

A Little More Than Just People

Monologues of Community Cultivators from Franklin County
By the 8th Grade Class of the Four Rivers Charter School
Greenfield, Massachusetts
2003 - 2004



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Written and produced by the 8th grade class
of Four Rivers Charter School

Photographs by Judy Ramirez, Hallmark Institute of Photography



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A Little More Than Just People

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P r e f a c e

No matter how different people may appear; whether we are White, African-American, Hispanic, or Asian; short, tall, fat, or skinny; our intentions in striving for true happiness are all the same.

Community Cultivators help others in achieving this true happiness. As a term “Community Cultivator” can be defined in multiple ways both literally and metaphorically. They are people of both compassion and respect. However they go beyond their personal world to make a difference in other people’s lives, keeping up with their regular work schedules at the same time. Some receive pay while others the satisfaction of brightening someone’s day. Some take simple pleasure knowing they contributed to the community’s well being.

All of us, in our own individual ways, are Community Cultivators; influencing others with the small actions we make each and every day; small things like picking up trash or helping an elderly woman cross the street or carrying her groceries.

Going through the complete process of this project has been a new experience for us. We had never interviewed someone, typed the interview, a transcript, or written a monologue. It was an experience that we may remember for the rest of our lives, or perhaps forget entirely. Since some of us are on the shy side, it was sometimes awkward. However, as an eighth grade class, we have done a project which recognizes and truly appreciates our community and its cultivators.

Hearing what our Community Cultivators had to say opened our minds to new ideas which we will be exploring for a long time. A Community Cultivator is actually a term created by our teacher and defined by the class, but it completely describes those who nurture our community. They work to better our lives and seek to do what they believe is right and what is just. In this respect, they are a little more than just people.

Our Roots: A Teacher's Perspective

In the broad sense of the word, a community is a group of people who share something in common. We have learned that history is about the story of communities: how they are formed, how they are sustained, and how they, as all of them seem to do, fall apart. The life of a community follows a plot, with a beginning, middle, and end, but each community also has its own, unique story to tell.

Within this unique story are characteristics that each community has in common. Whatever their size, place in time, or location on a map, be they empires or small religious sects, there are striking resemblances between seemingly unrelated communities. Take governing structures, for example. Although they were separated by thousands of miles, both Feudal Japan and Feudal Europe had a code of behavior (Bushido and Chivalry) which held together the social and political hierarchy. Or look at how similarly communities behave when they have a thriving economy. How curiously alike were the communities of the European Renaissance in the 1500's to the Islamic Abbasid Empire of 800 years prior. Each fashioned their culture after "classic" models, had a class system, and placed a high value on learning (and how ironic it is that the descendants of both are presently at war).

In this story of communities, there are also important differences. All communities distinguish themselves from one another by their value systems and the individuals who follow them. We know that the Mongol and Roman empires took vastly different positions toward minorities. The Mongols were so tolerant of small cultures within their empire that they lost a unified, national identity. This made the Mongols very easy to conquer, and they fell quickly to invaders. The Eastern Roman Empire, on the other hand, gained power because they forced conversion on minorities under penalty of death. In this example, history teaches us that tolerance of minorities could lead to one community's downfall, while intolerance could lead to another community's growth. Different values bring

about different destinies.

Value systems are so influential that they have the power to shape the individual's personal identity. Look at how the individual's worth was perceived during the Middle Ages. At that time, "many Christians saw themselves as sinful creatures struggling to get into heaven" (from our textbook, *Across the Centuries*). In the exact region just several hundred years later, however, a philosophy called humanism took a very different view of humanity. It saw the dignity, importance, and potential in human kind. Humans were suddenly considered capable of self-improvement through study, public service, and the development of skills and talents. These values influenced artists, philosophers, and politicians, giving rise to some of the greatest accomplishments of western civilization.

We also know that individuals have the ability to shape their community. History books are full of such people: Muhammed, Joan of Arc, Charlemagne, Leonardo da Vinci, and Constantine to name a few. Individuals shaped the destinies of entire civilizations, and they have been celebrated for their influence on the thousands of people whose lives were shaped by them. However, most history textbooks don't recognize the thousands of people whose lives are less influential in terms of numbers, but whose work is equally important for the sustaining of community.

