



# CAPACITAR—Women Planting One Heart

## An International Network of Empowerment and Solidarity

### Spirit and Transformation

This past June CAPACITAR collaborated in a workshop in Managua at CANTERA, Center for Popular Education, celebrating ten years of commitment and accompaniment as sister organizations. Co-presenters Judy Ress (Con-spirando and CAPACITAR-Chile) and writer/editor David Molineaux gave inspiring analyses of deep ecology, feminism and a new cosmology to 45 grassroots leaders of Nicaragua and other Central American countries. My part in the conference was to share body/mind/spirit work and to introduce the Labyrinth, an ancient practice that has re-emerged in many places to help heal the spiritual paralysis of our times. This was a first time for the Labyrinth in Nicaragua, and many of the participants walked and rewalked the ancient design laid down with brightly colored tape. The workshop presented both a sober description of the current plight of our world, as well as a hopeful vision of the task before us as we move into a new millenium.

The workshop was a sharp contrast to real life in the streets of Managua. Growing numbers of children wash windshields, sell fruit and beg for money, unable to attend school. Neoliberal policies have widened the gap between have's and have-not's. Consumer luxuries, electronic equipment and the latest fashions are displayed on TV ads, while the reality for the majority of Nicaraguans is grinding poverty, 70-90% unemployment, violence and vandalism, a rise in suicides among youth, the poisoning of lakes, rivers,

air and soil, and the destruction of large sections of rainforest by multinationals. Yet faced with this bleak reality, the participants left the conference hopeful. One Central American said: "We only have our hope. If we lose that, then we are really lost."

While structures and institutions that characterize modern times disintegrate around us, a new paradigm, a new cosmology is struggling to emerge like a phoenix from the ashes. There is much hope that a creative Spirit is awakening us and moving us forward in the midst of the darkness. Our challenge is to surrender to the process, to get out of the way and to let this transformative Spirit work through our hands and through our hearts. The force of Spirit moves through us in the passions, synchronicities and intuitions that we feel. We must learn to listen deeply to access this transforming wisdom. The task at hand is to risk following these intuitions and enchantments which will open us to whole new ways of being and doing on the planet. "Tu encanto es tu destino, tu servicio." Your enchantment, your passion is your destiny, your calling, your service.

This issue of the newsletter shares the stories of some of the CAPACITAR national and international teams who are following their passion as Spirit moves them to transformative action. May their stories inspire you to discern and follow your own passion and service.

—PAT CANE, FOUNDER/ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Celebrating the Labyrinth at CANTERA—Managua, Nicaragua, June 1998

WE ARE AS LARGE AS OUR  
LOVES. . . THE PROPHETIC  
OPTION FOR A BIOCENTRIC  
ETHIC TRANSFORMS US  
TOWARD GREAT-HEARTEDNESS,  
PLACES US IN RESONANT  
COOPERATION WITH  
CREATOR Spirit. WE ARE  
EMPOWERED TO BECOME  
SISTERS AND BROTHERS,  
FRIENDS AND LOVERS,  
GARDENERS AND STEWARDS,  
ADVOCATES AND POETS,  
COLLEAGUES AND FELLOW  
DANCERS, CO-CREATORS AND  
CHILDREN OF THE WORLD  
THAT GIVES US LIFE!

—ELIZABETH JOHNSON,  
WOMEN, EARTH, CREATOR Spirit

CAPACITAR is network of women who share a desire to heal and empower themselves, as well as heal and transform their groups and societies, especially those living in areas of poverty and violence; who believe that through nurturing, listening and responding to the deeper wisdom of body and spirit, it is possible to bring peace and healing to our world.

The CAPACITAR network includes women, as well as men, from diverse countries, cultures, generations, socioeconomic backgrounds and experiences, who encourage and support a spirit of solidarity and hopeful interchange.

CAPACITAR shares techniques of healing, team building and self-development with women leaders to encourage physical and spiritual transformation, working in such a way that all involved are empowered to act out of their own source of strength and wisdom.

CAPACITAR connects women through an international network of solidarity, building relationships of cultural and personal understanding, responding to needs identified by community groups within a country.

Our name, CAPACITAR, is a Spanish word meaning to empower, to encourage, to bring forth.

