



CAPACITAR—An International Network of Empowerment and Solidarity

Building a Culture of Peace

CAPACITAR is network of people 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 people 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 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 people 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.

"What if the year 2000 were a new beginning, an opportunity to turn the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and nonviolence?" As a global movement the UNESCO Manifesto 2000 gives the human family a realistic way to build a culture of peace. UNESCO invites individuals and groups to sign the Manifesto 2000 committing themselves to live out in daily life the principles of peace and nonviolence in family, work, community and region. As of this writing 9 million persons from around the world have signed the Manifesto. The pledge is simple yet challenging, inviting us to share responsibility for the future, especially for the children of today and tomorrow. The Manifesto 2000 was drafted by a group of Nobel Laureates. Six key points of the commitment include: Respect all Life. Reject violence. Share with others. Listen to understand. Preserve the planet. Rediscover solidarity.

We affirm the UNESCO Manifesto which profoundly expresses aspects of Capacitar's vision and mission to empower and to walk in solidarity with those affected by systemic violence, trauma, disasters, poverty, and economic marginalization. We recognize that our work to promote personal and systemic healing and transformation must be grounded in the principles of peace and nonviolence. This newsletter shares some new efforts of Capacitar to contribute to the culture of peace in the U.S. and in other world areas through work within prisons, work with refugees and the homeless, work with the deaf and hard of hearing, work at the border and in places affected by violence.

The recent workshops that Joan Condon and I led in Belize focused on body-mind-spirit practices to encourage personal and communal peace and healing. The Belizian work in three regions of the country included women from many cultures and backgrounds who are intent on uprooting the beginnings of violence in a country which has been relatively peaceful. In September we will share Trauma Healing and Transformation trainings with SERPAJ (Service for Peace and Justice) in Tobasco, Mexico. Mary Litell, OSF, and I will also work in Chiapas with the staff of SIPAZ (a nonviolence peace-keeping presence) as well as with organizations and NGOs focused on human rights and non-violence in a very conflictive region.

In November, in collaboration with Honduran grassroots leaders, we will offer trainings for staff and guards at the men's prison near Tegucigalpa, where a massacre occurred after Hurricane Mitch. In collaboration with Centro Visitación Padilla, Gladys Lanza of Capacitar-Honduras, and Carol Bialock, RSCJ, we will have a retreat day for women running for public office in Honduras. A first national assembly of several hundred Hondurans doing Capacitar work in different regions of the country will also be held, along with a fourth level training for the national team. In Honduras we are working with the grassroots for systemic change in a country considered to be the second most corrupt in the hemisphere. Early next year Capacitar will collaborate in Guatemala with the Mental Health Committee of the Diocesan Human Rights Commission offering trauma healing trainings for representatives of nongovernmental organizations working to heal the wounds of thirty years of violence. We will also start work with grassroots mental health workers in Quiché and Chimaltenango, two areas greatly affected by political violence.



International Coordinator Joan Condon with Georgina Ponce, social worker at the Honduran Men's Prison.

Capacitar will begin work in new global areas in 2001. We received funding to go to East Timor, and also have been invited to work in Papua New Guinea. Both places are deeply affected by massacres, violence and natural disasters.

During our June work in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, the worsening conditions and desperation in each of these countries was evident. Neoliberal politics and economics have impacted the region resulting in a rapidly growing gap between rich and poor, growth of illiteracy, increase in child prostitution, lack of access to medical care and increase in suicides. The average salary of a teacher in Nicaragua, for example, is \$65 per month, and many hold two or three jobs at the same time just to support their families. The director of OXFAM in a recent meeting shared the directions that the international agency is now taking in the region: support and empowerment of the civil sector and grassroots people, along with pressure on governments to implement values and justice in the tax free zones where many international companies have set up sweat shops (maquilas). On a flight to Honduras, we overheard two U.S. business men bragging about how cheap they could get labor in Mexico and Central America: 65 cents per hour, or \$5 per day without benefits in some maquilas and fastfood restaurants, all without taxation of the multinational corporation.

Women leaders of Centro Antonio Valdivieso in Managua feel that a re-envisioning of the philosophy of development is needed based on a systemic perspective to include the psychological, cultural, economic, physical, and spiritual. The whole system of development must be reconsidered—individual, familial, communal, societal and global; and systemic violence and multigenerational trauma must be healed and transformed.

