



CAPACITAR—Women Planting One Heart

An International Network of Empowerment and Solidarity

Companions in the Struggle

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.

"We are witness of the pain and injustice around us, willing to be companions in the struggle to heal and transform our world," states our CAPACITAR Philosophy. During this past year CAPACITAR has grown significantly as we have tried to listen and respond to the hunger of many peoples desiring to heal and empower themselves and their societies.

There is a bittersweet quality to our work as we hold in our hearts this pain, accompany the struggle and learn how to be peacemakers for the long haul. Often we feel great frustration and outrage as we witness the injustices—with the abused and homeless in our area, as well as with friends suffering the effects of violence and poverty in Central America. And from these friends we also learn how to hold this pain, rather than run away from it; how to honor this pain, listen to it and transform it into peacemaking action so that wisdom and love can grow, rather than anger and depression. This process demands that we live peacefully grounded in the present moment with wise and compassionate hearts. And it requires faithful action: remembering who we truly are, reclaiming our power and unique talents

to act in positive ways, doing what we can and what we love to do with great passion.

On our December Journey to Guatemala and Nicaragua 12 CAPACITAR women and men from California, Tennessee and Georgia were companions in this process with Central Americans. We came from diverse backgrounds—activists, psychotherapists, a physical therapist, an attorney, a writer, a printer, a weaver, ages 45 to 82— all with a common desire to be peacemakers. Two of the Journey members represented SALT—Southern and Appalachian Leadership Training and Highlander Center, which have worked in civil rights and grassroots education for decades. One member worked in advocacy for black prisoners on death row. Six members have been active in Atlanta in La Solidaridad on behalf of Central American issues.

We began each day of the Journey with a Tai Chi circle, grounding ourselves with Earth's energy, praying that we might be bearers of peace and light, connecting ourselves with those who made our Journey possible or who, in spirit, came with us. During the day as we met with different groups, our interchanges were often accompanied with tears, laughter, joy and song. This Newsletter shares some of our experiences and learnings. At a time when US papers carry little news about Central America, we feel it is all the more important to stay committed to these people, helping heal the wounds of war paid for by our tax dollars, faithful companions in the struggle for the long haul.

—PAT CANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Journey participants Ann Getzoff, Meg Randolph and Barbara Joye present a sewing machine to Sonia, whose brother was disappeared in the political violence in Guatemala. The sewing machine will help Sonia support her family.

WE ARE CAPACITAR.

WE ARE WISDOM AND CREATIVITY EMBODIED,
A VOICE FOR GAIA'S ENERGY UNFOLDING.
WE ARE COMMUNITY—DISCERNING, EMPOWERING AND
COMPASSIONATE, INTERCONNECTED WITH ALL BEINGS.
WE ARE PROCESS ENCOURAGING INNER AND OUTER HEALING,
willing to be "IN THE CAULDRON" OF TRANSFORMATION.
WE ARE WILLING TO RECOGNIZE OUR WHOLENESS AND
HOLINESS, willing to GROW WITH PEACE,
POWER AND LOVE. WE ARE WITNESS
OF THE PAIN AND INJUSTICE AROUND US,
willing to BE COMPANIONS IN THE STRUGGLE
TO HEAL AND TRANSFORM OUR WORLD.
WE BELIEVE IN EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY,
RESPECTING AND CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES.
WE BELIEVE THAT GIVING IS THE ACT OF RECEIVING,
THAT IN HEALING OURSELVES WE HEAL OUR WORLD.
WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE INTERCONNECTED—
PART OF ANCESTORS AND CHILDREN TO COME,
PART OF SOIL, EARTH AND STARS.

—CAPACITAR Philosophy



Hope in Action—MEG RANDOLPH, JOURNEY CO-LEADER

For the last few years I have spent much time thinking about hope in Central America, wondering why these people seem to be able to grasp onto hope in the midst of so much despair, while many people in the US seem to lose hope. When I traveled with CAPACITAR in November of 1994, I witnessed this hope and was moved and challenged to bring it back to the US. I discovered that hope in Central America is often founded in a deep sense of spirituality and firmly rooted to nature and the earth. This seems to be a missing piece for us in the US where, as a culture, our sense of spirituality and connection to nature have been lost.

On the 1995 CAPACITAR Journey I found that hope was again a thread weaving my experiences together. Wherever we visited in Nicaragua and Guatemala we heard story after story of worsening times. There is privatization of public services in both countries, increased unemployment (up to 95% in some rural areas of Nicaragua), decreased access to health care, growing numbers of street children and homeless, and much more. But in spite of all this we saw people who were able to rise above the despair and move forward.