Our logo comes from a pre-Columbian design of the lotus. For us it symbolizes the creativity and empowerment of women—coming to life, rooted to the earth, birthing new life, joining together, empowering each other.





## Mucho Animo—A Meeting of Cultures

—SISTER DENISE SAUSVILLE RSM

DIRECTOR, WOMEN'S WELLNESS PROJECT, ST. LOUIS, MO

*CAPACITAR is committed to creating bridges of solidarity and interchange among cultures. We recently collaborated with Denise Sausville RSM, Director of the Women's Wellness Project at Mercy Center in St. Louis which hosted twelve women from three countries for a cultural and spiritual interchange. The following article describes the transforming experience of the women.*

The idea for the Women's Wellness Project originated over 15 years ago when I participated in a Latin American study tour to very poor remote areas of Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Bolivia. We stayed with various missionary groups who were involved in Christian base communities, reflecting on scripture as it applied to socioeconomic and cultural realities. One night we were housed in a simple residence in Sicuani, Peru, an Indian village in the high plateau. I awakened quite early the following morning and decided to scout out the vicinity on my own, following a narrow pathway through the village and beyond. Amidst the small windowless huts with their spacious patios I heard scratchy sounds which I recognized as the static of radio waves. Then I experienced a disconcerting sense of recognition. Across those waves was coming something that not only I, but also more people than I had ever imagined knew—the music of Michael Jackson.

Throughout that Latin American study tour, in conversations with both missionaries and elders of the communities, we heard their concern for loss of culture and cultural values. In Peru and Bolivia where men still wore stocking caps and women derby hats, we saw billboards with blond-haired, blue-eyed women in scanty bathing suits advertising cigarettes. One Mexican woman in a household where I later stayed asked me, "Why do all the models have to copy the women of the U.S.?" Her question haunted me for a long time. I heard in her question the plea: "Please don't strip me of my culture. I can't be you. I basically don't want to be you." The woman's plea put me in touch with a growing movement in the world today—the formation of a global mono-culture motivated by mass consumerism—where we will all be wearing Guess jeans and Nike shoes, eating McDonald's hamburgers and drinking Coca Cola, listening to Michael Jackson and speaking English. What a tragedy that whole cultures, languages and spiritualities will be lost in the process of moving toward this consumer-run mono-culture.

A second moment that catalyzed the Women's Wellness Project was the St. Louis CAPACITAR weekend held at Mercy Center in 1994. Seventy-five Afro American, Mexican American and Anglo American women came together with a richness of experience that was remarkable. The energy in the room not only reflected the many gifts residing in each woman, but also the unique cultures that the three groups of women brought to the weekend. Both the Sisters of Mercy and CAPACITAR in their missions are committed to the promotion of women, to the health and well-being of Mother Earth, and to multiculturalism.

The Woman's Wellness Project, funded by Mercy grants, grew out of this history and vision. This past June we invited 3 groups of women to come to St. Louis to participate in a week of exchange, sharing their cultures, life experience and work in different communities. They also participated in a CAPACITAR workshop with 70 other women from nine different states. Four Mexican women came from Project Arise and a border town in Southern Texas. Four Afro American women came from Apprenticeship for Tomorrow in Gulfport, Mississippi. And four women came from Belize representing Guadalupe Spiritual Life Center and Mercy Clinic. Besides sharing their cultures and work, it was hoped that these 12 women would bring CAPACITAR back to their communities.

What happened in the course of the week remains an unfolding mystery. The presentations of the three groups were a testimony to the giftedness of each culture with its stories, dances, songs, foods and way of life. The dances of the Belizian women portrayed the life of garriana, creole and mestizo peoples. "Soul food" and Gospel music reflected the vibrance of the Afro American women. And moving stories of the difficult passages of the Mexican women into the United States combined with their powerful sense of celebration. The week began with the contemplation of a poster of Mother Earth as seen from outer space. We asked the question: "Where is Belize? Where is south Mississippi? Where is south Texas?" And in the spirit of the first astronauts looking back at earth from outer space, we said, "Out here there are no walls, no boundaries." We pondered Jesus' prayer to God, "That all may be one." In our opening ritual we poured together waters from the Caribbean Sea (Belize), the Rio Grande (Mexico/south

Texas), the Gulf of Mexico (south Mississippi) and the Mississippi River (St. Louis, Missouri). Each of the waters represented a distinct culture and geographic region. We recognized that we were, at the same time, the one and the many. And at the end of our time together we sang: "Lean on me, I am your sister. . . believe in me, I am your friend." The Women's Wellness Project empowered each woman with a sense of her own identity as well as with a connection to other women in the ongoing struggle of healing herself, her people and her planet.