A guiding light for us all can be the UNESCO Manifesto 2000 which describes the commitment of the human family, as we listen to the cries of the 21st century. To study, sign and promote the Manifesto visit the website: <http://www3.unesco.org/manifesto2000>.

—Pat Cane, Capacitar Founder/Director



Capacitar's Work to Build a Culture of Peace

—Mary Litell, OSF

Northern California

"Listen, these things can really help you!" Women in detention center (jail) programs were talking to newcomers during a Capacitar session in the jail. One of them described how she and two others in the program who had just learned an exercise for releasing traumatic memories were able to help a woman in their cell block who was suffering flashbacks. "We just took out our paper and I called out the steps of the exercise, while the others showed our friend what to do with her hands and eyes and all. She calmed down right away."

Chaplain Mary Lou Eder tells how many women have done well in their court hearings because of practices they learned in Capacitar trainings. They use finger holds to focus and calm themselves during the hearings. While other classes they receive emphasize a positive lifestyle that can nourish and support the women when they return to their homes and jobs, Capacitar trainings focus on the release of blocked traumatic energy and balancing the energy system. In this way the women can connect with their own source of well-being and experience life-giving energy which can empower them to begin creating a positive lifestyle, even while still serving their sentences. As I leave the center each month, I always share a conversation with Mary Lou Eder about new ways that more of the women in the jail could be empowered through Capacitar. And we always affirm the value of a training program to help more women develop their abilities to share the healing processes of Capacitar.

The Northern California program includes work with homeless and other very poor people through St. Anthony Foundation in San Francisco. Sister Maureen Halley, RSM, Steve Lennon of St. Anthony Staff, and I lead Capacitar trainings as a regular part of drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. Women in the emergency shelter and transitional programs of Marian Residence have participated in the Capacitar sessions. And staff at St. Anthony Foundation Farm have received training to include a holistic approach in their rehabilitation program, focusing on the body, mind, and spirit. Immigrant women who have come to the San Francisco Bay area with their families are also a part of the Capacitar network. Women in a mutual support group in Mountain View begin each meeting now with Tai Chi and with stories of how they are experiencing healing in their lives. One of these women will participate in a Capacitar training program here this fall and winter.

The Catholic Women's Network, in their annual conference held in June in San Jose, included Spanish language sessions for the first time. Teresa Padilla and I led a Capacitar workshop which was followed by a session of prayer with prayer dances and reflection. During the reflection, women spoke of their needs and desires for this kind of experience of healing and empowerment in their lives.

Our experience of immigrants, of women in jail, of homeless, and of very poor people in San Francisco, has been so very rich. We are learning more and more about an amazing resilience and a great-heartedness among these women and men living with the burden of so much trauma as a part of their daily life. And we are encouraged by the enthusiasm and dedication of people from these communities who will participate in a training program this fall and winter. Their wish to work in the spirit of Capacitar to spread a way of healing and transformation in communities in Northern California is a gift as well as a wonderful challenge to move where we are being led by a most gracious Spirit.



Mary Litell, OSF, leading a dance of peace at a Capacitar training



Suzie Bonet, Co-Director of the Ojai Youth Foundation, sharing reflections with Ojai youth on developing competence for peacework using Capacitar practices

Southern California

• **Ojai** "The United Nations declared the year 2000 to be the Year of Peace, and their message can apply to individuals, families, and even small towns like Ojai. . . The Ojai Youth Foundation will host peace and wellness workshops designed for adults and teenagers" (*The Ojai Valley News*). Capacitar wellness practices were shared with Ojai youth and adults who are working together to develop competence for peace work and for nonviolent service and action. The Ojai workshops created great interest and enthusiasm for all participants as well as for Co-Director Suzie Bonet, and trainers Pat Cane and Mary Litell. We learned a great deal from this youth-adult partnership which has initiated wonderful community awareness projects in the areas of diversity and community wellness—social, physical, and cultural. At the end of the day, participants named some of the ways they intend to use Capacitar practices in their work: to clear negative attitudes before meetings; to become aware of feelings that one holds that can easily affect others; to use rituals at the beginning of regular staff meetings and regular Tai Chi practice; to incorporate emotional clearing techniques and relaxation exercises in diversity trainings. Summarizing, one youth said, "It starts with us. It is our choice to envision and live in a way that promotes joy!"



