

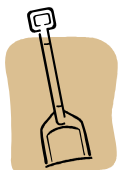
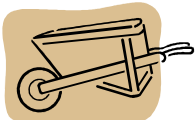
PLANTINGS

NEWSLETTER OF HOMECOMING

A Sponsored Ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Amityville
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Volume 9

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We Are All Coming Home

Over ten years ago the not-for-profit organization Homecoming was born. It emerged out of the vision of geologist and cultural historian Thomas Berry who calls us all to the Great Work of our time which is in his words "to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner." Homecoming, a sponsored ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Amityville, is committed to the understanding that the human and natural world are one sacred community of life. To fulfill our mission, Homecoming strives to enable groups and institutions on Long Island and beyond to grow as responsible members of the universe through projects and programs which promote mutually enhancing human/earth relationships. Homecoming now has two projects: Sophia Garden and Sophia Learning Center.

So much has happened in the ten years since Homecoming came to birth. Through Sophia Garden over a hundred families have come home to the source of their food and have taken responsibility to support the growing organically of vegetables, fruits and herbs, thereby providing not only healthy food for their families, but protecting the water, soil, air and animals from the effects of pesticides and herbicides. Sophia Garden has also helped

in the efforts to slow down climate change by eliminating the fuel used in the processing and packaging of food, the fertilizers and large equipment used in growing and reducing the mileage normally used in transporting food thousands of miles away from the homes of the consumers of that food. Spurred on by reading Barbara Kingsolver's book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* some of the mem-

bers of Sophia Garden are becoming interested in beginning to explore how they can eat regionally grown or produced food all year long. We will be initiating a space on our web page this year to help in that endeavor. We are coming home.



Connetquot State Park, Oakdale, NY

M. Galiardi

Another sign of homecoming was made manifest this year as we

sought for a new grower for our Garden. We received applications from three people who lived right here on Long Island. Regina Dlugokencky, who lives in Centerport, was chosen to be our grower. She brings great passion, enthusiasm and love of the soil and we are excited about deepening our relationship to the land in our new site in the open field here at the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters. Our two interns, Rosa Cassani and Alex Trupiano, also residents of Long Island, are eager to learn and help us as we strive to be faithful to the land, the microbes and earthworms, the butterflies and birds, and of course the children.

The children are a real sign of homecoming as they learn through the programs at Sophia Learning Center that they are a part of the web of life, living at a unique time in the history of the planet when

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2008

PROGRAMS

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- Vision Quest
- Gentle Earth Retreat
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- Annual Gardeners and Gators Fundraiser

the human is discovering the story of the Universe and the impact of that story on the development of a new consciousness; one that recognizes that the human and natural world are one sacred community. Through spring, summer and fall programs hundreds of children have been introduced to this story, have shown such enthusiasm as they connect to the land, learn the story of soil and how precious it is and marvel at the miracle of seeds and compost. During quiet time, a favorite of many children, they have in a very real way connected with nature and allowed the trees, the breeze and little creatures to speak to them. We believe that when the consciousness of the human child changes, the young of every species will be protected. Hundreds more children have been touched through the ten years of Homecoming's existence through a school program in which the staff of the Learning Center has conducted a two-year program in four schools in Brooklyn, visiting once a month with the good news that each child in a unique way contributes to Earth's life and receives the nourishment that only Earth can give. Through lessons in classes, storytelling and assemblies the children have been encouraged to become involved in the Great Work of helping our wonderful planet to survive and of knowing that they are joined by millions of people around the world. Acquiring funding for this program remains an on-going challenge. This year, however, many people responded to our call for funds and because of this response we are able to continue our programs for children for this spring and summer, We are all coming home.

Like Earth, herself, Homecoming is always moving, changing, expanding. Margaret Galiardi, O.P. in joining the staff, has helped the Learning Center to address the need of all of us to connect to the land through her Earth-based retreats known as Vision Quests. Margaret has trained leaders to offer this program to college-aged students. Responding to invitations from retreat houses,

women's religious communities, the International Dominican Order and organizers of national conferences, Margaret has spread the message of Homecoming beyond Long Island. During this past year she has facilitated a program to make our Motherhouse building more Earth-friendly and has acted as a part-time consultant for the newly formed Center for Earth Jurisprudence (www.earthjuris.org) whose work is to re-envision law and governance in ways that support the well being of the Earth community as a whole and work towards the recognition of the rights of nature. This past October the Center sponsored a two day conference, "Water World: H₂O, Life, and the Future," during which over 700 students of Florida's Barry and St. Thomas Universities examined the burgeoning local and global issues concerning water. We are all coming home.

