
VENERATING TEACHERS

by Anissa Howard

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This past June, I traveled to Maui, Hawai'i to spend six days with an extraordinary teacher by the name of Ram Dass. Hardly 80, he is now using a wheelchair after having had a near fatal stroke in the late nineties that took away the use of the entire right side of his body and left him with expressive aphasia. A deep, wise human being, Ram Dass is still very much alive and rather than traveling, he teaches now from his home. I sought him out after having studied his work for several years and finding it to be absolutely beautiful real-life stuff.

I was born three years after Upland Hills Farm School began. Phil had begun directing the school, which numbered forty-five and was in pre-dome, pre-schoolhouse form, which I think means school was held in a barn. Ram Dass was living in India. At some point Knight and Dorothy Webster hired teachers for their summer camp program, and my grandmother was hired to teach children the art of basket weaving. It is a family amusement that so many interests I have ever inquired about in my life, my grandma has either helped found, accomplished or done in some form or another. I seem to gravitate toward the same things she did and it has been said that we are kindred spirits. So that when I spoke once of beekeeping, her family had been beekeepers for 140 years or something, and when I was interested in the Pontiac Center for Creative Arts, she had helped found it, and when I inquired out loud once about the Montessori Method, she disappeared behind her bookshelf and surfaced with the entire Maria Montessori collected works because after all, she explained, she was trained as a Montessori teacher in Winnetka and taught for ever so many years... What was then an unfolding set of coincidences to marvel at, I would later begin to see as important indicators that my life was perhaps not what I thought it was.

Around the same time that my grandmother was teaching summer camp children at the Farm, she was also teaching me how to weave the baskets that she grew up around. Sweetgrass grew wild in Tallulah Falls, Georgia where she was born and raised, and here also, it can be found if you have the nose to find

it in the summer. My grandmother would often find hers here by driving along the rural Michigan roads with the windows rolled down and saying, "Stop here, I think I smell some." My sisters and I would gape at each other and whisper, "How does she *DO* that...I smell *nothing*!"

I grew up attending public schools. I remember being in my third grade classroom and feeling a desperate wish to get outside of those walls. If I wanted to learn basket weaving I had to come home from school to do it. My grandmother represented something I loved best – and that was learning by way of an older person who is skilled and kind and loving, and who felt inspired to teach within the context of the natural world. When my daughter was four, I was seeking something for her that encompassed this. A natural, expressive, protected way of learning. After thinking I might home school, a friend mentioned Upland Hills School. That awakened in me some faint association that I felt curious about.

Unaware of her time teaching on the Farm I said, "Grandma, I found this wonderful school called Upland Hills School." "Oh sure Upland Hills...I taught at the farm for many years...basket weaving. Knight and Dorothy were such *fine people* – *really they were*..."

Pretty soon, I had called and enrolled Jane just in the nick of time in Holly's Group for her first year (only one spot left). I did not know at that time, that this would be a place that would continue to call out to me in ways that were, and still are, integral to my own growth.

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At the time I was completing some graduate work in Speech Pathology and Audiology. During that time I learned my grandmother had become fluent in sign language when she worked in Pontiac with deaf people to help them find jobs. But I was finding the study to be empty of what I had hoped would be a specialty field where I could effectively meet the needs of children. Each day I was dropping Jane off and driving away to my classes with an increasing pull to stay at Upland Hills. I approached Phil and I asked him about the school, explained that I was in a transition, and that I would be honored to have the opportunity to have some time in the classroom and that I was particularly attracted to the four and five year olds and the 55 year olds – Holly and Holly's Group. At that time there was no framework for accepting in a new teacher with any sort of pay. People had done short mentoring stints over the years, but nearly always voluntarily. As it turns out, the teaching staff had just come off of their yearly winter retreat having had an introductory conversation about the future of the school and they were in the question of how and when to begin inviting younger teachers to mentor under existing teachers.

And who were those teachers?
Where were those teachers?

I began having conversations with Holly and offering my observations about the nature of this work and specifically with regard to this school, which is so dynamically different than other learning environments. The next fall I began working in exchange for Jane's tuition and observing in the classroom with Holly. I was riveted by the depth I found in her approach to the children both individually and as a group, the intelligence and gentleness with which she engages the children, and the dedication she has in protecting the innocence of childhood. I watched how she and Jean worked closely together, listened to stories, laughed and sometimes cried, and had a ringside seat next to the situations that presented themselves that year. Each day I would go home nourished and exhausted, knowing this was important in so many ways – and feeling deeply grateful for this time and place. I stayed at the school all day every day

watching and learning. In addition to being a part of Holly's Morning Meeting Group, I also taught an Afternoon Class in basket weaving, which gave me an opportunity to presence my grandmother and also try my hand at the challenge of vertical grouping, a core part of the school in which one particular Afternoon Program class might have multiple ages of children in attendance.

One day Holly asked, "How's your wisdom doing?" She knows that this is the right kind of question to ask a new teacher in an environment that is organized around a central theme of individual geniuses. One that is ever-changing, and one in which consistency is found throughout but based on things not traditionally held as values in other educational systems. Things that form the foundation of Upland Hills School like an inherent sense of trust and joy and love. Upland Hills is an experience. Each who comes to teach here brings a completely new and different set of skills and strengths and experiences. For me, working here has often meant undergoing large shifts in perspective, meeting a diverse set of challenges, and looking inward to find the heart of the work resonant there - always finding it to be an extraordinary time and place in which to work and live.

I mentored in Holly's room for three years in which she graciously opened her space, her heart, her mind and her arms, to teach me in my favorite way of learning, and the one way in which I find such potential because of what it leaves intact: Wonder. Dignity. Trust. At the beginning of those three years, I had been introduced to Ram Dass' work and who he was in relation to the school. I learned that he had delivered his last lucid teaching to a group of people at our EAC in February of 1997, just two days prior to the stroke that altered the course of his life. His work became interwoven with my mentoring experience. The depth of human-ness with which he taught paralleled the nature of much of what I was experiencing. Learning to teach alongside a staff with much more practice and experience than I had ever had was and is a wonderful challenge. Very inspiring. Very humbling.