There is a Spanish word "animo" which like the word "capacitar" carries a significance far beyond its English translation. "Animo" means spirit, energy, positiveness, gusto, passion and determination, all rolled into one. The twelve beautiful, powerful women from three cultures left St. Louis with "mucho animo."



Denise Sausville RSM (right) with the women from Belize. CAPACITAR has been invited to work in Belize in April, 1999.



## CAPACITAR Journey 1999— Sharing Culture and Spirit —JOAN CONDON CAPACITAR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR

*CAPACITAR will be offering a Women's Journey to El Salvador and Guatemala January 21-31, 1999, co-led by Joan Condon and Pat Cane. In the following article Joan shares her reflections on the impact a journey had on her life.*

Each of our life journeys is composed of many smaller journeys. The paths we choose to travel—or choose not to—change our lives. In 1991, I made a journey to El Salvador and Guatemala. It changed my life. The people I met were struggling against overwhelming odds to live lives of dignity—or, often, just to live.

In both Guatemala and El Salvador I met women whose children and husbands had been disappeared, victims of their government and my government's campaign to destroy any political opposition. Their crime? Working for a better life for their people. I remember vividly one Guatemalan woman who pulled a thin tattered leather wallet from her bosom, opened it, took out the photo of her husband and teenage daughter and said, "They went to take a bus one day. I have never seen them again." On this journey, I listened, felt people's pain and changed. When I returned home, I knew I had to play some part, however small, in the struggle of these people for a better life, for justice and for peace. I went to work for a health and development non-profit which works in El Salvador. In turn, this work led me to CAPACITAR and another journey.

We, as women, and as CAPACITAR, will make this journey from January 21-31, 1999. We will go to El Salvador and Guatemala and we invite you to join us. You will get to know special women who are part of the ongoing struggle for human rights in their countries. In El Salvador, you will meet Isabel, former secretary to Monsignor Oscar Romero; Higinia, Lola and Lorenza, the three Salvadoran coordinators of a midwifery project which serves women in 30 rural communities; and Tita and other members of the Women's Defense Committee, who work with abused women. In Guatemala, you will meet Carmen, a former union woman who has rebuilt her life after a terrible work injury to her hand, and Barbara, a Mayan woman who works on development projects for her people. Each of these women has suffered because of her dedication to human rights and justice.



*Joan Condon with the midwives of Suchitoto, El Salvador*

But you can bring a special gift to these women and to other journey participants—yourself. Whoever **you** are, you have something unique to share. And your very presence, your willingness to be present, is testimony to the women of El Salvador and Guatemala that they do not struggle alone. In addition, as part of a CAPACITAR journey, you will become part of the a shared body, mind and spirit healing process for the wounds we all suffer as we travel through life.

This is the opportunity for a shared journey with women of Central America who have much to teach us. It is also the opportunity for an individual journey whose inner path you must decide. But I believe that just as my journey in 1991 did, this journey will bring positive change—perhaps large, perhaps small—in your life. *For information or an application for the 1999 Women's Journey, call the CAPACITAR office: 831-722-7590.*

## Presentation Sisters empowering CAPACITAR —PAT CANE, FOUNDER/ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past January on a bleak rainy day when CAPACITAR was facing financial crisis, I was visited by Presentation Sisters Rita Jovick and Patricia Ann Cloherty. Feeling alone and discouraged, I can still remember the moment when Rita said: "Now before we start our meeting I'd like to tell you something that may change what we're going to talk about. I want to come to work with you as CAPACITAR's Development Director." Tears flowed down my cheeks as I recognized a moment of grace and empowerment. "Empowerment" is what CAPACITAR does with many others. And there are moments when we, too, need that support and empowerment from others. As a Presentation Associate and formerly as a Presentation Sister for 14 years, I have known the support and empowerment of Sisters. When CAPACITAR was first starting out as a new nonprofit, Presentation gave us a grant which enabled us to take a team to El Salvador, develop a local program in the migrant camps, and offer workshops to marginalized women.