Through the years Homecoming has worked closely with Citizens Campaign For the Environment and Neighborhood Network, two organizations on Long Island who have worked diligently to protect water, encourage organic lawns, educate on the use of alternative energy and respond to the myriad ways we on Long Island can "come home" to Earth. We join with them and with the millions of people around the nation and world who are changing their lives and are feeling more whole in the process. We are living our values today rather than waiting for systems to change. Like Gandhi we want to "be the change we wish to see in the world." We are all coming home.

All of Homecoming's work could not have happened without the faithful support of the Dominican Sisters who came to this land in Amityville in 1875. Because of their generosity of sharing this land with us we are all connecting to an Energy far beyond ourselves. It is an Energy that out of a glacier formed Long Island; an Energy that billions of years ago out of fire created a Universe. That Energy, that fire, lives in all of us and is calling us all home to Earth.

Help with our Expenses for 2008

We are thankful for past donations from people like you who believe in our philosophy. We hope you'll find it in your heart to help us with some the following expenses for this year:

Irrigation.....	\$150	Car Trailer.....	\$1,500
Gloves	\$150		

We are also in need of a spreader, if anyone has an unused one to donate to the Garden. We would also appreciate any donation toward a share in Sophia Garden for families without resources. A gift of \$700 provides a full share for the season. \$350 provides a half share. Would you like to sponsor a child for our fun summer program? Children learn from Earth, create art and eat organic lunches. Cost per child is \$125.

If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter and the brochure we ask for \$10.00 in order to help defray the cost of printing and postage. Garden members and people who have supported Homecoming with financial contributions receive the newsletter and brochure free of charge.

Sophia Learning Center's Educational Programs for 2007

These Earth centered programs are offered by Margaret Galiardi, OP. For more information or to register, go to the websites or email addresses provided.

Feminine Images of God

Feb 8-9

Register at www.taborretreatcenter.org

Cost: \$125

Tired of all the male language in the naming of God? While noting that God is spirit and so beyond gender, theologians have expanded the repertoire of our images of God to include the feminine. Join us in exploring the wonder and mystery of the "feminine face" of God. This 24-hour retreat starts at 7:30pm on Friday at Tabor Retreat Center in Oceanside.

Presenter: Margaret Galiardi, OP

Vision Quest

\$100 Non-refundable
deposit due June 15

July 14-18

Cost: \$450

Register with mgalop@aol.com

Sophia Learning Center is sponsoring this retreat for those who want to encounter Mystery in the natural world. To be held on the banks of the Hudson River on the grounds of Villa St. Dominic, in Glasco, New York, this is a 5 day experience of living on the land. We will partake of solitary and communal experiences, reflections and fasting which will open us to the fierce love of Holy Mystery, and ancient silence which comes from living on the land. Previous camping experience not necessary

Presenters: Margaret Galiardi, OP and Val Lordi, OP

Gentle Earth: An Earth Based "Sleep Inside" Retreat

\$100 Non-refundable
deposit due June 30.

July 28—Aug 1

Cost: sliding scale \$300-500

Register with mgalop@aol.com

Is spending time in nature one of your favorite ways of encountering the Divine? If so, join us on the banks of the Hudson on the grounds of Villa St. Dominic in Glasco, New York for this unique experience. With the exception of sleeping indoors (and lavatory facilities indoors), we will spend time on the land together, making ourselves available individually and as a group to experience "the presence of God" who is profoundly accessible to us when we are profoundly accessible to nature."

Facilitators: Margaret Galiardi, OP and Val Lordi, OP

Holy Week Retreat: A Sacred Journey - Celebrate Easter with Earth

March 16-23

Springbank Center, Kingstree, SC

Register at: <http://www.springbankretreat.org/programs.html>

Blazing a Trail: The New Cosmology and the Christian Story

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN

May 16-18

Register at <http://www.whiteviolet.org>

Earth, Spirit and You Retreat: Contemporary Spirituality for the 21st Century

June 20-22

Spirit Mountain Retreat, Idyllwild, CA

Register with: Abigail@spiritmountainretreat.org

Cooking With Greens In Springtime

April 5 9:30-1:30p.m.