The mentoring was a verbal agreement on a year-to-year basis with no indication that it would be able to continue. Every year I wanted it to. It was an experiment, although most began to realize very quickly how extremely valuable mentoring was. The school's Board of Trustees could hear and see that value, and worked to create a line item in the budget for its continuance. There was no promise; only a hope that someone mentored by an existing staff member

would ultimately be prepared to take on a Morning Meeting Group if that opportunity arose. This looked like it was going to be never – after all people STAY at Upland Hills School for lifetimes- but the very next year, unexpectedly, David Sosin was moving to Virginia. Nobody could really stand it- losing David from the school after 22 years. But it became clear that after navigating this Upland terrain, that the years of mentoring I had done with Holly had produced a situation where I was offered that Group after David left. There was an interesting and strangely tender ceremony in which David passed along to me a horrible-looking real stuffed squirrel (I have no idea where it is...David?). Ken Webster had given up that Group (and that same squirrel) to David years ago.

Now, here in January, 2011, the invitation is opened (and for the most part de-squirreled). The staff is responding to the fact that many of them are approaching retirement age, and we are in discussion around how best to mentor new teachers. What gets preserved and passed on in a place also so dedicated to creativity? Passing on stories and wisdoms that will help the school continue to flourish (for another 40 years?) is work that is underway.

This year we are so fortunate to have our full staff present and teaching. In addition to this, we also have four wonderful people mentoring and teaching at the school in various fashions. There are currently two interns. One is Lori Shultz. Lori's quiet, wise and creative manner is attractive to all. She has the gift of being able to sense and see into the children, know exactly where it is they are blossoming, and what to give them that will further their growth. Lori also has the gift of listening. This year she has been spending her time each day with Anissa's Morning Meeting Group as well as teaching Afternoon Program classes, a Math Group, helping with the Fall Play and in Safe Circle. When the idea of writing an article about mentoring at Upland Hills School arose, Lori's humor did too, saying, "A writing about Mentoring? There's so much..." In the end she declared it would have to be written as a Haiku.





In addition to Lori, we have Shaun Piazza interning. Shaun is another very important presence at the school again this year. Shaun is a former Upland Hills student himself. He has returned to work within this environment out of the recognition of the value inherent in this kind of teaching/learning. He loves to play interactive games with the children that make them scream with delight, is teaching a range of Afternoon Program classes from younger to older, and is working with Phil in Men's Class as well as teaching math on the older end each morning.

Two other people have also been with us this year, spent time and creative energy, teaching and observing, gifting us with their talents and minds and presence. Melissa Zeiman, (mother of Olivia in Holly's Group), has been working all year very closely alongside Holly, learning her current curriculum and then taking over full time for 3 weeks when Holly underwent surgery and recovery. Thereafter Melissa has been a supporting teacher to the children on in Holly's Group. Melissa embodies the steadiness and beauty of a quiet mountain that the children sit in a kind of reverence before. As she worked with Holly and Holly's Group, it was clear that not only does Melissa make the children flourish, but she seemed to flourish as well to the point that Jean commented on sometimes not being able to distinguish between Holly and Melissa - their similarities were so great. High Praise.

Melissa Clark, (mother of Xavier in Jean's Group), spent the first part of this school year moving about the younger end observing and teaching. She spent a few days a week in Jean's Morning Meeting Group with Jean, in Math with Anissa's Group several times weekly, and worked with Karen helping choreograph part of the Fall Play. Melissa Clark's kindness and exuberance delighted the children. One of her observations about the school pointed to the fullness, and the richness of the environment and the work. She noticed how someone could be initiated into the culture by being mentored for years and still, there would be so much to learn. She's right. Melissa also designed and taught an Afternoon Program class in the fall trimester called World Travelers.

The school has a good balance between being and doing. Between silence and activity. Between young and old. Innocence and wisdom. It has many Global Faculty, over 700 alumni, and even more who care deeply about its longevity. After his stroke Ram Dass continued to work in earnest on the subject of aging in our culture. His work had already included directing the kindergarten/nursery school programs at Stanford, teaching at Harvard as a psychologist, and subsequently living in India, he had developed programs for prisons, worked in conjunction with Hospice and created a project around conscious dying. He had been all over the world, written many books, helped found the Seva Foundation that worked to

eradicate blindness in Nepal, he had worked with prisoners and people with AIDS. And he said, "I don't think our inner experience is one of age... In our culture we are somewhat impoverished by focusing on achievements, material accomplishments, the product, rather than the process of life." When I was just about to leave Maui to catch my plane home to Michigan I sat for a moment with Ram Dass at his outdoor dinner table. He was quietly looking out over the ocean. He said, "We have to make sure we find a way for our school to continue and flourish because it is so important for the children to have this available to them." Yes, this is good.

This year the school is celebrating forty years, with plans for a party in September. There are six long time staff members looking at transitioning sometime across the next six years. Ram Dass is 80, speaking from an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. My grandmother is 85, fingers frozen with arthritis; she can no longer weave baskets. Time passes. Things change. The 3D Campaign is in full swing, and we are working to create abundance in all three areas of Dignity, Diversity, and Development. The staff continue to amaze me with their abundance of creative energy, and their collective genius in using their experiences to keep passionately alive, a place for children to learn and grow and be loved. Their commitment to one another is strong. I continue to be an advocate for mentoring at the school. For the history of a place to be passed along or at the very least remembered as foundation for new growth, there must be an overlap of existing staff and new staff. I feel mentoring is crucial to the health and longevity of Upland Hills School. I am deeply energized and excited when I think that this is possible - that there will be those of us who are drawn to this type of depth-work in education, and who would love to help the school step into a future where service to families and children, can continue.

I took across the Pacific with me last year's All School Picture - the one of all of us sitting on Grasshopper Hill. On the last afternoon with Ram Dass, he picked it up and looked carefully and silently over the photograph. Studying each child and staff member. When he finally looked back up at me he sighed and his eyes twinkled and he said: "Bunch of individuals...and they all look happy. That doesn't happen easily."



FORTY YEARS OF UPLAND HILLS SCHOOL

by Phil Moore

The 1970's

The first time I heard of Upland Hills School I was on the other side of the planet, far away from the snowy winters of Michigan. It was 1970. Karen, Nina and I had found a beautiful three-bedroom house just three blocks from the Mediterranean Sea in Fuengirola, Spain. The monthly rent was \$65. Our neighborhood included people from Ireland, South Africa, Sweden, New York, and San Francisco. We were an eclectic community of searchers and seekers and we were all convinced that it was wise to winter on the Costa del Sol.

