to raise \$600,000 to renovate and "green" existing space and replace all sorts of equipment. The remaining \$500,000 we'll hold in reserve for future works of service and capital improvements. Many have already contributed to the reserve fund by including Koinonia in their wills, by setting up charitable gift annuities, or by

making Koinonia the beneficiary of life insurance policies.

We are deeply grateful for all who have already contributed and thank all of you who will be considering a gift. In the fall, we'll send more details about the campaign. Until then, feel free to ask for more information at [www.koinoniapartners.org](http://www.koinoniapartners.org), via e-mail at [contributions@koinoniapartners.org](mailto:contributions@koinoniapartners.org), or by phone at 229 924-0391.

I continue traveling around the country, speaking to various groups and visiting friends of Koinonia. One of the greatest joys of the work I do as a community member is the opportunity to meet so many wonderful friends of this sacred place. It would be an honor to stop by to see you. Your prayers and financial support have kept us going for more than sixty-five years now. Thank you.

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# Living as a Demonstration Plot

by Bren Dubay



The Koinonia family gathers outside of the chapel one chilly morning, ready to hear our work assignments and get moving.

photo by Thomas Monahan

*"They who have an unsatisfied appetite for the right are God's people, for they will be given plenty to chew on."*

I like Clarence Jordan's translation of the fourth Beatitude. I'm particularly fond of the word "chew."

Not that long ago—in May 2003—I was living comfortably in Texas. Life was good. I wasn't looking to go anywhere or do anything new. But I couldn't get out of my mind this farm I had just visited a few weeks before. Standing in the pecan orchard, walking across the hardened red clay, wherever I went in those few minutes while I was there, I couldn't deny it—I had felt, tangibly, palpably, God's wild love. And I was hungry again. So, I moved to Georgia.

The experiment in Christian living at Koinonia began in 1942. It followed the description of the early church as found in the Acts of the Apostles until 1993. That year, for noble reasons, Koinonia shifted the experiment a bit. Throughout its history, Koinonia's neighbors have been mostly African-American, but no African-Americans had chosen to become

members of the koinonia. Community members were White, and the seasonal

employees were mostly African-American. So, in 1993, Koinonia moved to a non-profit corporate structure, shifting the focus of our service to come from the businesses of Koinonia, rather than from the communal life of Koinonia. If Koinonia could add additional employment and leadership opportunities, perhaps that would attract our neighbors to become more involved.

The experiment didn't work as well as hoped. Koinonia struggled mightily in the 90s, but as has been true again and again, God remained faithful and blessed us with people who refused to let the experiment die. I came in 2004 to fill the position of executive director and joined in the effort to help Koinonia continue to find its way out of hard times.

We quadrupled our prayer times. Much needed to be done, and we definitely needed help from our "senior partner." Like that friend mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Luke—the one who goes to a neighbor at midnight, asking for a loan of three loaves

of bread—we persistently knocked on God's door. What does God want next from Koinonia? How do we best serve in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? We kept asking, "We are your servants, oh, Lord; what do we do with this unsatisfied appetite for the right?" We were hungry for answers to these questions. The response we heard was, "Keep working, keep praying, and keep inviting others to join you. Be obedient and return to the original vision."

So, we have. In 2005, we recommitted ourselves to communal living. And God has blessed us with more diversity than perhaps in our history. We currently have 9 stewards, 4 partners, 7 apprentices and nine children, and we hope for novices by this time next year.

We have been working to revitalize so much of our community—ministries, vision, mission. But we have not done it alone. We've had many friends willing to help. Don Mosley, Brad Smith and other brothers and sisters at Jubilee Partners, David Janzen, and all the folks at Reba Place Fellowship have been extremely helpful during this transition. We've

had wonderful professional consultants: Hilton Segler helped with the revitalization of the pecan orchards; Malcolm Beck advised our farming and ways to return our soil to good health; and Diana Leafe Christian gave an inspiring workshop that, among many other good things, led us to restructure our community meetings to be far more productive.

Among the most important tasks completed thus far is structuring how one enters and progresses to full membership and a long-term commitment. You'll find more about these listed in other sections of our newspaper.

Perhaps you'll want to pause with us for a moment of prayer each day? We ring the bell here at 10:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m., and 8:30 p.m., and we stop whatever we are doing to observe a moment of silence. We take this time to remember that we are called to hunger for what is right and then move into action ... except at the 8:30 bell, when we usually move into our beds for some much-needed rest.

God has blessed us. God continues to give us much to chew on. We are grateful.



## The Call to Membership

by Bren Dubay

Since recommitting ourselves in May 2005 to Koinonia's original mission—to be an intentional Christian community—we've been gradually clarifying how one enters the community and progresses to a long-term commitment.

There are three ways to come and walk with us for a while: As a neighbor, a visitor, or a community intern. The intern program lasts roughly three months, introducing the individual to the prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship of the community.

Neighbors, visitors, and interns may want to explore the possibility of joining the community long-term. Through petitioning and by affirmation of the stewards, an 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 person remains a novice for at least one year. This is a period of time 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 in the community, 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.

## Mission Statement

*We are Christians called to live together in intentional community, sharing a life of prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship. We seek to embody peacemaking, sustainability, and radical sharing. While honoring people of all backgrounds and faiths, we strive to demonstrate the way of Jesus as an alternative to materialism, militarism, and racism.*

## Steward Covenants

We are Christians in that we strive to follow Jesus' teachings and example and live a shared life with one another inspired by the description of the early Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

Because we believe God has called us to Koinonia, our commitment is long-term.

We pray together.

We work the number of hours and days necessary to support ourselves economically and to build a way of life together.

We study together.

Together and individually we serve our neighbors.

We seek opportunities for fellowship with one another.