In Nicaragua during the most revered holiday of Purissima, we felt much joy, greater than last year, as we celebrated and visited the homes of the people. In Ciudad Sandino, where our friends of CANTERA have a project, we saw the mobile library which last year was a dream and, this year, a reality. In Barrio Batahola children continue to grow and blossom with self-esteem as they perform with the choir. Even at the women's prison in Managua, where we left donated medicines because currently none is available, the women had pride in the work they were doing, building and caning chairs. They were proud to share their work with us.

In Guatemala we witnessed the growth of the grassroots center CAMI, from a house and garden, to the addition of a small new education building, a water and sewage system and a larger garden space. The workers at the Coca Cola Union now have new offices, an employee store and a gymnasium at the plant. Tierra Viva, the feminist center, has experienced so much growth in their programs, that an extra office and workshop space have been added. And last year when we visited Santa Inés Petapa, it was a depressed squatter settlement. This year we saw the 23 new IF/Habitat houses and great hope and joy in the community.

So hope continues and with it, action. Perhaps, through all of our efforts, this hope, along with a deeper sense of spirituality, can take root and grow in the US, as we share our experiences and put hope into action. This, after all, is the vision and mission of CAPACITAR.

*NO MATTER HOW INSIGNIFICANT WHAT YOU DO MAY SEEM,
IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO IT! —GANDHI*



Left: 1995 Journey Participants—Kay Delli, Lewis Sinclair, John Cox, Llewelyn Bell, Reid Jenkins, Barbara Joye, Mary Eastland, Margaret More, Pat Cane, Ann Getzoff, Joyce Dukes, Meg Randolph. Right: Tai Chi at Ixchimché, the Mayan archaeological site. Top: Margaret More helping a woman to weave a chair at the women's prison in Managua Center: Llewelyn Bell and Kay Delli delivering tooth brushes and teddy bears to groups in Nicaragua.

Gifts from Many Friends—ANN GETZOFF

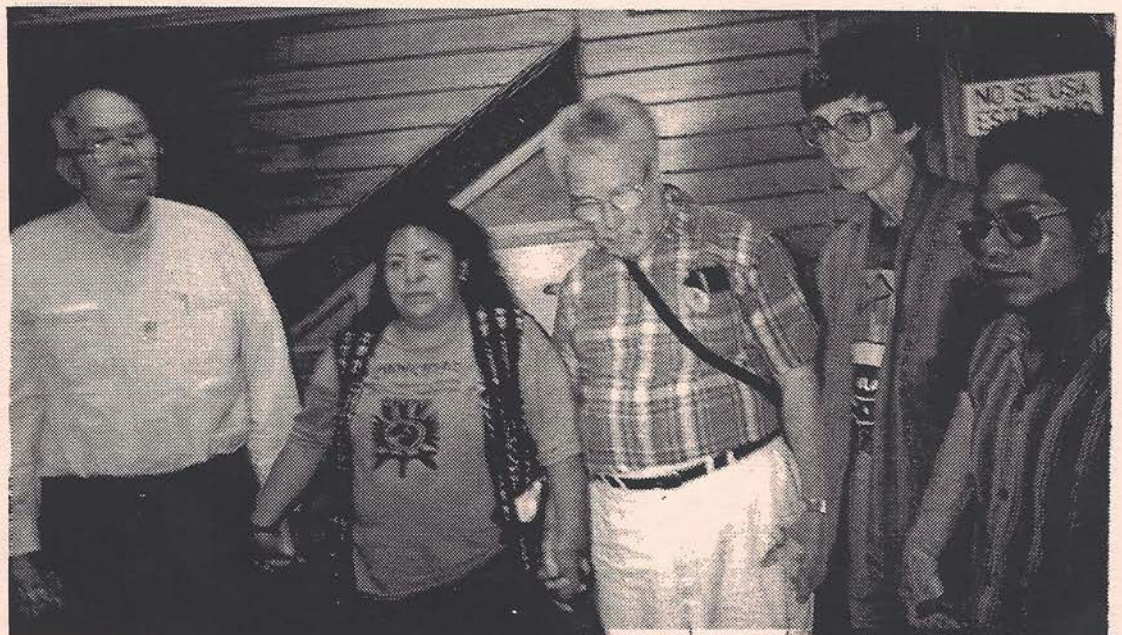
We were quite a sight at the LACSA counter in San Francisco Airport—four of us with ten huge duffle bags filled with gifts for friends in Nicaragua and Guatemala. The contingent from the East Coast were, at the same time, going through a similar process in Atlanta. As a novice at this CAPACITAR ritual, I wondered if we were, as they say in Central America, loco. The gifts had accumulated in magical ways. Atlanta participants received over 900 toothbrushes and countless tubes of toothpaste from a dentist friend and a toothbrush manufacturer. A seed company donated hundreds of packages of recently outdated vegetable and flower seeds. A Yoga teacher happily gave her massage table for a feminist group in Guatemala, while a colleague received a FAX machine from Hewlett Packard. Fourth and Fifth graders at St. Christopher's School in San Jose