Meanwhile, nearly 4,000 miles away, in Oxford, Michigan, a group of parents and educators were in the process of starting a new kind of school. They called it Upland Hills Farm School and recruited a professor at Wayne State University, Dr. Tom Hamil, to be the head of the school.

Karen and I and our new friends were also talking about starting a school. It didn't have a name but we had strong ideas about how it would operate and what we would teach. In Oxford, there was talk about the children choosing freely to satisfy their needs and interests, and teachers communicating continuously with each other to pool their resources in the best interest of the children. In Fuengirola, we were talking about how to teach children to think comprehensively, how to create a new global classroom that respected and valued all cultures and how to protect every child's gifts.

One year later, those two distant worlds were one. Karen and I enrolled our daughter Nina at Upland and I was hired as a teacher of the fledgling school. The odds of us being around 40 years later were about as favorable as an African American man born in Hawaii and raised in Malaysia becoming President of the United States.

We had seized what my mentor, R. Buckminster Fuller, called "the design science initiative." We founding parents and teachers of Upland Hills Farm School had boldly taken a step that went far beyond words and entered the territory of hard work, struggle, and the complexity of inter-personal relationships. Taking initiative is something our school has done time and time again. We knew that as teachers we had to model risk and that we would be held accountable for our mistakes and missteps. We also knew that if we didn't try this, we might never get the chance to do it again.

In the summer of 1972, equipped with a small bank loan, the generosity of Upland Hills Farm, and an abundance of idealistic, youthful enthusiasm we set out to build a school on the present site. We began to construct a Geodesic Dome classroom. Our task was to use the time we had from June to September to build three classrooms, a septic field, a well, electrical access, a road, and to navigate permitting and a thousand other details. We did all of this without knowing how to do any of it. We were raw and untested and in the time it takes to say "neophyte" we landed at the very center of the domain of "What you don't know, you don't know."

It is in that very domain that initiative is challenged. During the construction of our Geodesic dome classroom/workshop, many inauspicious things transpired. One of our best teachers quit. The footings for the dome were nearly impossible to dig because of the density of the clay below grade. The first dome kit never arrived because the supplier would only take a certified check. Addison Township refused to allow a driveway anywhere on Indian Lake Road. When the concrete truck arrived we found that we needed special tools (which

we didn't have) to finish the floor. We broke a rented ditch witch. The State of Michigan would not recognize a dome as a legitimate building for a school. And although we decided to skin the dome with cedar shakes, we couldn't figure out how to do it without divine intervention.

The 70's live for me as a decade of original ideas, tests, and uncommon support. We built the school, installed a wind generator and survived a terrible traffic accident that killed one child and seriously injured several others. We started another non-profit organization, which would become the Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center (UHEAC), which was dedicated to teaching ideas that would lead to a more sustainable, healthy planet. We created the foundation of an educational curriculum that would precede Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and designed classes that celebrated and developed each of the intelligences he later identified. What stands out for me about this era is the courage of the early families who believed in and supported us by re-enrolling year after year.



The 1980's

The 1980's began with a visit from R. Buckminster Fuller who, at 85, had published 28 books and filed 28 patents. Bucky came to inaugurate the UHEAC, to acknowledge our work, and to remind us of the challenges that still lay ahead. He ate at our home, where he took a brief nap, danced for us after dinner, played with our daughter Sasha, and then gave us his best out-loud thinking in front of a packed audience at the UHEAC.

In 1983, five months before he died, Fuller wrote, "Human integrity is the uncompromising courage of self determining whether or not to take initiatives, support or cooperate with others in accord with 'All the truth and nothing but the truth' as it is conceived by the divine mind always available in each individual. Whether humanity is to continue to comprehensively prosper on Spaceship Earth depends entirely on the integrity of the human individuals and not on the political and economic systems." This seemed then, and seems still now, to sum up the Upland Hills vision.

During the 80's we were tested. We hit our lowest enrollment, at 37. We tried numerous times to invent ways to sustain our school and our sister organization, the UHEAC. While we were considering a fund raising drive to build a new school building, at the very nadir of our existence, I was propositioned by the Rotary Club of Oxford. They asked me to host a delegation of Rotarians from India because one of their members had read an article in the Oxford Leader that mentioned J. Krishnamurti as an influence of our school. The tour of our newly constructed Ecological Awareness Center and our school complex resulted in an intense and surprising conversation between the seven guests from Tamil Nadu, India and myself about education and the meaning of life. Our Oxford Rotarian hosts seemed pleased by the way our conversation was unfolding, but, as it ran well over the hour they had allotted for the tour, they cut it short. To my surprise, a week later I was invited to be a member of a team of young men (I barely fit the description at 36, a year over the age limit) who would tour the state of Tamil Nadu for four weeks, all expenses paid, to continue the conversation.

So this is one way the universe works. The beginning of the decade opens with Bucky visiting and inscribing his book with the words "in admiring friendship." Within months it unravels to our lowest enrollment, causing me to doubt myself and to consider closing the school. Then, just when I thought we'd reached bottom, it

offers me a free trip to India.

I had read Krishnamurti's *Education and the Significance of Life* while on our year long wandering of Europe in 1970-71, and was so challenged and engaged by its unique message that I was drawn to conclude our trip by traveling to Brockwood Park in Bramdean, England to meet Krishnamurti at his school. It was at Brockwood Park that the idea of creating or finding a school for young children began to emerge with greater clarity. Now, almost two decades later, I needed to delve deeply into my frail self identity and ask questions of myself that required a period of introspection and self discovery. I was asking the question, "Who am I?" It was at just this time I was being given the opportunity to travel, not just to India, but to the specific part of India where there was a Krishnamurti school. Here I could take the time to practice meditation as an integral part of my inquiry. Here, I could follow Krishnamurti's own words:

"But there is an intelligent revolt which is not reaction, and which comes with self-knowledge through the awareness of one's own thought and feeling. It is only when we face experience as it comes and do not avoid disturbance that we keep intelligence highly awakened; and intelligence highly awakened is intuition, which is the only true guide in life."