The Sisters of the Presentation through the Ministry Subsidy will fund Rita's salary for 1998-99. Rita will work to develop the financial base of CAPACITAR so that we can expand our program to empower

and educate marginalized women, as well as develop teams to multiply our work locally, nationally and internationally.

Rita Jovick PBVM has many skills and talents to bring to CAPACITAR. She was a teacher for 17 years, school administrator for 17 years and for the last 7 years was Development Director of TIME (Together in the Mission of Education), a nonprofit of the Diocese of San Francisco. At TIME she raised over one million dollars in scholarships for children's education. Through her volunteer work, Rita has ministered to the homeless, to families in migrant camps, and to low and middle income women and families. She worked in East Palo Alto in Adult Education and served on the Presentation Social Justice Committee. Retiring from TIME, she went to Rockhaven Center in Missouri for a holistic sabbatical, where synchronistically she met Sister Cristella Carbaugh SLW and other friends who have been part of CAPACITAR in St. Louis. In the spirit of Presentation Foundress Nano Nagle, who educated the poorest of women in Ireland over 200 years ago, Rita has brought much light to many through the years. We are happy to have Rita as part of our CAPACITAR Administrative Team and feel blessed to be sharing our vision and mission with Presentation Sisters.



# Planting Seeds in New Places

## CAPACITAR in Appalachia—CAROLYN BRINK RSM

SUNRISE CENTER, RICHLANDS, VIRGINIA

*Earlier this Spring CAPACITAR traveled to the coal mining region of Virginia to offer a workshop and start a new team led by Deborah Haydu and the Sisters of Mercy.*

Twenty-two Appalachian women learned holistic health care at a CAPACITAR workshop in Richlands, Virginia this past April. Sunrise Center, staffed by Sisters Carolyn Brink and Martha Meyer, is a community organization for low-income women. Deborah Haydu, who is active at the center, attended the CAPACITAR workshop in Louisville, KY last fall. She learned the techniques well and was invited to present a one-day workshop for the low-income women in March. Eighteen women attended and responded very positively. Seeing this response, the women asked Sister Margaret Turk, director of the holistic health care project for the Women's Committee of the Cincinnati Region, to invite CAPACITAR Director Pat Cane to Richlands. "I have an inner peace and healing within myself," said one of the participants. "This will stay with me for the rest of my days." The women plan to meet monthly at Sunrise Center to practice what they learned. This was the third CAPACITAR workshop sponsored by the Women's Committee of the Cincinnati Regional Community. Funding was provided by a grant from Catholic Healthcare Partners.

## CAPACITAR in Kentucky—SUZANNE GUDE, DIRECTOR

CATHERINE SPALDING RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER, NAZARETH, KY

CAPACITAR came to Nazareth, Kentucky this past May! Events leading up to this magical four-day workshop are worth telling. One of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Lucy Freibert, approached me in the fall of 1997 and said "I have a wonderful book that is going to change your life!" Having deep respect for this woman, I knew it would do just that. After receiving and reading the CAPACITAR Manual, I immediately knew I had to meet Pat Cane. Being in the middle of Kentucky, and Pat living all the way across the land in California, I figured the odds were against this encounter ever happening. But being the "never say never" woman that I am, I sent Pat a letter. She called me and to my disbelief said that she would be in Kentucky in October! We met at the Sisters of Mercy Home in Louisville and the rest is history. CAPACITAR and Catherine Spalding Retreat and Conference Center were perfect matches. We held our first CAPACITAR workshop with Pat on the wings of the world-famous Kentucky Derby!

The workshops were attended by 23 women, ranging in age from 21 to 92! We had a very diverse group—from a young woman who works with victims of abuse to religious sisters to holistic therapists. One Sister of Charity of Nazareth who attended was from India; we also had women from Bosnia, Russia and Vietnam. Pat taught us tai chi movements and polarity; we tried to teach her to speak down-home "Kaintuck." But her California tongue just couldn't roll "you" and "all" together in order to say "ya'll." Everyone at the workshop learned and laughed a lot. Within four, much too short, days, all 23 participants created a bond, a circle of friendship that I, personally, believe we will carry with us for a long, long time.