collected children's school supplies, medicines, seeds and gardening tools. A teacher friend told the parents of her class, and a mom called with a portable sewing machine. A friend from Pacific Grove donated many boxes of art supplies, and several doctors donated much needed medicines. All of our friends cleaned out their closets and gave us T-shirts, health, beauty and medical supplies, sewing notions and baby clothes. Many of our friends went shopping and bought new things for us to take. Many wrote generous checks. I was personally overwhelmed that everyone I told wanted to help in some way.

There is no adequate way to describe how meaningful these gifts were to our friends in Nicaragua and Guatemala. So many live in great poverty, and those who are activist in any way are often under threat. On our first day in Nicaragua we delivered gifts to the women of Batahola, a busy community center in the middle of a poor barrio. The children's chorus sang for us the Highlander song "Nosotros Venceremos" and we tearfully responded with "We Shall Overcome". As we stood in a friendship circle and presented our gifts, I began to see how these small items not only have material value for the people, but are also symbolic of our support of their struggle for dignity and survival. At CAMI, a center in the countryside near Guatemala City, we presented a sewing machine and supplies to Sonia, a charming woman who cooked for us there. Sonia lost her brother and other close relatives and friends in the political violence, and she has long needed a sewing machine so she can support herself and her children. Her tears of gratitude and joy made all the collecting, sorting and hauling of donations worthwhile. Especially moving for us was giving gifts to a family from Puerto Barrios who had traveled many hours by bus to visit us at CAMI. Last year CAPACITAR brought toys and wigs for Mirza Carolina, because she had lost her hair from chemotherapy. Now in remission from leukemia, Mirza greeted us with big smiles and a full head of wavy black hair.

The people of Nicaragua and Guatemala were eloquent in expressing their deep gratitude for our gifts and our presence. They wanted our pictures, addresses and cards, as though connecting with us in some small way would give them hope and assist in their survival. Our efforts were no match for the gifts of love and inspiration we received from the courageous and selfless people of Central America.

To all of you who donated in any way, we say Thank You!



Top: "We Shall Overcome—Nosotros Venceremos:" Padre Angel and the Batahola Children's Choir sing Highlander's song to Joyce Dukes, Lewis Sinclair and Mary Eastland
Bottom right: "We'll Walk Hand in Hand. We are Not Afraid"—John Cox, Lewis Sinclair and Mary Eastland share a moment of solidarity and prayer with Guatemalan Union organizer Carmen Garcia and a community leader of Santiago Atitlan at the site of a political massacre.

Photos: Ann Getzoff and Pat Cane



A Women's CREED

The Declaration of the Women's Global Strategies Meeting, edited for the Ecofeminist Spirituality Workshop—1995 NGO World Forum on Women, China.

We are female human beings poised on the edge of the new millenium. We are the majority of our species yet we have dwelt in the shadows. We are the invisible, the illiterate, the laborers, the refugees, the poor. And we vow No More! We are the women who hunger—for rice, home, freedom, each other, ourselves. We are the women who thirst—for clean water, and laughter, literacy, love.

We have existed at all times, in every society. We are the women who stand in our sense and shout YES. We are the women who wear broken bones, broken voices, broken minds, broken hearts—but we are the women who dare whisper NO. We are the women who refuse to permit the sowing of death in our gardens, air, rivers, seas. We are each precious, unique, necessary. We are strengthened and blessed. We are the women who will reclaim our wisdom, question and redefine everything, including power.

We are poised on the edge of the millenium—ruin behind us, no map before us, the taste of fear sharp on our tongues. Yet we will leap. And then all this is political and possible: Bread. A clean sky. Active peace. A woman's voice singing somewhere. The army disbanded, the harvest abundant. The wound healed. The child wanted. The prisoner freed. The labor equal, fair and valued. No hand raised in any gesture but greeting.

Believe it! We will make it real, make it our own, make it available. Believe it! We are the women who will transform the world.

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We welcome you to become part of our CAPACITAR network.

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☐ I would like to be part of the CAPACITAR network.

☐ Please send me information on the '96 CAPACITAR Journey

☐ I would like to give a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

☐ I would like to order a CAPACITAR Manual:

Spanish _____ English _____

Cost per manual: \$12, plus \$3 for postage and handling.



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