We participate in community and team meetings and serve as coordinators, team leaders or members of the board of directors if called upon or elected.

We agree to engage with fellow community members in a spirit of reconciliation avoiding gossip within and without the community at every turn.



## Spiritual Life on the Farm by Amanda Moore

*"The spiritually humble are God's people, for they are citizens of his new order."*

Here at Koinonia, we seek to be spiritually humble, as Clarence Jordan translates in the Sermon on the Mount. By weaving worship, prayer, meditation, and song into the fabric of our daily life, we strive to remain focused on our mission to be a demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God.

Weekday mornings at 7:30, Koinonians, neighbors and visitors begin to gather in the chapel for a 30-minute period of silence. By 8:00, we've all made the early-morning trek from our beds to the chapel for a brief service.

After the devotion, we gather outside in a large circle to share morning announcements, introduce our guests, and check-in with work coordinators.

***"By weaving worship, prayer, meditation, and song into the fabric of our daily life, we strive to remain focused on our mission to be a demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God."***

At 10:30 a.m., we ring a bell, calling us to pray and to seek God in the activity of our day, whether it be in the garden, the office, pecan sorting plant, out in the fields, or wherever we might be.

During lunch, we share another time of devotion and prayer. We also light a peace candle, reminding us to pray for peace in our world and in our lives.

At 3:30, the bell rings, reminding us to pause and to seek God in our lives. After the work day ends at 5:00, we gather in the chapel again, this time to sing together. The bell rings again at 8:30 p.m. calling us to give thanks once more.

We share our spiritual lives at other special times in the week, too. On Monday evenings, our student intern Beth has led a Bible study on Hosea. Our community members are about to finish up a thirteen-week course meeting every Wednesday afternoon to study Dallas Lee's *The Cotton Patch Evidence*. Wednesday evenings, Ana and Sarah lead Reiki circle, a circle of healing through deep meditation and prayer. Our interns meet with Bren on Thursday evenings to study and to pray together. Saturday mornings, community intern Fredando Jackson leads a Bible fellowship at the Koinonia Community Outreach Center, KCOC, using Clarence

Jordan's Cotton Patch translation of the *Sermon on the Mount*.

On Sundays, we disperse among several local churches. Although we have a rich spiritual life here on the farm, we

desire to remain connected with a larger community of Christians and with the local community—this is a way to do both.

We encourage spiritual connections between Koinonians through companionship. When interns come to the farm, they are matched with a spiritual companion to walk with them on their spiritual journey, specifically to help them absorb and process what they are experiencing and discerning while here on the farm. These companionships continue through time spent as an apprentice and as a novice, and serve to strengthen the community's common spiritual life.

## Walking on Holy Ground by Seth Schroerlucke

*"Hey Intern!" I stop in my tracks and look back. "My coffee is empty."*

*"Sorry," I say and fill the coffee to the top and add two creams just how he likes it.*

*"And my back's not getting massaged by itself, you know." I set down the coffee pot and look at the other two interns wearily waving the long leaf branches. "Oh, one more grape please. A little slower with the leaf fan, and, once again, no eye contact." Ah, I think to myself, another day as a Koinonia intern.*



The sensational six: (l to r) Nichole, Seth, Amanda, Frednando, Adam, and Jake pause for a moment together in the office.

photo by Elizabeth Dede

Okay, so that's an exaggeration. Actually, right away we were made to feel at home; the community embraced our enthusiasm and encouraged our input in most every setting. Aside from attending fewer meetings, we feel like community members, knowing our names are now a part of its story—even if just for three months.

There are six of us interns, and despite different backgrounds, personalities, and interests, we've been

***"Koinonia will change you, man. There's something about this place. It'll change you."***

tight from the get-go. Our first night really set the tone for this intimacy. We walked together down to the grape vineyard, all the while talking and joking. Before long, though, we grew silent and found ourselves staring in awe at the brilliant stars that filled up the country night sky. Then, we were hand in hand, centered in prayer, all of us sensing that it was no accident that we are here together at Koinonia.

For most of us, this is our first experience living in community. It can get pretty intense, we've learned. Misunderstandings are inevitable and can cause rifts. But we desire to be close with one another, so, we try to make it a practice at our weekly dinner together to share openly and honestly both those things that keep us apart and those that draw us together. It can be a challenge, but it has enabled us to grow much closer and know each other better than we could otherwise.

One of the central parts of our time here is to see God moving within our lives. Nashua, a former long-time resident of Koinonia, visited a few weeks ago and warned me, "Koinonia will change you, man. There's something about this place. It'll change you."

We have found this to be true. It feels like a whirlwind peeling us through hidden issues in our own lives—showing us how to trust, to sort through what's important in our lives, to understand what it means for us to be Christian, and to uncover new direction from God in our lives. It is through the people here, the relationships that we've made, that these changes are able to come about.

The feeling we had that first night has stayed with us—God is doing something special at Koinonia, and we are in the midst of it. Within a few weeks, we will decide whether we will share God's vision for our lives here at Koinonia or elsewhere. But for now, we feel this is where we're supposed to be at this moment, learning to let God be in our lives and how to be with God. But, that's Koinonia; that's what happens here. There's something in the air, something in the land, something in the people. It's like walking on Holy Ground. I felt it the first day I walked through the pecan orchard, and in each face, I see it still.

## The Morning of the Resurrection

—excerpt from *The Substance of Faith*

Now this was the very clue to all of the New Testament preaching: That God had raised Jesus from the dead, and we are the evidence of the resurrection. You know, on Easter Day all of us get prettified, and we get on our nice garments, and we get our flowers, and we talk about Jesus being raised from the dead and how he's going to take us all to heaven one of these days ... Well, that might be nice, but that isn't what the resurrection is all about. God didn't raise Jesus from the dead to prove that he could raise a few cantankerous saints.