We are anxiously awaiting the return of CAPACITAR in October, and are expanding our circle to include workshops with women from spouse abuse centers, migrant workers and university students. CAPACITAR helped our retreat center's holistic team create sparks of creativity. Like Pat who takes her CAPACITAR home all over the world, members of CSC's holistic team are making plans to take CSC's healing mission to the urban streets and the country roads!

Peace to ya'll from Kentucky,

Suzanne Gude



OUR deepest fear IS NOT THAT WE ARE INADEQUATE.  
OUR deepest fear IS THAT WE ARE POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE.  
IT IS OUR LIGHT, NOT OUR DARKNESS, THAT MOST FRIGHTENS US.  
AS WE LET OUR OWN LIGHT SHINE, WE UNCONSCIOUSLY  
GIVE OTHER PEOPLE PERMISSION TO DO THE SAME.  
AS WE ARE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN FEAR,  
OUR PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY LIBERATES OTHERS.

—NELSON MANDELA



Tai Chi at Catherine Spalding Center—Nazareth, Kentucky



## Team Reports

### CAPACITAR—Chile —Judy RESS, CHILE TEAM

CAPACITAR-Chile is alive and well—and has "designs" on our next-door neighbors for bringing more and more women into the growing network of "sanadoras" (Healing Women). During the first six months of 1998, we concentrated on extending our work here in Chile, especially among women in the provinces. This included giving CAPACITAR workshops to health workers in the southern city of Concepción, as well as to Mapuche women, members of the Methodist church in the small village of Nueva Imperial, also in southern Chile. We have also been working with HIV-positive folks and Sex Workers in the port city of Valparaíso. We are now five, Doris Muñoz, Victoria Martinez and myself (the veterans!), Mercy Sister Margaret Milne (who is our Reike master) and Maryknoll lay missionary Maruja Gonzales, who is based in the small town of San Nicolás. We now have five different workshops that we are able to give, including one on the Chakras and on Reike. We are also learning Shiatsu from St. Joseph Sister Mary Ellen who lived and worked in Japan for more than 14 years.

During the next six months, we are planning to offer CAPACITAR workshops in Lima, Peru (we have been invited by Pro-vida, the Catholic Church's health program that trains grassroots health workers to administer basic medicine and first aid throughout Peru); Córdoba, Argentina; Quito, Ecuador; and Aymara indigenous women around the Lake Titicaca region (Peru-Bolivia). CAPACITAR techniques were also part of the latest Shared Garden Project (organized by Con-spirando of Chile, Ivone Gebara of Brazil and Water of Washington, DC) held in Recife in mid-July. Next year, we thought we'd go to the moon! Taking applications now. . .

Much love, Judy

### CAPACITAR—Peru —SR. BARBARA CAVANAUGH RSM

I am a Mercy Sister from Burlingame, CA who worked for 31 years as a missionary in the Andes of Peru. After 3 years home, I recently returned for a visit to Peru. I had my CAPACITAR materials with me and gave 5 workshops in the course of my travels. I flew to Puno and gave a workshop in Chucuito in the Andes. I had been asked by a Peruvian Sister of Mercy to form a CAPACITAR team there. The participants were young women of high school and university level. These women were chosen as leaders and all ten completed the 4 day training. They did very well and were given materials with which to teach others. Two other workshops included health workers of the mission area and another training for the catechists. I also worked in Lima with Sr. Magdalena Castro, longtime CAPACITAR friend and part of the China team. In Lima we worked with 40 men and women, as well as with her community of Sisters who serve the very poor. I was pleased with the positive responses of all the groups.