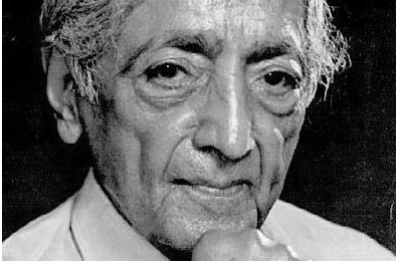
On the plane ride home from my travels to the east, I reread an article on fundraising for a capital campaign (something I had packed six weeks earlier and forgotten) and decided that I would try my best to serve a vision that would enable us to build a new school building. I had wrestled some of my demons, I had discovered an inner strength, and I had deeply missed everyone and everything that I had left behind. Six weeks seemed like an entire year. That project became known as 'Project Schoolhouse' and by the decade's end, with the generosity of so many individuals and the hard work and determination of so many volunteers, we realized that vision. It was September, 1989.



The 1990's

The 1990's brought new life to our school in the form of a core group of parents who were independent, loyal, committed, and deeply resonant with our school's values, which we finally wrote out in our mission statement. By that time we had gathered the core teaching faculty, a most amazing assembly of hard working, dedicated, deeply committed and compassionate educators who stood on the shoulders of every teacher that ever believed in innovation and kindness as the core to an evolving profession.

The decade opened with Ted Strunck deciding that a great comprehensive unit for the seventh and eighth graders could be centered on building a bridge. This project, which began in 1992 and was completed in 1994, was an amazing example of passionate teaching, comprehensive learning, and stunning achievement. Ted's leadership, his compassion, his vision, and his deep love for his students, are all characteristics shared by each of our staff members. The bridge is a physical structure, but like all great ideas began as an invisible thought. The bridge is a connector, between the school and the Ecological Awareness Center, but it also is a metaphor that makes two into one. The bridge is also a demonstration of collaboration, and an example of how experiential education transcends book learning. The bridge is also a song written by Bill Staines, and as Ted and I sang that song on the day we celebrated the accomplishment of these wonderful kids, I was profoundly moved by the miracle of who we had become. It was no mere coincidence that it was music that provided that transcendent moment. Music is a language that Ted has integrated so deeply into his heart and soul that it defines his teaching style.



Because of our deep rooted investment in this community, personal things became community things. Karen's fight with cancer unfolded during the 90's and as I tried to support her and to believe she would live, I often stumbled into periods of despair. However, by 1997 we had lived through our encounter with cancer, and we were able to begin again. In February of 1997 Ram Dass, an inspiration to me and so many others throughout the years, came to our community and lived in our home for a weekend. His incomparable storytelling laced with insightful wisdom were hallmarks of his master teacher style. The weekend was wonderful in so many ways. Ram Dass was in exceptional form and his teaching was lucid, warm, engaging and challenging all at the same time. Two things occurred the week after his retreat. Ram Dass had a stroke which left him paralyzed in half of his body, and I resigned as the director of the EAC. It was time once again to pause and reflect.

The 2000's

The roaring zeros opened with an effort to build a performing arts space that would be called the Karen Joy Theatre (KJT). Thanks to our board, staff and community leadership, we raised a significant portion of the cost of the theatre. In the fall of 2003 we opened the theatre with a play that was written by Karen with music composed by Ted Strunck. The play, called "Heros," was the perfect play to celebrate Karen's recovery and the new vitality of our learning community. This year begins our seventh season. In past seasons, the Karen Joy Theatre has presented performances by world class artists including Eugene Freisen, Rafe Martin, Karen Taylor-Good, Billy Jonas, Josh White Jr., Steve Bhaerman, Ted Strunck and Kenya Massala. UHS alumni performances have featured Anjuli Dawn Elder, Mary Giroux, Jesse Elder, Willie Rowe, Kelley Clute, Niko Grossfeld, Brett and Evan Kline, and many others, as well as original plays written by Karen and Ted and starring students of the school.

Continued on pg. 10





UPLAND HILLS SCHOOL
**is celebrating its
40th birthday**



Labor Day week end, Saturday September 3rd and Sunday September 4th, 2011
(RSVP with enclosed envelope)

Two days of fun and dream making
Our intention is to create together
an atmosphere that invites:

**music making
story telling
game playing
building
rocket launching
networking
learning
laughing**

Including:
**talent show
overnight
movies from times past
slide show
organically grown local produce
(some from Upland Hills Community
Supported Agriculture)**

Music featuring Ted Strunck, Phil Moore,
and special guests.

Let's dream together about co-creating the next
steps that will take our learning community to the
next level.

Be prepared for the biggest All School picture ever.

Bring:

- your ideas of what worked best at our school**
- your favorite songs**
- your bathing suit**
- your stories**
- your dreams for our collective future**
- your children**
- your parents**
- your friends**

3D Phase II Campaign

It's a joyous milestone to be sure: Forty years of co-creating this magical, loving place called Upland Hills School. Since 1971, roughly 700 children and their families have been touched by this unique learning environment that inspires students to explore their individual passions and fall in love with the world around them.

Standing here these many years later, I can't help but be struck by how the ideals that have always made up the core of our educational approach – the importance of ecological awareness, sustainable living and growing community – are the very lessons our ailing planet requires today. It seems to me that now, more than ever, the world needs the kind of education that happens at Upland Hills School every day.

That's why, as we honor our fortieth year of teaching children, I ask you to reflect on something just as important: Our plan to secure the next 40 years of Upland Hills School.

Eight years ago, we developed an initiative designed to both honor our past and prepare the way for a sustainable future at our school. Called the 3-D Campaign, it's a plan designed to nurture and sustain our school in the three key areas of Dignity, Diversity and Development. To date we've raised over \$400,000 and have seen the benefits in the form of everything from new teachers to our photovoltaic solar panels that provide our school 70% of its electricity each year. You can learn more about this campaign on our website, www.uplandhills.org

It's my sincere hope to guarantee that this loving educational environment remains healthy and ready for whatever challenges might await it over the next forty years. For that reason, I hope you'll consider getting involved in raising funds for our 3D Campaign and make your own tax deductible gift today.