This is why the Community Cultivators project began. Community Cultivators shape the lives of local people in ways that aren't always immediately measurable, yet they have clearly committed their lives to helping people in a place and time that we all share in common. Originally our goal for this project was to educate ourselves and others about our community cultivators; we sought to learn something about the individuals from Franklin County who work on behalf of others. Now we seek to both recognize and celebrate them for what they have done and continue to do for the community, in the broad sense of that word.

Juanita Nelson

Practitioner of Non-Violence Deerfield

Juanita Nelson is a nice elderly woman. Juanita's presence in a room makes you feel the comfort and warmth of your own home. She makes you feel like no matter what you do she will still be kind to you. She speaks with the tone of a woman with experience and strong beliefs. She speaks loud and clear in everything she says.

"We were interested in how we lived every day, not just going out to a demonstration, not just voting, and not just writing letters."

It isn't easy living without electricity. Sure there's work to it, but I'm not working any more than anyone else who has everything. I just have two gas lamps for lights, so I don't have to pay much to live. I grow my own food, have a well, a solar powered oven, and an outhouse. I use a washing machine at the Woolman Hill Conference Center, but in Mexico I used to wash my own clothes by hand and dry them too.

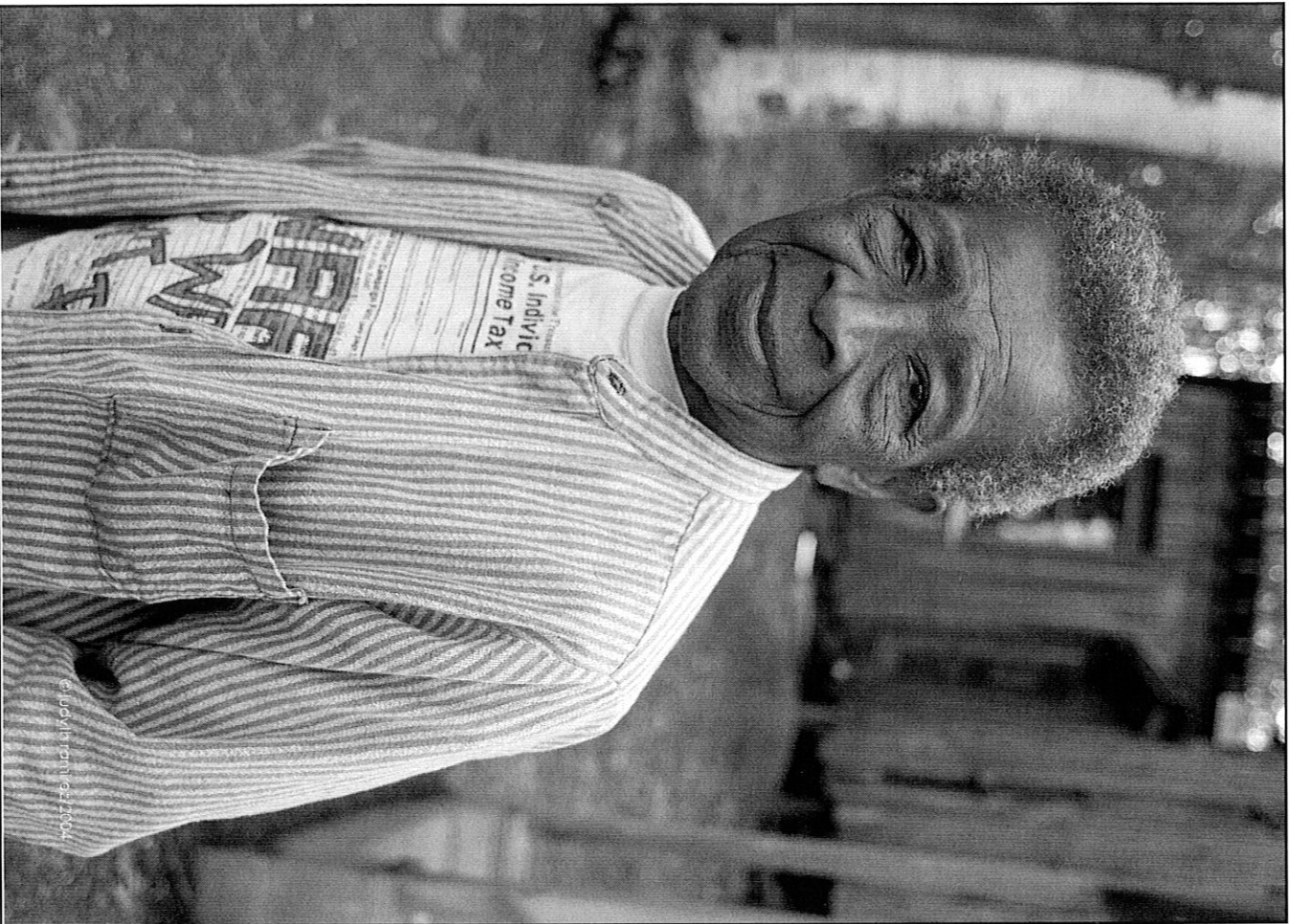
If I could choose a title for myself, I think it would be a "want to be" practitioner of non-violence. I think Gandhi said something like, "Non-violence is not a garment that you put on and off, it's something that you try to wear all the time." In 1943 when I was a sophomore, I was arrested for the first time in Washington D.C. for trying to eat in a restaurant. I went back to Cleveland where I was born and founded the Cleveland Committee of Racial Equality and worked on various projects along with a man named George Houser.