### CAPACITAR—El Salvador—SR. NANCY MEYERHOFFER OSF

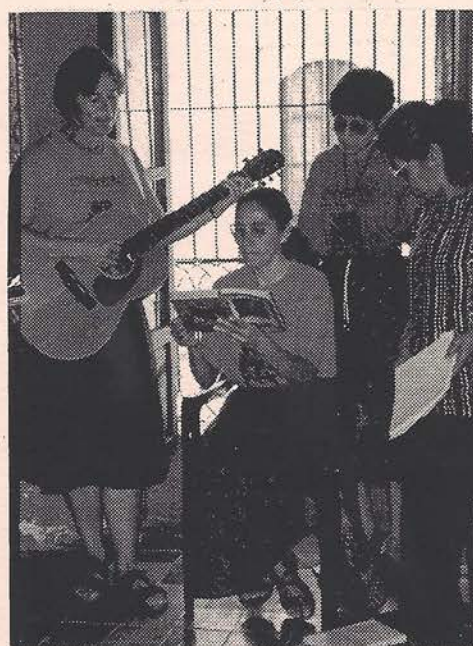
Nancy Meyerhofer and the Salvador team have been working with a variety of groups in different parts of the country. Recent workshops have included participants from San Bartolo, Santa Tecla, Santa Ana, Suchitoto, Masatepeque. In one San Salvador parish a workshop was offered to prostitutes and ministers working with them. Nancy is also developing a team in Ocotopeque, Honduras and will again be offering trainings in Tegucigalpa in November. In September she will be in the US and will co-lead a Dubuque, Iowa workshop with Pat Cane. A reception will be held for Nancy in Watsonville on Sept. 26, when she is in California.



Appalachian women at Sunrise Center—Richlands, Virginia



Anabel Torres of CANTERA—Nicaragua with Judy Ress of CAPACITAR-Chile



Nancy Meyerhofer with the-Salvador Team





## CAPACITAR—St. Louis: A Four Year Process

—SHARON SCHMITZ-NIENSTEDT RSM, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTER

At Christmastime 1994 a friend sent me a newspaper clipping about CAPACITAR. I showed it to Maria Luisa Vera RSM, our Regional President and she was as impressed with it, as I was. "It" happened, for the first time in June, 1995 with close to 70 women participating. Since that time we have had annual workshops with more than 250 women. While the majority have come from St. Louis, many have come from other parts of Missouri. We have also had women from Texas, Mississippi, Illinois, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana and Tennessee. This past June, four women came from Belize in Central America. In 1997 some of the women began CAPACITAR Crones which continues to meet monthly at Mercy Center. In 1998, 25 women who had participated in Levels I, II, and III, were present for CAPACITAR IV. Wonderful women...wonderful leaders.

CAPACITAR—St. Louis participants have "passed it on" in many ways. Linda Smith incorporates polarity work and hand massage in her Healing Touch practice. Lynn Placek, in addition to being a Healing Touch practitioner, is a teacher who has introduced CAPACITAR techniques to the other teachers in her school. The plan is that the teachers will be able to soothe some of the students' aches, pains and minor complaints without need for medication. Cecilia Ann Loomer has used head massage with retreatants. ("They loved it.") Denise Sausville and Cecilia Baranowski have given neck and shoulder massages to Sisters at their meetings. Sharon Schmitz uses polarity work and acupressure with women in drug rehab in prison. Rosemary Welsh and Christine Blair with their TexasTeam have taught the techniques to over 150 women in Texan colonias. This past June, we audiotaped Pat as she lead us in the spiritual version of Tai Chi. Many, many of us are incorporating Tai Chi into our daily personal practices. And now, we, at Mercy Center, look forward to continuing our CAPACITAR Workshops for the fifth time, in July, 1999.



Top: Celebrating each woman's gift at the June Level I workshop—Mercy Center, St. Louis  
Bottom: Celebrating four years of growing together as CAPACITAR healers, Level IV workshop



## CAPACITAR—Cincinnati

CAPACITAR arrived in Cincinnati a year ago May, and already the multiplier effect of the work is touching and transforming the lives of many. Approximately 150 women have participated to date in Level I workshops. Pat Cane is working for the Mercy Regional Health System of Greater Cincinnati to train a professional team in Multicultural Wellness Education and outreach using CAPACITAR practices with low income and marginalized women and families. Members of the team are using the materials with a wide variety of people: Afro American children in the inner city, Appalachian women, homeless and abused women, women in homes for the elderly, nursing staffs and professionals who are suffering from stress and burnout, management level personnel in the hospitals, teachers and parents in schools.