-Phillip Moore

THE 3D GIVING TREE

Individuals and groups of individuals often join together to serve Upland Hills School. This offers donors a way to build community with other like minded individuals. Naming opportunities include:

VISIONARIES	\$ 500,000	Richard & Samantha Monahan Jr. John G. Marshall Ernie Miriani Steve & Hilary LaGattuta Agent Benefits Corporation Dave & Debbie Hudson Jack Krasula John & Marjorie Tedesco	SEEDS	\$ 500	John LoVasco Sr. Karl Gorman Moments Matter – Connie Smith Chris Rink David Sokol Mark Thomas Michael & Nadiya Samhat Anne Donnelly Baker Mark Vitelli Jim Unrue Edward Deeb Anne Donnelly Ed Begley Jr. Annetta Miller David Batdorf-Barnes
ADVENTURERS	\$ 300,000				
MAP MAKERS	\$ 100,000				
John & Donna LoVasco Scott Cameron					
PATH FINDERS	\$ 50,000	IMAGINAL CELLS	\$ 1,200		
Glenn & Cindy Frey/Starkey Foundation		Phil & Karen Moore Bill & Terry Gardner Joel & Debbie Pace Jean Ruff Holly MacMahon Jan Butcher Kathy & Matthew Long Marilyn Jereau & Ken Webster Dave & Francine Zick John & Rosalyn Coury Jerry & Julie Wright Julia & Nathan Hill John Ahee David & Lisa Sosin Steve & Sandy Rollin Colleen Cavanagh & Dan Kosuth Tom & Jill Tomich Core 13 LLC Professional Hearing Aid Trustinus			
STONE BUILDERS	\$ 25,000				
EARTH TENDERS	\$ 10,000				
John Yavruian Mel & Ellen Moore Pete & Kaye Riley EDS					
PLANTERS	\$ 5,000				
Michael Anderson & Lisa Maruca Eugene LoVasco Ty & Christine Damon Steve & Paula Patterson Blue Cross Blue Shield John B. Marshall Gerald & Susan Zaccardelli Joseph & Amy Dicresce					

All Individuals and Groups will be acknowledged and visibly recognized as donors to the 3D INITIATIVE in our prominently displayed permanent honor roll.



But nothing compares to watching the audience as our children perform the spring play. Karen is sitting on a concrete step stage left, near the front of the theatre. She has a flashlight and she's following the script. Her job: to make sure every actor has their line and if they don't, to give it to them (this rarely happens). The children are operating the light and sound booth, managing back stage and pouring their hearts into often over twenty roles. There are set changes, singers singing, dance and movement, and voices moving the story along. My role has long passed; I am allowed only the special effects - the explosions, fog, ropes and ladders, and any other illusions. So I watch the actors and I search the audience for the faces of the proud parents, who like me are choked with emotions as they watch their children shine. And there Karen is, hunched over in the corner on book, supporting the actors and missing the magic. As I watch the children bring our house to life, I feel such a deep sense of gratitude that I lived to see the day that Karen, who with John Yavruian started our theatre in a mobile classroom in the 70's, is now producing plays in a building called 'The Karen Joy Theatre'. This is what it feels like to have a dream come true, to serve and to delight in the success of others: it is a feeling of pure JOY.

In the spring of 2008, I was with a small group of children in the medicine wheel when my heart seized. Like my father, I didn't realize what it was and because I was determined not to bother anyone, I rested in our home until it passed. The next day I drove to my doctor's office and after an EKG, was admitted to the hospital. Open heart surgery, followed by an infection that lodged in my sternum led to another operation and a slow recovery.

While lying in my hospital bed, I thought about what mattered most to me. I remembered scenes from my past and the thousands of mistakes that I made

as I travelled to this here and now. I let images arise and selected some to hover over me as if they were guardians that would comfort or inform me of something I needed to learn in order to heal. I saw before me that April day when I arrived at Lake George and Predmore Roads to see our Dodge Maxi Van on its side and children scattered broken and crying. I conjured an image of the Dunlite Wind generator at full tilt providing clean power. I invoked names and faces of children and matched it with this quote: "You are not a man until you give your love truly and freely, to a child. And you are not a good man until you earn the love, truly and freely, of a child in return."

I thought of my daughters and how much I loved them and how far away they seemed. Every face and every image came out of sequence as if time and space had merged in a world where no one had aged. I remembered Bucky's kiss the night he opened the UHEAC. I brought my mom and dad back to life through the sheer will of imagination. I remembered Jack and Marilyn and John and I had dreams that we were living illegally in our old farm house on Orion Road and that at every moment we were somehow both free and living on borrowed time. "A dream is a place where a wish and a fear meet."

My brothers came to help me heal and their presence gave me something so rare and so precious that it has no name. Karen fed me and cared for me while holding her worst fears at bay. "A good man is as strong as the right woman needs him to be."

It was a visit from my friend and native teacher, Jorge Arenivar, however, that transformed my process. He asked to see the open wound on my chest where the doctors had scraped my sternum to rid my body of all necrotic flesh. I lifted my tee shirt and he said "Ah Phil, this is your Sun Dance." I looked at Jorge's chest this week end and his scars are vertical, like mine only smaller and to the side, yet we had received them as marks of serving our communities. A Sun Dance is an opportunity to test yourself on behalf of the community you serve.

In March, 2010, we installed a 10 KW solar array on the roof of our school. It will provide non-polluting electricity for over 30 years, saving the school thousands of dollars and providing our staff and students with an abundance of opportunities to create an innovative curriculum. We purchased it for a fraction of its actual cost, thanks to the vision of our board of trustees which developed a long range plan that we now call the 3-D Campaign. The realization of this campaign holds great promise for the future of our school.

So here I am now. I had my heart attack in a sacred place called the medicine wheel and it took more than a year for me to grow into my new self. Jorge gave me the language to understand that this scar on my chest was proof of my wounding and of my healing and of my connection to this learning community.

"There's a truth deeper than experience. It's beyond what we see, or even what we feel. It's an order of truth that separates the profound from the merely clever, and the reality from the perception."

This summer in Montana, I mentioned to a friend how Bombay, India in 1985 had brought me to my knees and initiated me into deep and silent waters. Later, he sent me the novel *Shantaram*, a 900 page love poem to that city now known as Mumbai. Reading the novel helped me gain a perspective that, like my scar, will remain with me for the rest of my days. The quotes of this section come from Gregory David Robert's book.