I have been a member and am now sort of an honorary member of the Commonwealth CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), a group of farmers who offer locally grown produce to subscribers who pay in advance for a "share in the harvest". I am also one of the co-founders of the Pioneer Valley War Tax Resisters

in Massachusetts. During the Vietnam War my husband and I began to feel that more was required of us than to be tax-refusers, though we helped out the United Farm Workers. We were enmeshed in a system that really required -requires- war. I shouldn't put it in the past tense. I knew I couldn't get out of it, but I wanted to do a little bit more than we did. And so we went to New Mexico in 1970 from Philadelphia. We lived in an adobe house in a village of 500 called "Ojo Caliente" where we had an outhouse and cooked and heated with wood. We had the most wonderful garden we've ever had and used irrigation that came from the mountains and at least we were supplying our own food. I learned to garden with a book in one hand and a hoe in the other, but we learned to love it. It was very beautiful.

I'm a city person originally. I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, never did any farming or anything like that. I was from a very poor family anyway. My mother always tried to garden a little wherever we were, but I was not at all interested in helping her. But when we lived in a community outside of Cincinnati, I did a little gardening. I wasn't too interested in it, but I did a little bit. I just happened to be living here when they started the Farmers Market in Greenfield, which is of great importance to us.

My husband had been in prison during WWII. He had



registered, and then he walked out of camp. When he got out of prison he said that it didn't make sense to pay someone to do the killing that he wouldn't do himself. And so we became tax-refusers. We were interested in how we lived everyday, not just going out to a demonstration, not just voting, and not just writing letters. I'm not an activist in the sense that most people talk about, I'm not even sure exactly what that means. I don't go running off to Washington and this and that. It's just not my style anymore. I used to be in many more demonstrations. But I like this thing that a friend of mine in California does: she's been a tax-refuser for quite some time. And she goes to demonstrations, but instead of walking, she just stands there with a sign: "Don't like war? Then don't pay for it! Refuse to pay war-taxes! I haven't bought a bomb since 1971!" That's more my style.

"If I could choose a title for myself, I think I would be a practitioner of non-violence."

J u a n i t a N e l s o n

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e

Richie Davis

Senior Writer, Greenfield Recorder
Greenfield

As Richie Davis sits he seems to be constantly calculating and assessing everything, and yet he appears calm and relaxed like he has done it all before. He has done this before as just another part of his everyday job; only in his job, he's the interviewer. He wears comfortable clothing and speaks clearly and directly. He seems like one of those people you think you've seen before, and maybe you have.

