

GREETINGS FROM GITCHE M'QUA

December, 2009

Thank you to all our 2009 volunteers, supporters and members, to our Being With Our Dying Council, to our Board, and to all of our relations.



It's all about the heart of giving: we cannot be one without the many

There is a story about St. Vincent, who was walking one day through a fierce storm. He came upon a beggar, who was cold, shivering and lightly clad. St. Vincent's action is something we can all learn from. He tore his cloak in half. Interestingly, he didn't give his whole coat away, leaving himself vulnerable to the elements. He gave, while also caring for himself. As human beings and as caregivers, we can all learn from his actions. In a sense, we cannot serve the many without caring for ourselves. But how do we truly care in the face of so much suffering? Our world is in a terrible tangle, where some even fear the world is ending. I remember Roshi Joan Halifax pleading with us one day: Please remember not to turn away from your own suffering. It really struck me. When we speak of compassion, we usually think of giving our kindness to others. But can we offer this same compassion towards our own suffering?

Not turning away must include our fear, our loathing, our denial, and our delusions. And this is the heart of giving. By keeping our heart open even in the face of our personal difficulties, we transform the world. Start close to home with yourself, and then reach out to another. This is what a Tibetan lama said to me years ago when I asked him about true compassion. The altruistic thought of "compassion for all beings" begins somewhere close at hand and then spreads out one person, one animal, and one cause at a time.

As we prepare to leave for Italy to visit Angie's relatives and the land of her ancestors torn by a recent earthquake, we tear our cloaks. My sister-in-law said she was relieved we were going. "We need more giving less getting," she whispered. This will be the first time we are both away from family; our family is moving from close to home into the larger world.

May all beings know how to be happy and give that joy to the world, the earth, and all beings .



By turning towards other's, we learn to overcome limitations. When we listen to those "not good enough" thoughts, we withhold our gifts from the world. So in this time of giving, let us each give our best to all beings.

Now, our joy is to ask for your support and to ask you to give to our work. It means so much to be able to receive, as it nourishes our programs and our volunteer end-of-life care that bring compassion and mindfulness in our living and dying. Whether you know it or not, we grow because of you. For we cannot help the many, without each one of you.

Contribute at: www.gitchemqua.org **And watch for an invitation to join us in Winterfeast, a world-wide, 40 day, 40-minute meditation marathon.**

Thank you to all for your giving and caring:

Sherry and Alan Sim, Andrea Warnick, Shari Geller, Pauline Abrahams, Kanae Kinoshita, Lysa Toye, Stuart & Jill Sackman, Stephen & Katherine Vaccaro, Noah & Nathalie Howard, Paul Chan, Jim Milligan,, Genevieve & Sheila Walker, Ani Jamyang, Kate Wallis, Peter Gugler, Tiago Varella, Theodore Tsaousidis & Adele Brown, Shelley Harris & Norman Levine, Joan McClintock, Marsha Wright, Hilary Bowring, Wendy Kramer & Stephen Sillman, Michelle Chaban, Elissa Gallander & Dennis Winters, Stephen Keith, Goldie Sherman, Layah Davis, Josie Ford, John Pollard, Albina Murphy, Robert Rottenberg, Ana Dixon, Peter Deroche, Sarah Rose, Averill Lehan, Bernnitta Hawkins, Ann Robertson, Meredith Ware, Jacob Bali, David Good, Angelina Pethebridge, Kendra Ward, Pat Foreman, Thelma Feldman, Naomi Fromstein, David Good, Cheryl Jordon, Barbara Greenglass, Brian Menzies, Carol Krause, Doreen Rao, Elaine Frank, Joanne Shaw, Karma Lekshe, Laurene Winkler, Robert Morgan, Jenny Huynh, Onalayah Smith and to any we have forgotten on this list.

Happy Holidays & Let our Oneness reach the Many.

Angie & Andrew & Everyone from Gitche M'Qua