

Discovery Meeting #20

May 16, 2011

Minutes



Photograph by Jennifer Roth

Present: Anne Avidon, Susan Bayley, Holly Campbell, Joan Caplan, Linda DeHart, Marc Edelstein, Carol Gallagher, Helaine Golann, Chris Graefe, Suzanne Hanser – Presenter, Pattie Heyman, Connie Hill, Joan Horgan, Juri Love Jones, Bill Kennedy, Nancy Lippincott, Linda Marks, Greta Merchant, HeeYoung Na, Tom Pugh, Sandra Rizkallah, Karin Rosenthal, Adelaide Smith, Pati Stillwater, Arthur Stowe, Jeff Volk,

Attending Via Conference Telephone: James Cavanaugh, Susan Brender, Bridget Chin, Amy Dunion, Gail Ellison, Dale Ford, Linda Rapuano, Ms. Lowman

PRESENTATION – “The Healing Empowerment Center” – by Suzanne B. Hanser, EdD, MT-BC, Chair Music Therapy Department, Berklee College of Music (See attached pdf of Sam Hanser’s vision)

The Healing Empowerment Center is the vision of Samuel Hanser, Suzanne Hanser’s, son who died suddenly in 2010. Sam left for us his inspiration in many forms, particularly the thesis completed for his Masters degree from the California Institute of Integral Studies: the concept, complete business plan, and prospectus for The Healing Empowerment Center.

Sam was born in 1982 in California and showed wisdom, sensitivity and spiritual awareness from a very young age. Growing up he wrote poetry, acted at Children’s Theatre, and excelled in many areas. While he had pursued no specific art training, he was accepted by 14 art and design colleges, choosing to attend Parsons School of Design, where he received his BA. His Master’s Thesis from the California Institute of Integral Studies presents The Healing Empowerment Center as a step in our human evolution. Based on a circle, with no beginning and no end, it is a place to address disempowerment, which he defines as “forgetting that we have everything we will ever need within us,” where we can transcend victimhood in response to “dis-ease.”

Suzanne showed the powerpoint of Sam’s thesis, the Healing Empowerment Center, reading from the text that Sam wrote to describe and explain it. He situated it on the waters of the Hudson River in New York, on the site of a former landfill. The central focus of the building is an empty hole surrounded by a circular plaza, with five levels of structure housing yoga and meditation rooms looking inward, private

consultation rooms looking outward, and the top level, administration, overseeing the entire Center.

The Center embodies five concomitant directives: monumentality, transparency, response to natural geography, a haven provided by interior spaces, and togetherness as a community embrace.

The ensuing discussion was lively and inspired. Many people gave examples of healing empowerment in their own lives.

Linda Rapuano saw that this center could lead the way to creating a different model of care, and asked if we are willing to step out of the current model. "The Israelites had to leave and come to a new place to be truly free," she said.

Sue Bayley noted the intense current debate about rising medical costs and suggested that now could be the time for healing empowerment concepts to at last be incorporated into and accepted by the mainstream medical community. These concepts offer healing modalities that are less costly than meds and procedures. Also, significantly at this time, there is increasing research to support the concepts and they are more and more widely accepted in the general population.

Patty Heyman asked about music, art, and poetry. Suzanne said that she had that conversation with Sam and he assured her that it was part of the concept and he was counting on her, Suzanne, to advise him.

Anne Avidon noted that the Hudson River location is close to the New York financial district. Bankers need healing. Perhaps Goldman Sachs would be interested in the public relations image-building that could come from helping to sponsor such a project to demonstrate their care and concern for people in a world that has been through such intense financial trauma.

Suzanne explained that the actual location could be anywhere, not necessarily in New York, as long as it is associated with waterfront.

Linda DeHart suggested that a beginning could be to make a model of the Center that would travel to cities all over the world, to help with fundraising the concept building.

Pati Stillwater said she personally identifies with Sam's vision and that it addresses how our culture has isolated the body from the mind – that we need to experience it all as one.

Brigit Chin, a surgeon and acupuncturist, said that we are on the cusp of a new era of medicine. The healing is starting from within, and we need to recognize it in order to heal ourselves as a human species. She is developing a proposal for Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital to include a health integrative center as part of HR benefits.

Arthur Stowe proposed that we examine the meaning of "empowerment." It is a special word, and everyone has a different idea of what it means.

Linda Marks said that in terms of power, she has to bring in the power of the heart. She recommends the movie, "I Am," in which Director Tom Shadyac speaks with intellectual and spiritual leaders about what's wrong with our world and how we can improve both it and the way we live in it.

Helaine Golann, psychologist and yoga teacher, said that healing comes from inside, certain things can bring it forth, and we make our own medicine. She offered this poem:

The bud stands for all things
For all things come from within
But sometimes it is necessary
To put a hand upon the head of a rose
To reteach it it's loveliness.

by Galway Kinnell

Juri Love works with children in juvenile detention centers and said that kids are healed by the power of music. She is also working with a \$25,000 grant to use yoga in her program.

Tom Pugh and Sandra Rizkallah also work with youth, and said that empowerment is something that you can't exactly plan. Music is a form of meditation, and their students experience empowerment through compassion.

Linda DeHart mentioned the coming movie about Jill Bolte Taylor, the neuroscientist who witnessed her own stroke as she experienced it, and emerged to tell the journey of moving from injured back to healthy brain. When the movie comes out in 2012 it will help people begin to understand the need for a whole-brain healthy balance, a different way of being, that will change us from the inside out. This is really where self-empowerment starts.

Bill Kennedy said that in physics, power is the ability to do work, and it's all from the inside out – energy, music, poetry.

Many people expressed a desire to help realize the Healing Empowerment Center. Anyone with resources to offer should contact Suzanne Hanser shanser@berklee.edu For more information about the Healing Empowerment Center view the attached pdf and/or visit the website at http://healingempowermentcenter.com/Site/Healing_Empowerment_Center.html

UPDATE: The Art of Health Documentary

James Cavanaugh announced that he is finishing the Art of Health website at www.theartofhealth.tv and he invited people to look for it within two weeks. He said that he has asked each of the Discovery Meeting participants for permission to list their names as supporters of the Art of Health project.

Susan Brender brought up Donna Karan's Urban Zen Initiative that brings together health, the arts and education. She said it is an important integrative care program on New York's Beth Israel Hospital cancer ward that would be a good topic for The Art of Health.

She is also producing her first interview on her radio podcast, "V for Vitality," an

interview with yoga guru Matt Sanford, and will let the Discovery Meeting know how to access it as soon as it is complete. Any Discovery Meeting participants who are interested in sharing their own work and stories are invited to contact Susan to discuss being on her show.

JUNE 20 MEETING: Singing Crystal Bowls, Joan Caplan

Joan Caplan offers the beauty and peace of singing crystal bowls as our guest at the next meeting on June 20. Join us for this special experience.

Next Discovery Meetings:

Fall season to be determined – after summer break.

By Susan Bayley for Discovery Meeting • www.discoverymeeting.org