God raised Jesus from the dead for a different purpose. When Jesus came in his first body, people didn't like God around. It was a bad place for God to be. Sort of like having a preacher in the barbershop. And we felt uncomfortable with him here. And so we had to get rid of him. And we nailed him to the cross and said, "Now you, God, you go back home where you belong and be a good God, and we'll see you at

eleven o'clock on Sunday morning." The resurrection is simply God's way of saying to humanity, "You might reject me if you will, but I'm going to have the last word. I'm going to put my son right down there in the midst of you and he's going to dwell among you from here on out."

On the morning of the resurrection, God put life in the present tense, not in the future. God gave us not a promise but a presence. Not hope for the future but power for the present. Not so much the assurance that we shall live someday but that he is risen today. Jesus' resurrection is not to convince the incredulous nor to reassure the fearful, but to enkindle the believers. The proof that God raised Jesus from the dead is not the empty tomb, but the full hearts of his transformed disciples. The crowning evidence that he lives is not a vacant grave, but a spirit-filled fellowship. Not a rolled-away stone, but a carried-away church.

## A Brief Reflection

by Bren Dubay

I enjoy spending time at Clarence's shack. It's where he did his writing, and it's where he died. I write there sometimes, too, but mostly I go there to pray. I sit. Sometimes I talk. Mostly, I listen. It's a place where I can get really quiet. I believe I hear more clearly there. My hope for all of us is that we find those times and those places on the farm where we can go into the silence. I thirst for our morning and evening meditations together in the chapel, but it's in the solitude of Clarence's Writing Shack that I find solace, deep, deep peace, and a quiet joy.

For many years Koinonia had no building designated as a chapel. Though we have one today—a recently renovated, simple, beautiful one—I think of the entire farm as a chapel, a sacred place. I can tell I'm not the only one. I see our visitors walking in the orchards, standing by the garden, strolling through the grape vineyards or the blueberry patch, and I perceive that their breathing grows a little easier, they become more relaxed. This



At Clarence's Shack, Bren finds space to relax and reflect.

photo by Thomas Monahan

reminds me once more that Koinonia has always been a place of hospitality. It is a place of spiritual renewal—a place that welcomes the stranger, the pilgrim, the seeker, the neighbor and the friend. The idea of locked churches is a relatively new notion. For centuries, the norm was to welcome the stranger, for that stranger could very well be Christ. And the belief certainly continues that Christ is within each person who comes to the door. Our life together at Koinonia is based on the description in the Acts of the Apostles of the early house churches. And our house church has almost 600 acres that are never locked. There are many, many beautiful places to pray here.

Come and see. Come pray with us.





SOOPers Mary Ann & Ruth make granola in the bakery under Geneva's watchful eye.

photo by Thomas Monahan

## Super SOOPers

by Ellie Castle and Ann Karp

Our ministry of hospitality has welcomed a beautiful array of people, families and groups to the farm this year—as always—and we are grateful and amazed at how God works through each person who comes here. Here are a few highlights of hospitality...

Our community has been blessed to have a number of senior visitors spend from two to six weeks with us, joining in all aspects of our worship, study, work, and fellowship. They're part of a Mennonite Central Committee program that matches older, typically retired, people, with service placements. (Did you know that there is more than one way to spell super? At Koinonia, we spell it SOOPer! It's an acronym, standing for Service Opportunities for Older People—the name of the program.) Our SOOPers come from Canada and several U.S. states and bring a variety of experience and skills. They also bring an excellent work ethic and a deep Christian faith. Since our first SOOPers in 2005, each year we've had more. This year we had two couples and five single women. It was a huge blessing to have extra workers for our abundant pecan harvest. Pecans have a whole new meaning for these volunteers. Already we are talking with some potential "super SOOPers" about 2009. Bring them on—we love them!

*...we are grateful and amazed at how God works through each person who comes here.*

We have also had many lively college groups on "alternative spring break" trips, church youth groups, families, and individuals come and join in our daily life of prayer, work, study, service, and fellowship. Plus, we've hosted family reunions and conferences for fair trade and social justice projects. Our number-crunchers have figured that in the month of March 2008 alone, we've had 150 overnight visitors and 139 day-trippers. We've welcomed upwards of 400 so far this year, and counting... that's a lot of fresh linens! Please check our Web site for more information about visiting or bringing a group to Koinonia: [www.koinoniapartners.org/visit](http://www.koinoniapartners.org/visit).



## Walking for Peace

by Seth Schroerlucke

At Koinonia, we have many visitors. Some stay for an afternoon, others for a couple of days, but there's an added blessing when people stay longer, allowing us to share more deeply in each others lives. Brother Northstar is one of these people. He is a Peace Pilgrim—put simply, he walks for peace. His pilgrimages have led him all over the United States and several other countries, including Africa, a particularly "life-inspiring" pilgrimage. Wherever he goes, he shares his message of peace.

Growing up in New York, Brother Northstar chose to spend much of his youth on the streets, but later went to college. He enjoyed college but didn't find it fulfilling; he kept yearning for something else. And he harbored a deep anger. Perhaps it was being a young African-American or witnessing the inequities of society, but ultimately this growing rage frightened him. "One day," he recounts, "I just started walking. I didn't know where I was going." He walked 19 miles to the next town. He felt his anger slowly melt away with each pound of his foot. When he returned, he felt "lifted."



Peace Pilgrim Brother Northstar prepares for his next journey.

photo by Thomas Monahan

For the next several years, he took long treks and joined others on pilgrimages including Nipponzan Myohoji, a Buddhist order from Japan for whom walking was a lifestyle. Yet Brother Northstar considered himself only a "part-time walker."