Cost: \$45

Rosa Cassani will once again share with us her culinary art and creativity by helping us to celebrate the coming of spring by learning to cook delicious recipes with the variety of greens gathered in the Garden in springtime. We will help Earth by learning to lower our intake of meat and create tasty and delicious meals using tofu and tempeh, two soy products. Our cooking class will end with the sharing of the delicious things we have made along with wonderful conversation and the sharing of ideas.

In conjunction with the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition's Prevention Is The Cure Week, Sophia Learning Center is happy to present:

Springtime In The Garden

Thursday, May 15

10a.m.-noon

Raindate May 16

Cost: free will offering

Prevention, healing and recovery have a great deal to do with Coming Home to the whole community of life where we live. Join with others for two hours of peaceful reflection and sharing under the Norway Maples overlooking Sophia Garden. Discover how a new way of seeing and understanding our place in the web of life can prevent future illness and pathology and lead to wellness for humans and Earth. Be present to springtime on Long Island, to yourself and all that surrounds you. Bring your lunch if you desire to stay after 12. Drinks will be provided. Facilitated by Jeanne Clark, OP

Summer Fun For Children

July 21-25

Ages 6 -12

Cost: \$125

We support children's innate ability to see life in its wholeness and to include all creatures as their relatives. This week will connect children to soil and seeds as they learn how vegetables grow. We will share stories, sing songs and make new friends as we experience are oneness with creation and learn the story of how everything came to be. The children will experience hands on planting, and through art will express themselves creatively. Each child will be encouraged through "quiet time" to see, hear and touch nature and discover the wonder that is life. Each day will end with a delicious organic lunch connected with the day's learning. For the children who attended the program last year there will be new experiences.

To register for any of our programs please send us your Name, Address, Phone, and the Program Name(s). Please make checks payable to: Homecoming, the not-for-profit under which Sophia Learning Center operates. Mail to:

Sophia Learning Center
555 Albany Avenue
Amityville, NY 11701

Welcome to Our New Farmer, Regina

We are very pleased to welcome a new farmer, Regina Dlugokencky, to Sophia Garden. She will be working with interns Rosa Cassani and Alex Trubiano.

2008 Events

Sunday, April 12 10am
Opening Meeting for Sophia Garden
Garden members should attend the opening meeting of Sophia Garden. This is a great opportunity to meet Regina, our new farmer.

Sunday, September 28 2pm - 6pm
Gardeners and Gators Fundraiser
Join us for a wonderful afternoon which includes live music, delicious food, and great company. You won't want to miss this event.

Sunday, December 7 10am - 4pm
A Holiday Happening
In a calm, peaceful, joyful atmosphere, make your holiday purchases with a purpose.

*Sophia Garden's Core Group: Celeste Crockett, Doug Crockett, Jeanne Clark,
Julie Cohen, Natalia deCuba, Bonnie Heller, Tom Mauro,
Eileen McCormick, Jean Stoddart, Gladys Roeper*

We meet once a month to discuss the needs and direction of the garden. New members welcome.

We have a New Website

Please make note and update any bookmarks to reflect our new website:

www.homecomingearth.org

This website is being redesigned to provide Communication, Information, and Inspiration to all who visit. Please check it often; new features will be added regularly throughout the year. If you have questions about the Garden that are not answered on the website, please contact our Garden Manager, Julie Cohen, at 631-842-6000 x333 or sophiagarden@aol.com.

We have had many successful programs for children and youth organizations. If you would like to bring a group of children to the Garden and Learning Center contact us to schedule.

Seasonal Celebrations

Join us as we honor the blessings of the seasons... the energy of Spring, the warmth of the Summer Sun, the Fall harvest and darkness of Winter.

Summer Solstice - Saturday, June 21st, 4 PM, followed by a Potluck meal
Autumn Equinox - Sunday, September 21st, 2 PM
Winter Solstice - Saturday, December 20th, 7 PM

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