Capacitar Frontera with participants from San Diego, Escondido, Tijuana and Sonora

Capacitar-Frontera: Building Peace at the Border

• **San Diego/Tijuana** International/California Coordinator Joan Condon, San Diego Coordinator Virginia Mejia, and Pat Cane recently facilitated a second bi-lingual training in the San Diego/Tijuana area. The training was one more step toward forming a Capacitar team to address the problems of refugees, immigrants, and homeless people at the California border. Participants who came from different groups were interested in forming local teams of trainers who would teach body-mind-spirit practices as a way to bring peace and healing to many people caught in the poverty and violence at the border.

Since the first training in February, Capacitar practices have been used in many communities. Natalia Hernandez, Coordinator of Capacitar in Tijuana, spoke of the healing that she and the team of Servicio y Solidaridad (Service and Solidarity with Mexico) are trying to empower in people at the border. "We are working in a more holistic way in political, social, and personal change. In recent gatherings before the elections, we included Tai Chi and other practices. When people feel better in themselves they are open to listen and work in a positive and constructive way with each other. Queremos hacer la revolución con amor! We want to create change, a revolution, with love!"

Dates have been scheduled over the next year for an in-depth training on both sides of the San Diego-Tijuana border (November 4, 2000; January 27-28, May 19-20, August 25-26, 2001; January 12-13, 2002). The training in Capacitar Multicultural Wellness Education will include the application of the different practices to many groups at the border. For more information contact Virginia Mejia: 619-461-3020 or the Capacitar office: 831-722-7590.

Our special thanks to Kay Deli for donating Southwest Airlines coupons for our flights to San Diego for the first trainings. Capacitar welcomes the donation of any Southwest Airlines coupons to cover the six roundtrip flights to do our future work at the border.

Listening with the Body-Mind-Spirit

—Karen Lindberg, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

Participants in Wisconsin's Center to BE training in Multicultural Wellness Education are applying Capacitar practices to work with prisoners, youth, chronically ill, and seniors. Karen Lindberg describes her work with the hard of hearing.

In the spirit of the Buddhist adage, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear", hearing loss showed up in my life over two decades ago at age thirty, turned a deaf ear (pun intended) to my cries of protest, and has been hanging around ever since. In the early years I tried fighting, kicking, and screaming my way out of the relationship, but still she stayed. Finally in desperation I decided maybe there was something I could learn from her and stopped to listen. I've been listening ever since. I can say of hearing loss, more than anything else in my life, that at first it drove me crazy and then it drove me sane. Like most young people, I took my normal hearing for granted, and why not? The first person I knew who had trouble hearing was dear old Sr. Virgine, my high school English teacher, who seemed a bit daffy anyway. (Not too many years later I had many poignant insights into her "daffiness" when I stood in front of my own classroom of kids and had to guess at much of what was being said.) However, since reliable government statistics tell us 25 million people in this country have some degree of hearing loss, I think Sr. Virgine was probably not the only hard of hearing person in my acquaintance, but rather, the only one I noticed.

The term body/mind/spirit was not widely used when I first began struggling with hearing loss, but had it been, it might have helped me articulate why I found it so debilitating. Hearing loss threatens at all levels of our being, striking as it does at the ability to communicate, the very heart of our relationship in the human community. Learning to use hearing aids and other adaptive technology is the first line of defense for most hard of hearing people seeking help, and rightly so. However, unlike corrective lenses in eyeglasses, hearing aids help, but do not correct the problem. Of equal importance is the need to heal the tension built up in the body from chronic straining to hear, the negative self-talk in the mind caused by awkward social encounters, and the repression of the spirit from the loss of spontaneity in many facets of life.

Realizing this need for healing in my own life attracted me to the Capacitar body/mind/spirit practices. Even though I'd sampled many of these practices already from other sources, read extensively of their long-term benefits, and even incorporated some into my life on a more or less regular basis, the simplicity and immediate relief offered by the Capacitar practices is what I continue to find most appealing. They are practical tools to share with people in crisis or in need of respite from assaults on the body/mind/spirit. Personal experiential confirmation of the efficacy of the practices, as well as Pat Cane's stories of people from various cultures using them to heal the effects of trauma and even violence, leads me to believe that they will be of similar benefit to people living with chronic hearing loss.