That all changed on Sept. 11. For years, he felt the encroachment of a world infringing upon his freedom a growing disillusion in a system that produced lifestyles and priorities that seemed out of balance. When he was on the road, sleeping in fields, dependent on God to provide for him, he felt liberated from the pull of that destructive lifestyle. Sept. 11 was the impetus he needed to become a full-time Peace Pilgrim. From that moment, he has become one with the road walking has become his identity.

As a Peace Pilgrim, Brother Northstar's message can be summed up with the phrase, "One people, one earth." It points to the realization that people are deeply connected with each other and with the environment. "Peace," he says, "must begin in your own heart, your own life and body, in your own relationships." He harks back to his younger days filled with untar-geted anger. "Walking has been a way for me to have peace in my soul," he says, quick to add that the health of the earth is integral in the larger aspirations of peace.

Brother Northstar is not alone. There are countless others who

are led to the same path of walking. Jerry Nelson, another recent Koinonia visitor and peace pilgrim, has converted to the bicycle while traveling the nation. Mildred Norman, the original Peace Pilgrim, walked for 28 years until her death in 1981.

Brother Northstar desires to live as his name suggests—as a compass pointing to God, leading people to the right path, a way of life out of the system. He doesn't know where he'll head next, or where he'll stay, but he trusts God to lead him. And that trust begins with the first step.

## Circle of Friends

by Amanda

Each Thursday morning, a dozen Circle of Friends in the Koinonia Community Church (KOCOC). The Circle of Friends has met for many years, sharing paths with one another, to learn from one another.

Every meeting is unique. Some gatherings begin with a song and to sing together. Other meetings are more focused on bringing in various speakers to educate the Circle of Friends on finding help pay.

Last fall, Kathleen invited several health care experts to provide information and tips on healthy living and flu shot.

During the holidays, the Circle delivered 33 meals and turkeys, and hosted a Christmas party. The day, bringing goodies to share.

The Circle is busy planning for summer homes. On May 13, the Circle plans to host the Senior Citizen's Council on Ag and their annual fish fry, including a lot of fun. They also hope to begin a local initiative by a local in.

## Koinonia Ministries

### Many folks ask, "So what do you do at Koinonia?"

To answer, here's is an ever-evolving list of services and acts we do in an attempt to live out the Gospel and pass on blessings we are so grateful to have received. To get involved, give us a call!

**Hospitality and Spiritual Renewal:** For 65 years now, people of all faiths have come to Koinonia to engage more deeply in a life rooted in Jesus' teachings. We welcome individuals, families, groups, conferences, RVers, retired people, youth, students, and everyone else.

**Education:** We hosts regular workshops and seminars on a wide variety of topics, from organic gardening to non-violence, from Scripture study to nutrition.

**Heart-to-Heart Home Repair:** See next page

**Circle of Friends:** See article

**Fair Trade & Organics:** We are working to grow and sell more healthful food.

**Products:** Our products is more than a business; it is a ministry that helps our other ministries to function. People from all over the world are able to participate in this koinonia by supporting our products.

**Seasonal Employment:** This seasonal employment builds relationships and benefits both Koinonia and the individuals hired.

**Peace Action Team:** Koinonia and area neighbors work together to present youth with alternatives to the military.

**Sign of Times:** Koinonian artists offer beautiful & affordable paint wall murals & sign art for local organizations & business.

**Reiki Healing:** Every Wednesday we host a Reiki Meditation Circle. We also offer individual treatments & Reiki classes. Reiki Level I, Level II, Advanced Practitioner & Reiki Master classes scheduled through the year.

**Individual Calls to Service:** Many of us serve regularly in the Sumter County com-

munity by individual calling.

**Responding to the Needs of the Times:** Koinonians continually strive to come together as a group to love and serve our neighbors in ways both small and large, unnoticed and public.

**Sowing seeds:** Koinonia has been a catalyst for the transformation of countless individuals and the creation of many organizations, including Habitat for Humanity International, Jubilee Partners, The Prison & Jail Project, The Fuller Center for Housing. For information on any of these, just ask.



# Heart 2 Heart

## The Greater Blessing Project

by Bren Dubay

One of Koinonia's most popular ministries is Heart to Heart Home Repair. Koinonians J. Reilly and Kathleen Monts head up the effort. The great need for repairs keeps our crew very busy, and thanks to the support of The Fuller Center for Housing and other interested donors, we're able to keep up with this busy schedule.

We partner with our neighbors in the area who need assistance in keeping their homes in good repair. Kathleen assists them with the application process, and J. prepares a cost estimate for the work needed. Once a budget is determined, Kathleen works with the homeowner to decide on a payment and sweat equity plan.

The generosity of our donors allows for flexibility in the repayment process. The homeowners can opt to repay a portion of or the entire cost—depending on their financial circumstances—over a time table they can afford. They receive a Greater Blessing Box, which contains payment envelopes. These monthly payments are pooled, then used to make repairs on homes of other families in need, providing each homeowner the opportunity to receiving the greater blessing of giving, not just receiving.

J. and Kathleen can tell you that there is a long waiting list of work to be done. What sometimes appears to be a small job can become major once it begins. We've been very fortunate to have steady funding from the Fuller Center. Before this, we could only schedule repairs when the homeowner could afford the materials or if the materials were donated. Now there is no slow down waiting for materials. Thank you Millard, Linda, and all the fine staff at The Fuller Center for Housing!



### Bertha Williams Home Repair

by Elizabeth Dede

Bertha Williams is filled with joy over our Heart to Heart home repair ministry. She loves it for several reasons: the repairs being made to her home, the friendships she is making with the folks at Koinonia Farm, and how it honors the memories of her parents wrapped up in her house.