Looking Forward

Labor Day week-end 2011 marks our school's 40th birthday. We invite you to gather with us on that weekend, not only to honor and celebrate, but to co-create a new emerging vision for the next 40 years. I hope we pause to honor our founders. I hope we remember the names of all the teachers that have contributed to who we are and who we might become. I hope that we will live our values and create an atmosphere of love, inclusion and purpose. I hope that we will play music and games, tell stories and create new ones and inspire each other to take initiatives to help transform our world.

I hope that you will honor us with your presence. Our interest as we awaken to new emergent prospects draws our attention to focusing deeply on the possible. An Upland Hills Learning Community is calling us to work together in ways we've only just begun to experience. Together we will expand and breathe new life into our story, the story of how a group of ordinary souls came together to bring love, acceptance, creativity, and transcendence into the field of emerging consciousness.

SIGNS OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

By Steve Bhaerman

Steve Bhaerman taught at Upland Hills School in 1973, and is a long-time supporter of the school. He performed at our theatre during its first season..

*His just-released book, **Spontaneous Evolution: Our Positive Future and a Way to Get There From Here** was written with world-renowned biolo-*

gist Bruce Lipton, and offers a heartening view of humanity's future, based on the latest science and ancient wisdom. This excerpt from his "Notes from the Trail" blog appeared October 1, 2010.

This past weekend, I was reminded of an evolutionary project I have known about and been associated with for 37 years! I had the pleasure of a visit with my friend Phil Moore, who has been the director of Upland Hills School since 1971.

Although I wouldn't have thought about it that way until recently, Upland Hills was and is an imaginal cell of the new humanity.

As someone who reached adulthood in the late 1960s and got caught up in political and social activism, I remember folks being against a lot of things. But there were very few projects at the time moving forward a positive agenda. In the alternative high school I helped start in Washington, D.C. in 1968, I remember what a challenge it was for our kids to have no authority figures to protest against!

When my then-girlfriend and I moved to Michigan in 1973 to work at what was then called Upland Hills Farm School, an entirely new world opened up to us. Here was a school based around discovering the natural world, where freedom and structure were balanced to bring out the genius in each child in the context of community, and where there was a vibration of building what we DO want rather than protesting what we DON'T want. Yes, there was political activism at the school, including a field trip to Washington, D.C. to support the Equal Rights Amendment. More importantly, there was the building of nourishing community and development of individual gifts that bring the "heart" to any project for social change.

I am overjoyed that this unique project is thriving after nearly 40 years. Next year, in fact, Upland Hills celebrates its 40th birthday, and I am thrilled to be part of that celebration. So ... introducing the first evolutionary project featured in this blog, because it was the first evolutionary project I was involved in.

Thank you Upland Hills School, and thank you Phil Moore for being an imaginal cell for so long. You can learn more about this unique project here: www.uplandhills.org then click "About UHS-Our Story" May it live long and prosper!



ABOARD SPACESHIP EARTH

Comprehensive Education for the 21st Century

By Mark Hanf and Marnie Muller,
Co-Directors Aboard Spaceship Earth

Buckminster Fuller was probably best known as the architect of the Geodesic Dome, yet many are not aware that he was also an engineer, cartographer, geometer, scientist, poet, and author who devoted his life to creating a sustainable future for 100% of humanity. A generalist is one who knows a little about everything...a "Comprehensivist", as defined by Buckminster Fuller, is someone who understands how everything is interconnected. One of the Upland Hills School's guiding principles is "to promote comprehensive thinking" and this intention is fully supported by the school's commitment to cooperative, interdisciplinary learning and the multiple intelligences. Upland Hills School is a unique learning environment where students can experience these interconnections in a natural setting whether in the forest, garden, or sustainable structure.

It was very exciting to come to Upland Hills School and work with the students and teachers this past November, partially because we felt right at home. We originally met Phil Moore through the Buckminster Fuller Institute, where he serves on the Education Committee and he invited us to Michigan to share our Aboard Spaceship Earth educational program. Aboard Spaceship Earth integrates real-world Science, Technology, Engineering and Math skills, as well as global geography, and sustainable design, and was inspired by the work of Buckminster Fuller. The hands-on approach of ASE incorporates geometric modeling tools and large 12' floor maps based on Fuller's Dymaxion projection.



The unique Dymaxion world map minimizes the distortion of traditional maps and shows the continents as one continuous island in one ocean. This interconnected worldview and a passion for sustainable design is the basis of our program and is obviously shared by the community of Upland Hills. For the last forty years, Upland Hills has pioneered a learning environment where the key principles of the Universe that Buckminster Fuller spent his life exploring can be discovered daily. The beautiful campus includes a geodesic dome classroom/workshop, Dymaxion map posters on the walls, and an incredible history including working with the Junior World Game. Even the building where we presented the Aboard Spaceship Earth hands-on Dymaxion Map programs is a passive solar, earth-bermed, environmental learning center equipped with solar panels and a wind generator. If that wasn't enough, thirty years ago that building was personally dedicated by Bucky himself!"

Upland Hills is now an Aboard Spaceship Earth pilot school and will be using the giant world map to explore Math, Global Geography, World Resources, Earth Science, and more. The ASE global game board integrates state-of-the-art satellite imagery and high-resolution, digital, GIS map overlays to allow students to cooperatively graph global information such as population density, climate data, and world resources using color-coded disks and geographic labels. Aboard Spaceship Earth also uses an elegant system of geometric modeling equipment called Zometools to teach sophisticated multi-dimensional mathematics, science, engineering and design concepts in a fun and hands-on way. Teachers and students from fourth to eighth grade at Upland Hills will be integrating the ASE Kit materials into their curriculum this year. It was wonderful to visit a school that understands, as Fuller said, that "every child is a genius". Upland Hills nurtures the individual genius within its students and teachers. We hope to see 40 more years!



THE VALUE OF AN UPLAND HILLS EDUCATION

By Shaun Piazza

As we celebrate the 40 year anniversary of Upland Hills School and put our efforts towards making the next 40 years possible and successful, I want to examine why we would do so. What does Upland Hills provide its students that makes it worthwhile? Anyone who has spent time at Upland Hills knows that it has value. They hear it in the laughter and shouts of children resonating through the woods. They see it in the smiling faces when strolling through the hall. And they believe in it because of the loving faculty, many of whom are approaching their own 40 year anniversary with the school and who still emanate joy and excitement throughout their work day.

I know personally the value of this school. I returned to Upland Hills wanting to put a name to this value, to prove it to those who weren't fortunate enough to spend time here. I wanted to prove that our school is better than most.