To this end, I've invited a small group of hard of hearing people to a pilot program in my home to explore these practices. Incorporation of the Capacitar practices into a "Coping with Hearing Loss" program feels like fitting the missing puzzle piece in the hearing loss health (yes, oxymoron though it is) and wholeness picture. I'm still experimenting with ways to accommodate the participants. For example, I'm currently in the process of having the Capacitar video captioned, since captioning is a must for many severely hard of hearing people, and a help for others with a milder loss. We use an assistive listening system in the program and many visuals, including handouts and flipchart illustrations. All of these methods are intended to eliminate or reduce the stress inherent in group listening situations. I'm indebted to the pilot program participants for providing feedback both on the program itself and the strategies used to present the material. It continues to be an enriching mutual learning experience.

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Gifts Made

In Honor of

Olivia Laird Marie Regine Redig, SSND Donna Wilkinson

In Memory of

John & Angie Cammarata Rose Guevara

Marguerite La Foy Tom Martin

Rev. Vince O'Neill Mary Carola Redig, SSND

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Lucas Adam Chan Robinson Ruth Sausotte

Frank Spicer Gertrude Quillinan, PBVM Karen Taylor

Remember CAPACITAR in Your Estate Plans

Bequests - Gifts made through your will may be for a specific percentage of an estate or a specific sum.

Gifts of Life Insurance - You can transfer ownership of a life insurance policy to CAPACITAR.

The legal name is CAPACITAR, Inc., Watsonville, CA

CAPACITAR Calendar

2000

- July 26-August 7 Belize: Belize City, Belmopan, Dangriga
- August 18-20 Capacitar Wellness Training 1
Nazareth, KY, Spalding University/Catherine Spalding Center
- September 8-15 SERPAJ, Tobasco, Mexico
SIPAZ, Human Rights NGOs, San Cristobal, Chiapas
- September 22-24 Capacitar Training 2, Center to BE, Wisconsin
- September 30 Springfield College, Boston, MA
- October 1 Women's Theological Center, Boston, MA
- October 7-8, Hispanic & African American Ministries, Cleveland Ohio
- October 20-22, Level 1 Workshop, Grailville, Ohio
- October 28 Capacitar Board Meeting, Plaza Vigil, Watsonville
- November 3, 4 Capacitar Frontera—San Diego/Tijuana
- November 11-12 Trainers Workshop 1, Redwood City, CA
- November 17-20 Guatemala meetings/trainings
- November 23-24 Honduras Level 4 Trauma Training
November 25 Capacitar-Honduras National Assembly
November 26 Retreat for Honduran Women Candidates
November 27-28 Workshops for Penitentiary System
- December 1-3 Capacitar Training 3, Center to BE, Wisconsin
- December 8-10 Capacitar Wellness Training 2, Kentucky

2001

- January 13 Capacitar Board Meeting, Presentation Center, Los Gatos
- January 20-21 Trainers Workshop 2, Redwood City, CA
- January 27-28 Trainers Workshop 1, San Diego/Tijuana
- February 14-17 Central America Regional Conference, El Salvador
- Feb.19-March 2 Trauma/Transformation Workshops, Guatemala
ODAH, Office of Human Rights, CONFREGUA, Mental Health
Project Quiche, Centro Msn. Geradi Chimaltenango
- March 8-11 Capacitar trainings La Paz, Bolivia
- March 14-19 Capacitar trainings Santiago, Chile
- March 23-25 Capacitar Wellness Training 3, Kentucky
- March 31-April 1
Capacitar Trainers Workshop 3, Redwood City, CA
- April 27-29 Capacitar Training 4, Center to BE, Wisconsin
- May East Timor—Capacitar International Trauma Team
- May 19-20 Trainers Workshop 2, San Diego/Tijuana
- June 19-22 Leadership and Spirituality, CANTERA, Nicaragua
June 23-24 CONFER, Conference of Religious, Managua
- June 29-July 1 Capacitar Workshop Mercy Center, St. Louis, MO
- July 20-22 Capacitar Wellness Training 4, Kentucky