Bertha's house is about 100 years old. It was located on Jackson Street in Americus until 1970, when it was moved to the southern edge of Sumter County, off Logan Store Road. Bertha's mother and father lived in the house then, and Bertha had a trailer home next door. While Bertha's parents were still living, the house had new siding, a new roof, and new windows installed. The windows never fit properly, though, so the cold wind of winter leaked in around the edges. Bertha's mother passed in 2004, and, in 2005, her father followed.

Bertha has been part of the extended Koinonia family for about four years. She attends the Circle of Friends gatherings at the Koinonia Community Outreach Center. There she met Koinonian Kathleen Monts and learned about Heart to Heart. She made an application for home repairs and now those repairs have been completed.

The windows that never fit properly have been sealed. Her bathroom has a new toilet and sink. Her kitchen has a new sink and cabinets. The front porch that was rotting in places is repaired. Her storage room now has a door, and the hole in the ceiling is mended.

Due to Bertha's age and physical limitation, she is not able to put in sweat equity in the repairs, but she wants to give back in some way. She is volunteering at the farm in pecan processing. Most days you can find her in the sorting room, picking out the best pecans for Koinonia's products. Her love and joy shine.

## On the Job Learning by Beth Greaves

Heart to Heart is about helping our neighbors, but I have no doubt that I am getting more out of it than I am giving. I love what I do. Occasionally my friend and mentor J. Reilly and I work late into the night or on weekends. Some may find this a little obsessive, but I don't even think of it as work most of the time. I get to hang out with my best friend while helping people and learning useful skills. I don't know what could be better.



Even with all the work to be done, J. & Beth find time to have fun with each other.

photo by Amanda Moore

In between projects for our neighbors, we renovated a Koinonia house we call the Egg House. It was used for storing eggs back in the 1950s, before the boycott. Now we use it as housing for visitors or community members. We gutted it and put everything back together again: walls, ceilings, insulation, drywall, plumbing, electrical workings, doors, windows, and everything in between. It is has not been quick work—we've had to pause several times for other projects and for our busy product season. Although it has not been easy, we've learned a lot along the way.

For example, in February, we learned that our electrician had died. We were faced with finishing the electrical work without our electrician and without the plans that he put somewhere, but, to this day, no one can find. We tackled this unforeseen situation with our talented friend Craig Martindale, a returning visitor and soon to be apprentice. When we connected the circuit breakers, some things still had no power, and we realized that some outlets were hidden under the drywall. We also found a switch hidden under the drywall. It was in the yellow bedroom, but it turned on the closet light in the blue bedroom. So we crawled around the attic, and ran wires to remedy this problem. I learned so much about electrical work through this process – education is another one of those benefits of being at Koinonia.

I am so impressed with amount of work we do for our neighbors. Two recent major renovations—one in Koinonia Village and the other in Forest Park—especially stick out in my mind. Koinonians J. Reilly and Brendan Prendergast did most of the work, assisted by many skilled visitors. Both jobs took longer than planned, but the homes turned out to be absolutely gorgeous. I love the attention we give

to detail—it shows that we care about the work we do and about the people who benefit from it.

I think Heart to Heart is the perfect name for this ministry. I don't know how to do everything, and I ask a lot of questions, but J. consistently takes time to answer them. We share all kinds of life lessons too. We talk about God, our lives before coming to Koinonia, how to build a happy marriage, how to be a good friend, how to forgive people. I intend to use my new-found construction skills, but the lessons about life go a little deeper. This is what Heart to Heart is truly about: offering to each other whatever wisdom and skills we have. I am blessed to do this every day.

NOTE: Beth Greaves was an intern during the summer of 2007. She is currently spending a portion of her junior year "abroad" at Koinonia. She will be with us until August when she returns to Hendrix College in Arkansas to prepare for graduation in May 2009.



Beth takes great care in her work, even in the simple tasks.

photo by Amanda Moore

### Five things to do during a 15-minute work break besides pray

by Seth Schroerlucke

- 1) Eat as much of Geneva's chocolate as you can before other people get to the coffee house.
- 2) Take a nap in the pecan orchard and overhear visitors walking by wondering if you are passed out.
- 3) Chase goats back to their pen away from the screaming children they were chasing.
- 4) Shoot hoops still wearing your hair net and apron from the pecan sorting room
- 5) Keep working and make everyone else look bad





Koinonia is humbled and overjoyed to receive such a beautiful award in honor of peace.

photo courtesy of Community of Christ

# Koinonia to Receive International Peace Award

by Amanda Moore

Koinonia was recently chosen to receive the 2008 Community of Christ International Peace Award. The award, which includes a \$30,000 honorarium, will be given to Koinonia in October at the Community of Christ's annual Peace Colloquy, held in Independence, Missouri.

Koinonia was chosen to receive the award based on its witness as a signal community of justice and peace that reflects the vision of Christ, said Community of Christ President Stephen Veasey.

"When a number of academics were asked

at a recent Communal Studies Association gathering to name outstanding intentional communities," Veasey said, "Koinonia was consistently named first."

Koinonia will be the first group honored with the International Peace Award. In receiving this award, Koinonia will join a group of honorees that include Rev. James Lawson, Jean Vanier, Ela Gandhi, Jane Goodall, Marian Wright Edelman, M. Scott Peck and Lily Peck, and Jehan Sadat.

"It is moving that our way of life should receive such recognition," said Koinonia

Director Bren Dubay. "It challenges us to continually reflect about how we may better serve the causes of peace and justice in our world today."

Koinonia intends to use the honorarium to support peace work projects both near and far. Watch Koinonia Briefly—our monthly e-news—for updates about these projects. If you have not been receiving Koinonia Briefly but have signed up to do so, please let us know. If you have not signed up, you can do so online at [koinoniapartners.org](http://koinoniapartners.org) or by giving us a call at 229-924-0391.