"I care a lot about this community; it's a very special place."

I grew up in New York. When I decided to be a reporter I was just about 16 or 17. I've been a reporter for around thirty years. I go out and find news stories and feature stories. The hard part is exploring all the different sides of things and making sure that it's fair. I write in a way that teaches people in the community about what other people do and what ideas are out there that they might not otherwise come in contact with. To do this work I have to be able to listen and hear what's out there; hear what people have to say. I have to be able to translate what they're saying so that everybody can understand. I also have to make it interesting for people to read, always using my imagination because sometimes the story is right in front of me but I don't see it. So sometimes just seeing the story in the first place is part of what skills I need to do this work.

There aren't a lot of typical days in my job. Sometimes, I'll go into Boston in the morning to do a story. I wrote a story once about Foster's market, a local grocery store; how they go and get their vegetables and their fish, and that was a really fun story, because it gave me a whole different perspective on things. Another day I spent a whole day with a local farmer, from six in the morning until seven at night and walked through their day.

I really think that it's important for people to be respon-

sible, and for people not to be limited in the way they see things. I try to find people who aren't necessarily traditional in the way they live their lives, but people who live their lives by their values and use those people as examples. Those people tend to not necessarily get a lot of attention in our culture, so I try to make people aware of that. My goals are also to make people aware of all the alternatives out there, and to make people aware of the richness of the community and the ideas that are here. We're very lucky, we live in a place where there's a lot going on; people really feel a lot more free here than they do in a lot of areas in terms of how they live their lives.

One time I remember taking a walk up to the top of Poet's Seat tower in Greenfield and looking down—this was a long time ago. It was really neat because I could look down and see the whole town and the hospital, the school, the houses and the high-rises where the older people live, and I just got a real sense that things here are very small scale. I can pretty much see the whole place, and if I look out into the hills I can see how everything sort of fits together; I see a fire truck leave the fire station and go down a street to a fire. It's the scale of this area, which is pretty small, that makes it really easy for people to see how they affect people's lives.

That's what makes it special doing what I do, where all those

pieces are really there. I care a lot about this community; it's a very special place.

"I write in a way that teaches people in the community about what other people do and what ideas are out there that they might not otherwise come in contact with."



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R i c h i e D a v i s

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e

Peggy Gillespie

Co-Founder / Director of Family Diversity Projects
Amherst

Peggy Gillespie is a woman who is unstoppable, in her work and in herself. She has done so much in her job, and yet she has not accomplished her life-long goal to see the end of prejudice. But she keeps on going. She is both casual and formal, and is a very warm, loving woman who has a lot to teach us about peace.

“The reason we are here on this planet is to learn how to love, not to learn to cultivate hatred, anger, ignorance, and prejudice.”

When I was a teenager, I first became aware of prejudice. I saw it right in my family and in my community and it felt sad. I remember being in an airport in Virginia and looking for the restroom and seeing two doors: one had a sign that said: “Whites Only” and the other had a sign that said: “Coloreds Only.” I remember being shocked because I had never seen anything like that. I got really upset and angry. I wanted to complain to the people working in the airport, but my mother told me to calm down. She was scared that I would make people mad at us. It was the sixties and the Civil Rights Movement was just beginning then. It was inspiring to me. People of Color were fighting for their rights, and over time, the laws in our country began to change.