It took me a year and numerous conversations to realize I was looking at it all wrong. We can't be better than other schools because we are not providing the same service. Some schools

strive for business success and produce students who excel in the corporate world. Others produce musicians, artists, athletes, or scientists depending on the values and abilities they instill in their students. Most public schools aim to give a well-rounded education, and yet fall short with students who are not meant to be rounded - students like those at Upland Hills School.

Like many others, our school gives our students a unique subset of abilities as well. But what are they? What are the common characteristics of our alumni? It is a challenging question considering that the school celebrates uniqueness in each child and teaches to each individual. But when I think about the alumni I start to see some trends.

One trend is entrepreneurship. The students that leave here know they have unique abilities and they want to create an environment that matches their talents. Our students undertake and succeed at diverse challenges at UHS which gives them the confidence to make decisions and pursue their interests long after they have left the school. This does not mean that every alumni meets immediate success in their endeavors, but they continue to try because they know it is all part of the path. The only way an individual can truly fail is by inaction - everything else is learning. This entrepreneurial spirit has lead to UHS alumni having a large variety of professional paths ranging from self produced music to business creation and ownership to being a NASA researcher.

Our school also imparts a love of nature to its students. The natural world is the largest classroom at UHS, woven into the very fabric of the educational environment that is our school, and it shows in our alumni. Most practice sustainabil-

ity in their daily lives and some have set their professional goals on being naturalists and environmental engineers. Others have approached environmentalism from a different direction, from becoming wind turbine mechanics to pursuing solar research.

A third trait I see in our alumni is academic strength. While the alumni I am connected with represent only a fraction of all alumni, they have all performed extremely well in public high schools, independent high schools, and all types of higher education institutes and universities. I hope this is something I can one day quantify so that I may quell the fears of parents who want their children to receive all of the things Upland has to offer, but worry that the academic piece is missing. For now the best I can offer is my personal assurance that academics at UHS are not lacking.

The last trait I see in our alumni stems from what Upland Hills is built on and operates around - Love- for ourselves, our friends, our families, and all our relations. If the school provided nothing else, the strength with which it provides this element to its students and community alone has enough value to make the continuation of UHS worthwhile and essential.

But Upland does provide more. It gives us all of the things I have mentioned along with joy and a thousand other things I have missed. The value of this school is astronomical.

It is going to take initiative and conviction to write the story for the next 40 years of UHS. I invite you to embark on this journey with me. I encourage you to pursue any interest you have involving this school, whether it's as small as coming to visit for a day or as large as stepping into the director's position or beginning a whole new program at the school. The only failure we can have is inaction.



THE UPLAND HILLS LEARNING COMMUNITY

- A vision for the future

Connections editor, Linda Bowers, sat down recently with John LoVasco to talk about the Upland Hills Learning Community. John is a long-time friend of the Upland Hills Community. A life-long outdoor enthusiast, John's children attended Upland Hills School for 10 years. He is the former president of the board of trustees for Upland Hills School, a supporter of the Upland Hills Ecological Awareness Center, and member of the CSA project at Upland Hills Farm. John consults numerous for-profit and non-profit organizations on improvement plans, risk management and perpetuation strategies.

L: There has been a lot of discussion about what the future holds for Upland Hills. One idea that has been proposed is creation of an Upland Hills Learning Community. What is that?

J: Let me suggest that the fact that I'm being asked this question indicates that it already exists. Also, the idea of it lays in the imagination of many. Individuals who are attracted to self learning and discovering themselves, people who may have children, who may go about traditional lives, discover that a place exists where they can hear their own voice - this is really the seed of a learning community. I experienced it - you experienced it. Parents, children, grandparents, teachers or organizations that interact with Upland Hills through the farm, the school, or the EAC - have experienced it. It's a real place where people rediscover themselves and in the process find joy. Naturally, they also experience pain, and it's all ok because they are exploring themselves and their relationship to others and the natural world. It's a place where you are invited to try things out and see how it interplays with the community- that could be the idea of a learning community.

L: What does this learning community look like?

J: Do I have the answer of what this learning community is and why it is at Upland Hills...I don't necessarily think I have one answer, but I sense the formation of it will somehow profoundly and positively benefit our community and the world. I can tell you what I envision, and how the languaging of a learning community came about as I thought about it and shared it with Phil.

At some point you have to name and then build what you see. What human beings do naturally is have an intuition and then they concretize it - that's what engineering is. For example, one might see two pieces of land separated by water. Sensing something is missing and new possibilities can occur if a structure is formed - they visualize the concept, plan, design and then create this structure and name it "bridge." Like the bridge that connects the School and EAC, The Upland Hills Learning Community is the concretization of an idea that already exists.

There are assets at Upland Hills that have evolved over time, from an idea that the Websters had years back, which was that there has to be a way for people to walk softly on the earth. There has to be a way to interact with the natural world that will allow us to get away from traditions that we are stuck in, that hold people in a place where they are not naturally authentic and creatively curious. Many people are afraid to look outside of a normal traditional way of doing things. So while there may be fear about testing the status quo and looking at ourselves and our relationship to people and our planet, we can create a place where people can do just that and be safe.

So the farm was an experiment. Any time you have camp, any time you have animals, any time there is death of animals, anytime you have crops, and death of crops, any time you have a bad season where all of your intentions are blown up in smoke because the natural world didn't collaborate with your expectations, you have the conditions for learning and you can give yourself to it. So if you look at the roots of the farm and the school, you see that something real happened to Dorothy Webster - she had children. And something even more real happened - her children had children.

She had this question, "Where are my children's children going to learn?" She intuitively sensed the need for a learning community. People came together and took this intuition and concretized it in the formation of the school. Then there was an invitation. Phil was invited to the school during a conversation in Spain with Ken Webster who told him, "My mom is starting a school and looking for help." Phil and Karen followed their intuition; they also leveraged their skills and invited others to share their gifts. Ideas became real. Forty

years later we have a concrete example of visioning made real. The Wind Generator, Dome, School, Theatre, Bridge, and the EAC, are physical manifestations of these intuitive hunches.

L: So intuition leads to concretization and we have Upland Hills School and Farm as a result. How does this relate to the formation of the learning community?