## Norris Honored as Pastor of Year

by Amanda Moore



Norris Harris

photo by Kathleen Monts

In addition to keeping up our pecan orchards, Koinonia Chaplain Norris Harris stays busy pastoring three congregations in the Oglethorpe Circuit of the African Methodist Episcopal church. (The Oglethorpe Circuit includes the eastern district of the Southwest Georgia conference.) Each year, the eastern district chooses both a pastor and a lay person to honor for their dedicated service to the Church throughout the year.

This year Norris has been chosen for Pastor of the Year, recognizing the wonderful work he's done with these congregations. In honor of the recipients, the district hosts a Spring Gala for the members to come together for dinner, fellowship, and celebration. This year's Gala will be held on Friday, April 25, in Columbus, Ga.

Congratulations, Pastor of the Year Norris Harris! Thank you for all you do for us.

## Still Shipping the Nuts Out of Georgia

by Ann Karp

We were blessed with a bumper crop of pecans this year. Thanks to some hard working hands, prayer, and the loving support of our customers, we support our community through this earned income. Here are a few highlights:

✿ We now make customized Gift Pails to order for all occasions: birthdays, holidays, seasons and more. For \$20.99 you get your choice of tissue paper, delicious contents and gift message.

✿ Fair Trade Chocolate items debuted in our last catalog and the response has been super. Our 4-oz. Fair Trade Dark Chocolate Bark is already our #6 seller. Its chocolate comes in bulk from Kuapa Kokoo, a cocoa cooperative in Ghana. As more of our customers support Fair Trade

goods, we will be enabled to transition to more and more Fair Trade ingredients.

✿ Nut of the Month Club members receive a monthly delivery from Koinonia and a 5% discount on holiday orders and Gift Pails. If each of our "busy season" (October to December) customers purchased just \$10 of Koinonia products each month of the year, it would more than pay for all the service projects we have scheduled. By supporting us each month, buying a pound of coffee, a tub of peanut butter, a box of chocolate, or a book by Clarence Jordan, you receive a top-quality product, and you help sustain both our community and the people we serve.



Dennis Hassle enjoys a peaceful walk through our pecan orchards.

photo by Thomas Monahan

## Adopt the Trees

by Bren Dubay

Here's a story you'll likely hear if you stay at Koinonia for very long:

One rainy Christmas Day, Clarence Jordan was found out in the orchard planting pecan trees.

"What in the world are you doing out here, Clarence?" someone asked. "It's Christmas Day! It's raining and you'll never benefit from those trees. It takes 25 years for them to produce anything."

Clarence replied, "I'm planting them for the people that are coming after me."

To this very day, the orchards remain the backbone of our economic survival. We are still "shipping the nuts out of Georgia" and within Georgia as well! For the past several years, we've been revitalizing our eight orchards. Under the leadership of Koinonian Norris Harris, we've thinned trees, planted 60 new trees, worked on the irrigation system, planted clover—a natural source of nitrogen—and much more.

We're also renovating our pecan processing plants and the bakery. Returning

visitor Craig Martindale keeps busy these days in pecan processing plant #2, engineering a steel hopper that will expand storage space from 130 cubic feet to 500 cubic feet. He's also overseeing the installation of two 16' elevators and constructing a shoot from the new hopper to the crackers. We'll finish these renovations with the installation of two barrel stations—one stationary and one mobile. These will relieve us from lifting the 250-pound, 42- and 55-gallon drums above our heads to empty them. Ouch!

A big thanks to Bowie and Helen Duncan for their generous contribution to our renovation efforts. Thanks, too, to all who have adopted a tree or have contributed "seedling gifts" to the Adopt-a-Tree Project. These monthly gifts make a major difference in our work and our life. You allow us to continue sharing the spirit and fruit of Koinonia through our work in service others.

Koinonians Jo Knox and Ann Karp have painted a beautiful Adopt-a-tree mural in our Welcome Center. Names of the donors or their designee are displayed next to this mural. Adopting a tree is a wonderful way to remember a loved one or to honor a relative, friend, or person who has made a lasting contribution at Koinonia. To learn more about the Adopt-a-Tree Project, please visit [www.koinoniapartners.org](http://www.koinoniapartners.org) or call us at 229-924-0391.

## Making a Gift to Koinonia - Reply Form

- ☐ I joyfully enclose a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ I would like to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month to Koinonia. I am enclosing my first month's gift or including credit card information for a monthly charge.
- ☐ I would like to give my gift to be directed specifically to (name project or fund): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Please contact me about giving through:
- ☐ Charitable Gift Annuity
  - ☐ A gift of land or equipment
  - ☐ My will
  - ☐ Stocks and Bonds
- ☐ I would like to adopt a tree.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_



## When My Horse Comes to Koinonia

by Ana Laura Navarro (10 years old)

I am going to adopt a horse, and when my horse comes to Koinonia, everything is going to be even better than it already is. It's going to be GREAT! I want to adopt a horse because they are beautiful, strong animals with a very noble and kind nature. They help people in many cool ways. But let me tell you a little more from my own experience. Before coming to Koinonia, I lived in Florida where I did horseback riding with my aunt's horse Chocolate. It was awesome. I felt connected to Chocolate; she understood my movements and my words. When I looked in one direction, she knew where I was looking and took me there. When we jumped, it was always a surprising feeling. After riding, I fed her carrots, bathed her, and let her graze on grass before returning her to the stable. I loved Chocolate and always wanted to have a special friend like her; that's why I am going to adopt a horse.