A Mercy Research and Development Grant was awarded for producing a video and trainer's manual in multicultural wellness education to be used by the health system. During our June training Sister Kathy Green RSM, Regional VP for Mission, proudly showed us the two new Mercy Health and Wellness Centers which recently opened in Fairfield and in Anderson. The centers are the state of the art on the national level for integrating body, mind and spirit, blending together the best of Western medicine with a wide range of wellness modalities, along with a health club. CAPACITAR's role is to bring a vision of commitment to the underserved with the possibility of social transformation through healing the person and the community.



Kathy Green RSM and Kathy Moses, Coordinator of the Cincinnati Team in the new Mercy Wellness Center





## CRONE's Corner

—PATRICIA CORRIGAN—CAPACITAR CRONE PROJECT, ST. LOUIS, MO

The first anniversary of the founding of CAPACITAR Crones finds us in a state of transition, a time of endings and beginnings. Carol Bialock RSCJ, our wise and wonderful leader, moved to La Belle, Florida, there to continue her ministry working with those in need. We had time only for quick farewells and well-wishing. A week earlier prior to our monthly meeting, we invited women participating in CAPACITAR 1 at Mercy Center to come and learn about the Crones. Some 22 women attended that informal meeting where we defined for them the meaning of "crone" and then recapped how we had begun, coming together a year earlier to learn more about aging and about ourselves. When we asked the women to tell us what interested them, we heard echoes of our own voices a year earlier. How do we deal with the obstacles—both within ourselves and out—of getting older? How do we tap into our creative talents and enrich our lives intellectually, emotionally and spiritually? Nineteen of the women signed up on our mailing list, eager to attend our August meeting, and we looked forward to getting to know these new friends. After our guests left, we took stock of the past year and talked about directions for the next year. Mary Jo Brauner noted that though we have spent much time on spiritual and emotional development, we have somewhat neglected the physical aspects of aging, the very experiences that make us crones. With much enthusiasm, we spoke of broadening our focus in the coming months to include that important aspect and also to spend more time working in small groups. We then moved outdoors to walk the Labyrinth at Mercy Center, modeled after the one at Chartres Cathedral. We walked, alone with our individual thoughts. Together again indoors we talked about the experience, sharing our myriad impressions. With the Labyrinth, as in life, one path leads in and one path leads out. Interpretations of the journey vary widely, and we CAPACITAR Crones continue to explore.

### Tai Chi and the Crones—ANNE CARROLL—CAPACITAR CRONE

I'm in the formative years of becoming a Crone, working on the WILD part right now! This process involves knowing who I am and expressing this authentic self without fear. It's about finding the creative self within, and giving her the freedom to create. Crones feel comfortable in their bodies and adjust to the physical changes of a body that has made many journeys around the sun. Done in the circle of CAPACITAR Crones the process is more conscious and deliberate and a whole lot more fun!

Last year after participating in CAPACITAR 1, I made a decision to do Tai Chi every morning. It wasn't long before I felt balanced and full of energy all day long, and sleepy when bed time rolled around. During a birding vacation with a woman friend of mine, I decided to do Tai Chi at my childhood home. We called it our "Thelma and Louise Vacation!" I was determined to continue Tai Chi and invited Sandy to do it with me. She agreed and our vacation turned into a very spiritual journey for both of us.

We spent the last night of our vacation at my childhood home in Manhattan, Kansas. In the morning we began Tai Chi in the front yard with the first movement—"Drawing Energy from Mother Earth." All of a sudden I was surrounded by my present, past and future ancestors. I was drawing energy from the land I grew up on, this fertile land that had nurtured my sisters, my brother, me, and my parents. This land that had seen many family