J: As we try to gain perspective on the past, present and future of the school and farm, we start by naming the stories that hold us together. We look at our current strengths and assets and we leverage them forward for future days. One day, Phil and I walked through the Monastery grounds, north of school. We were discussing the school's future and particularly the talents and opportunities that still lay ahead for those that want to discover. I asked Phil, "What are the assets that we have?" The discussion that followed brought forth an idea that seems to be gaining momentum and is solidifying; The Upland Hills Learning Community. The answer was that we have history, unique values, a deep love of learning, a unique physical environment, philosophically aligned neighbors and, most importantly, deep relationships.

Because not everyone who has experienced Upland Hills lives in the local area, you can question whether or not it is a community. But a learning community, I think you could say it is. Lots of people come and become self aware. The school, farm and EAC have been places where many have heard their own voice for the first time. This place and the people here help them evolve so they can continue to go on. I don't know many people who don't take a little piece of Upland Hills with them wherever they go. I surely do.

We stepped back and asked “Who and what kind of deep relationships have touched the lives of this community?” Starting with parents, teachers and children, we realized that this amazing place has been visited and has a history with people that are courageous and love-based. If you think of the people who we visited here - F. Buckminster Fuller, Julia Butterfly Hill, Elizabeth Kubler Ross, Joseph Chilton Pearce, and Ram Dass - they have all talked about love, they’ve talked about taking risks, going through fear and following non-traditional learning paths.....following your bliss. That, to me, is the heart of self learning. We invited people because we were courageous enough to say there are things we need to learn about ourselves.

Then we asked ourselves about the geographical assets present here and realized our neighbor next door, the Benedictine monastery, even though it is a very traditional place, shares a sense of natural wonder and commonality in the land. They have graciously allowed the school to use their land. We have utilized their retreat facilities and land when needed. They have an asset that if not properly utilized fails to maximize its potential. Likewise, Upland Hills’ failure to identify and leverage its assets, fails to maximize its potential. We need each other.

The EAC also has solid assets and much goodwill, yet needs our attention. It needs a neighbor that is connected - it can give Upland Hills School benefit and the school can give it benefit. The Benedictine monastery can give the school benefit and the Benedictine monastery can give the EAC benefit. The farm can give the school benefit and the school can give the farm benefit. We started seeing that our attention to interconnectedness was what we have to give, not get, from each other. Giving to each other – this was the intuitive intention.

To the south of us we have Bald Mountain Recreation Area, another natural asset. As we further explored this Learning Community idea, I discovered that Oakland County very much wants Upland Hills to thrive because it is a jewel for the community. When you talk about inviting people to your geographic region and you want to highlight your assets to show why people should live here, you can leverage successes. Upland Hills School, Farm and EAC have been successes. But the Learning community extends beyond these three entities.



What if we formalized this place, called the Upland Hills Learning Community, where people explore natural, simplistic ways to learn outside of traditional government-based educational models. Most of us grew up with curriculums that were very science, mathematics and fact-based, which is fine and we have benefited as a result. However, learning by observation, trial, error, and play are not often available. Natural world-based, exploratory and self-discovery type of education is not really available in the government system, because some would argue that it is not as measurable.

So the Upland Hills Learning Community is a place where, if you consider the assets that exist (Addison Oaks Park, Bald Mountain Recreation Area, the farm, the school, the EAC, the Benedictine monastery) you can access and explore the type of learning that resonates most deeply from where you are. The idea is that starting from birth through death, there is a place where you can explore each of the stages of life. Whether it is the birth and death of plants, the birth and death of animals, the birth and growth process of young children through adolescence, through adults in the form of parents and teachers, as mentors through the end of life when you are not as active in the workforce and are giving back in the form of grandparenting, to the point of death, where we become the soil for future generations – you can explore it all and participate in this community.

We have even explored the idea of “green burial” which is where we would extend, along the boundary of the Webster farm, 40 acres which would become a cemetery and nature preserve. This would be a place where people could be buried without using embalming fluids, plastic

caskets, and glues which hold caskets together and where people could have natural burials in shrouds as well as cremation spreadings and burials. It would have landmarks that are only stones that were found on the property and engraved - not ones from New York or Wisconsin that are high polished gloss - only things that are natural to this specific bio-region.

And so, that is the vision of Upland Hills Learning Community. It is a place where people from the local area, the region and around the country can come and explore. They might be invited to contribute or explore their own gifts here as well as to leverage the assets of the community to continue moving education forward. This learning community can offer an individually inspired education rather than one having an outside force mandating how we should learn.

L: *You have indicated that the Learning Community is in an evolution, moving from the idea and the assets, into something more concrete. I imagine that the idea of this community will be very attractive to many people, who will want to get involved in it and access all it has to offer. What suggestions do you have for them?*

J: First, I must be clear that while representatives from these entities have met during the last few years to explore this idea, I have tremendous respect for each of their unique visions and missions. No proposals have been presented to their boards and no blueprints have been presented for authorization and funding. I would suggest that a subgroup of representatives from each of these entities reconvene with the intention to explore the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T) associated with manifesting a more intentional Learning Community. I would suggest that anyone interested in exploring this further might contact Phil Moore at the school to express their interest. It is my hope that as we move closer towards the celebration of the schools 40th anniversary this September, we could announce a structural outline that might move this intuitive vision towards a physical manifestation.



UPLAND HILLS SCHOOL

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MISSION STATEMENT

Upland Hills School, founded in 1971, is an independent school community whose purpose is to educate pre-high school children. Our aim is to discover and respect the uniqueness of every child.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Upland Hills School holds the following principles as our core values and seeks to create an environment that:

- “ Protects, nurtures and defends the innocence of childhood
- “ Encourages a relationship between children and the natural world
- “ Empowers teachers and staff
- “ Fosters cooperation and consensus in decision-making
- “ Promotes mutual respect and trust that encourages our community to form authentic relationships
- “ Teaches us to think comprehensively
- “ Builds friendships that connect us with others around the world



VISION STATEMENT

Upland Hills School encourages children to know themselves and to connect with their environment as responsible world citizens. We provide a full academic program that emphasizes mastery of skills and creative growth. Our vision is that through the alignment and commitment of parents and teachers, children will come to see themselves as having extraordinary learning potential and access to the greatest miracle or tool in human experience, love.

SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS...
STAY CONNECTED WITH US.
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