When my horse comes to Koinonia, this is what I will do: First I will prepare the stable by cleaning and decorating it. I will put hay, food pellets, and water in a pail. Then I will give him/her a name like Yoshi, Whisper, Spirit, or Cream. When my horse arrives, I'll go through my horse checklist and do them everyday as needed. I will make sure she/he is always safe, healthy, and comfortable. Koinonia is a very special home for my horse because people on our farm are loving, and the nature is beautiful. My horse will be a very lucky horse, and I will be a very lucky girl.

### Horse Checklist:

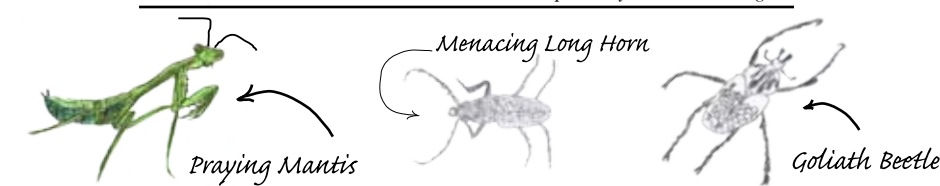
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> food         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> talking       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> water        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> riding        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bath         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pet           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brushing     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> hugs & kisses |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> clean stable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> treats        |

## Beetles & Bugs by Adrian Navarro (13 years old)



Ana Laura & Adrian at their "Bug House", a shed they built behind their home to create mini environments to study & play with the bugs they find in the forest & orchards.

photo by Sarah Prendergast

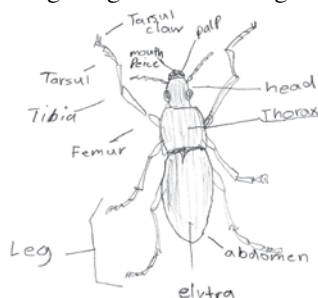


Koinonia is home to many people and also to thousands of insects of all shapes and sizes, from dung beetles to stick insects. They're all so fascinating. My two favorites are the Violet Ground Beetle and the Praying Mantis.

The Violet Ground Beetle is sort of black, but when looked at under a microscope, it looks violet. It's very fast and flexible and is about an inch long. It is carnivorous and nocturnal, meaning it hunts at night. My sister and I found this beetle in rotting wood near the river.

My other favorite insect is the Praying Mantis. The Carolina Mantis is a species found in North America, mostly in grasslands, meadows, and flowering plants. The praying mantis is a fierce predator that can eat almost anything from crickets, flies, lady bugs, and much more. It varies in length from 4 to 7 cm, and the females are usually larger than males.

When mating, praying mantises eat their mates. It's usually caused by hunger, and the female is less likely to attack the male if she is full. They usually lay their egg cases in twigs or sometimes in buildings. They die late in the fall. The nymphs stay warm through the winter. They can survive rain, snow, and storms. In early spring, the egg cases hatch and 100-300 tiny nymphs emerge. But the tiny mantises have many predators, so many do not survive. They molt several times before growing wings and becoming adults.



Anatomy of the Violet Beetle.  
Insect drawings by Adrian

## Bring on the Kids by Amanda Moore

*There is a lot going on for young people on the farm these days!*

We're already looking ahead to our annual summer youth camp at the Koinonia Community Outreach Center, KCOC. The camp runs for four weeks, with a different focus each week. So far the schedule will include the Atlanta Peace Mobile, Vacation Bible School, career education, and arts, crafts, and recreational field trips. We are most grateful to the Smith-Prochaska Foundation, Sumter Electric, and many individuals for helping to fund the camp.

On the farm, our community kids have been exploring, learning, helping, and growing. Kellan, our youngest, is now 1 year old. She's walking, running, talking—although still mostly her own language—and she is a bundle of joy. Our older kids, ranging from 3 to 15 years old, are into a mixture of activities. Ida, Ana Laura, Ben, and Adrian enjoy climbing trees, finding bugs, and soaring high on our new swings. Heather enjoys tea parties and telling stories. Hakeem shoots hoops everyday after school with intern Fredo and continues to be an honor-roll student at Sumter County Middle School. Quincy went out for and made the track team this year. And Mary stays busy with books and teenage life.

With the growing number of children on the farm, we've been contemplating founding a Koinonia-based school. In the past, Koinonia has offered a pre-school, so this wouldn't be an entirely new venture for us. Some of our children are already home-schooled, with Koinonian Emory Cortese spending half-days guiding the young people through their lessons and engaging the toddlers in creative activities. Our other children attend public school, keeping with Koinonia's long-standing commitment to public education. And we are happy to continue supporting the local school system, but we would also like to provide an alternative for interested families from the wider community as well as Koinonia families.

We're exploring a variety of options for the on-campus school. Some members are interested in Montessori education, with its emphasis on natural development through holistic learning and the fostering of spiritual development from an early age. Former Koinonian Linda Fuller shared that in the 60s and 70s, the community followed the Montessori method, so Montessori would be no stranger to Koinonia. Former Koinonian Coffee Worth received her Montessori training in London and incorporated that training when the community founded and operated the Koinonia Child Development Center many years back.

We continue to discuss the possibility of the school as we remain patient, prayerfully discerning what God may be calling us to do in this area.



In our children's faces, we see the joy and excitement of our shared lives here at Koinonia Farm. In the above photo, back row: Ana Laura; middle row: l to r, Hakeem, Adrian, Mary, Ben; front row l to r Kellan, Heather, Ida; pictured to left, Quincy (He was off placing first in his track meet while the above photo was taken).



photos by Amanda Moore



Ida drew three houses on a napkin one day at lunch. One house is for her to live in, and she wants Amanda and Ben to be her neighbors.