## 1998

## CAPACITAR Calendar

- First Sunday of each month, CAPACITAR Crones, Mercy Center St. Louis  
For information call: Mary Jo Brauner 314-227-7445
- September 18-19, CAPACITAR Level 1, Franciscan Center, Dubuque Iowa  
For information call: Sr. Marie Therese Kalb OSF 319-582-3592
- October 3, CAPACITAR Level 1, Center to BE, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin  
For information: Kathy Wolfe 920-921-6044
- October 7-8, CAPACITAR Level 1, Catherine Spalding Center, Nazareth, Kentucky, For information: Suzanne Gude 502-348-1516
- October 10, CAPACITAR Level 1, Women's Theological Center, Boston, Massachusetts, For information: 617-536-8782
- October 13-15, Team Training, Mercy System of Greater Cincinnati, OH
- October 16-17 CAPACITAR Level 2, Cincinnati 513-624-4560
- October 29, 12-1:00, Pat Cane—Presentation at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara California, Bannan Institute Spirituality Series, Nobili Hall
- October 30—Head Start Workshop, Watsonville, CA
- November 3-6 CAPACITAR workshops in Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- November 7-8, CAPACITAR Level 1, Franciscan Center, Tampa, Florida  
For information: Maureen Connors: 813-546-1921
- November 25-30 Workshops for Guatemalan Human Rights Commission celebrating the Day of No-Violence against Women, Guatemala

## 1999

- January 21-31, Women's Journey to El Salvador and Guatemala, co-led by Pat Cane and Joan Condon. For information 831-722-7590
- February 13-25 Guatemala workshops
- March—CAPACITAR Team training and Level 6—Santiago, Chile
- April—CAPACITAR Team training and Level 1—Mercy Center, Belize
- April 24-25 Workshop, Center to BE, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin
- April 30-May 1 Level 3, Cincinnati, Ohio, Mercy Health System
- June 21-25, Fields of Energy workshop with CANTERA, Nicaragua
- June 28-30 CAPACITAR workshops in Panama
- July 9-12 CAPACITAR Workshops, St. Louis, MO

get-togethers, weddings, baptisms, first communion celebrations, birthday parties, and funerals. My parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, my newly-born great niece, Isabel, were there. I even felt the presence of future generations. Overwhelmed by emotion, I cried, and this land of my family held me until I was able to go on with the other moves of the Tai Chi prayer. This land became a part of me that day. No matter what happens to the physical land, it will always be a part of me.

As I have continued my practice, Tai Chi has become a way to meditate as well as a way to build energy and maintain balance in my life. One day, while "Stroking the Bird with the Golden Tail" I began to image the face of a loved one in my hands. With the downward stroke I carressed this person's face which I held so lovingly in my hands. Then came the day when the image of a little girl in pigtails appeared in my loving hands, I stroked her face, my face, at the age of six. As I drove to work that day I felt as if I was cherished for the first time in my life. It took this old Crone's mind a few minutes to put two and two together. Since then I have held so many faces in my loving hands. Happily, God has gifted me with the faces of people I'm angry with or don't like. Tai Chi has become a tool to love myself, to feel gratitude, to forgive others and myself. What a difference this has made in my life and in the lives of others!





## Transformation in Action

*FEMINISM CATCHES FIRE WHEN IT DRAWS UPON ITS INHERENT SPIRITUALITY. WHEN IT DOES NOT, IT IS JUST ONE MORE FORM OF POLITICS, AND POLITICS HAS NEVER FED OUR DEEPEST HUNGERS.*

*WHAT A GANDHI KNEW, A MOTHER TERESA, A DOROTHY DAY, IS THAT WHEN INDIVIDUALS ARE DRAWN TO A SELFLESS CAUSE—THE RELIEF OF HUMAN SUFFERING, THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BARRIERS THAT SEPARATE US FROM ONE ANOTHER—ENERGY AND CREATIVITY COME INTO PLAY THAT SIMPLY DON'T UNDER ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES. THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT, THE UNITED FARM WORKERS, THE LIBERATION THEOLOGY ACTIVISTS—ALL WERE AND ARE SUSTAINED BY PEOPLE WHO CAN'T BE DISCOURAGED BY SHORT-TERM SETBACKS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE PART OF SOMETHING LARGER, WHOSE TRUTH DOESN'T NEED OUTSIDE VALIDATION. . .THE CAPACITY TO ENDURE WHATEVER ONE MUST TO ADDRESS THE SOURCES OF HUMAN SUFFERING, FOR DECADES OR A LIFETIME, ARISES OUT OF THE DEPTHS. . .REACHED IN PRAYER AND MEDITATION. FEMINISM MUST FIND ITS WAY INTO THOSE DEPTHS.*

*—CAROL LEE FLINDERS, AT THE ROOT OF THIS LONGING: RECONCILING A SPIRITUAL HUNGER AND A FEMINIST THIRST*



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