## SING WITH US

### MY FAVORITE KOINONIA THINGS

Lyrics by Ana Laura, Adrian & Ana Navarro

Down by the River & Peace Trail on weekends  
Butterflies, beetles & all kinds of insects  
Little Bear riding on car in a seat  
These are my favorite Koinonia things

Feeding & playing with nine cats & kittens  
Most Brendan's goats, fuzzy bunnies & chickens  
Kurt's s'mores bonfires just before spring  
These are my favorite Koinonia things

Tending with Michael our organic garden  
Caring for seed with much love & some magic  
Planting peach trees & get rid of the weeds  
These are my favorite Koinonia things

### Chorus:

When the swing breaks, when the work stings  
When I'm feeling mad,  
I simply remember my Koinonia things  
And then I don't feel so bad!

Gathering grapes during Fall with Ms. Ellie  
Smash them and strain them & turn them to jelly  
Playing the piano and climbing on trees  
These are my favorite Koinonia things

Weekends Jo's breakfast at the Cracker Barrel  
Looking for snakes & sing old Christmas carols  
Play at the playground & swing on the swings  
These are my favorite Koinonia things

Finding new chocolate from Geneva's kitchen  
Picking pecans in the orchard in Winter  
Movies at Richards with popcorn and treats  
These are my favorite Koinonia things (Chorus)



# Animals Run Amuck

by Amanda Moore

Along with the revitalizing our garden, Koinonian Brendan Prendergast has been adding to the number of animals running around on the farm. Currently, we have a handful of chickens, goats, rabbits, and guineas. Brendan hopes to include geese, sheep, beef cattle, and more heritage chickens—one batch of meat birds, one batch of laying hens.

In the process of restoring an animal count to the farm, Brendan has focused on how to create self-sustaining methods of raising the animals. By planting fruit and seeded trees next to the chicken runs and rotating the chickens between several runs, the



Our billy goat is very loving as long as Brendan scratches his nose for him.

photo by Amanda Moore

chickens will feed on the fallen seed, thus requiring no extra input or costs to feed. We're also hoping to implement a similar foraging system for our rabbits. They will be completely grass-fed, with access to the native grasses available. Using the geese, Brendan hopes to revitalize the fruit orchard. The geese will maintain the grass and clean up fallen fruit that would lead to pest and fungus problems.

The goats have been very helpful in clearing the land, eating through the overgrown brush and grass. Our billy goat especially has been helpful with his impeccable chewing skills, but he also has an unruly temperament. One day while intern Nichole Delgiudice was playing with the children, the billy goat escaped through the fence and ran after them. As Nichole tried to chase him off with a broom—with a toddler on one hip—the children ran for cover on a nearby playground and picnic table. Nichole's fiancé Seth Schroerlucke came to the rescue, grabbing the billy goat by the horns and gently guiding him back to his home inside the fence.

With the help of some of the interns, we've been able to repair old fences—like the



Brendan proudly shows one of the guinea chicks.

photo by Ann Karp

one our billy goat escaped through—put up new fences, and renew old chicken houses and runs to be used again. We've also added new delectable items to our edible landscape, planting peach trees, kiwi trees, raspberries, blackberries, Jostaberries, Satsuma oranges, and pawpaws.

We're also preparing a new home for two hives of Italian bees we'll be getting this spring. The bees will help with pollination of our fruit trees, and we'll be able to harvest some honey next year!

## Open-mic night

by Seth Schroerlucke

On Friday, March 7, Koinonia held a very special open-mic night. The chapel was filled with people and full of energy. The atmosphere was charged with laughter and thought as people shared their creative talents with the community. Koinonia Intern Fredo Jackson set the tone with his hilarious improv at the piano. Following him, folks read poetry, played guitar, told stories, and even shared the sound of knitting. Everyone enjoyed Koinonian Dave Castle's "alter-ego," as he told the story of Herbie and his pet mountain.

The evening reached an energetic climax during Kurt and Jake's interpretive rendition of the song, "Total Eclipse of the Heart," which involved Kurt flailing across the front of the chapel, screaming, slamming things down, and inciting the audience to intense laughter.

For an element of preserving the essence of the night, Ann offered her artistic talents to paint beautiful pieces of her impression of each performer's act while it occurred.

It felt great to stretch our insides with laughter and to see these wonderful, creative sides of one another.

### KOINONIA FARM CHRONICLE

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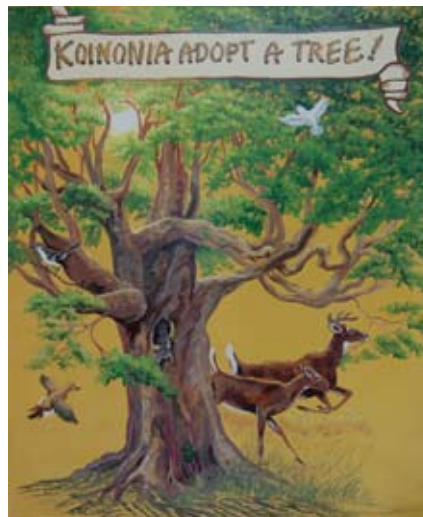
## Wish List

Back Hoe / excavator  
Manure spreader  
Wood chipper  
Compost grinder  
Hand tools for Heart to Heart repair work  
Pottery wheel, small kiln  
Hybrid / Diesel Vehicle  
Frequent flier miles  
Montessori materials  
Child-size furniture  
Tractor, in good repair  
More interns to help in the garden  
Dairy goat  
Cattle  
Mattresses  
Microwaves  
Cookware  
2 MacBook Air Computers  
1 MacBook Pro Computer  
30 -inch Apple Cinema HD Display Monitor  
Scanner (to digitize slide and photo archives)  
Arts and Crafts supplies  
Education and family software  
Video projector, screen  
Kids swimming pool  
Vacuum cleaner / shampooer



Thanks to a generous gift from Betty and Owen Miller, our chapel renovation is complete, and we are able to enjoy our beautiful chapel.

photo by Amanda Moore



murals by Jo Knox

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