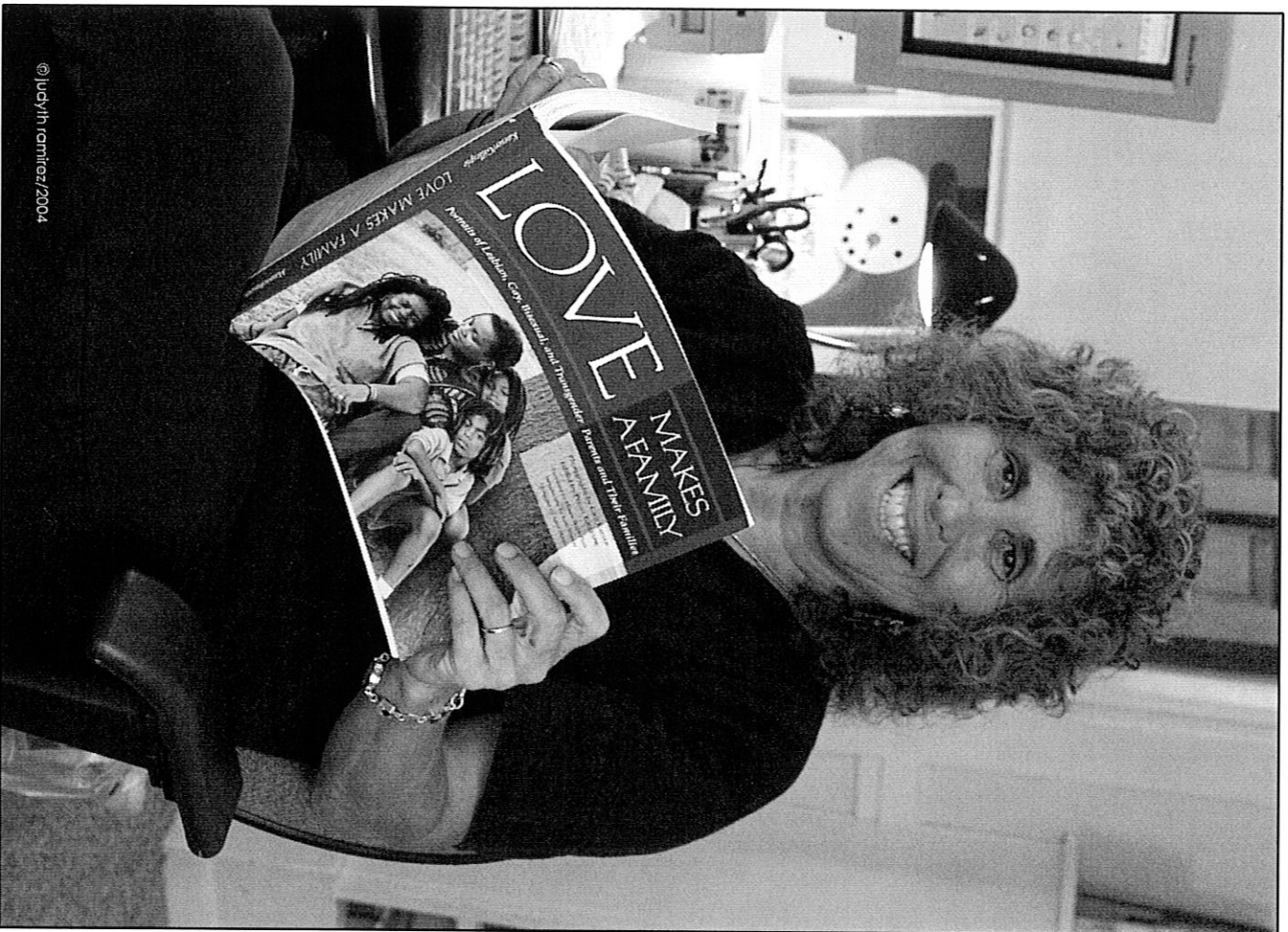
Many years later when I was thirty-nine, my late husband and I adopted a multiracial baby daughter we named Julianna, and soon we saw the prejudice she faced as a person of color. Even though the laws had changed, racism was still a huge part of our society. When my daughter was only three, her classmate Amelia told Julianna that her brown doll was an ugly color. Amelia’s mom was my best friend, so I knew that they weren’t a racist family, but it made me realize that by age three kids are already learning that white is good and black is not so good. At that point, I was think-

ing more about helping my daughter, which is why I began Family Diversity Projects. Julianna’s nursery school teacher, Gigi Kaeser, was a photographer and together we made a photo-text exhibit called: OF MANY COLORS: Portraits of Multiracial Families and it includes my family. As interest in that exhibit grew, I realized that our work could help the whole community.

Now I co-direct Family Diversity Projects, a non-profit organization in Amherst, where Gigi and I have created three more photo-text exhibits on family issues in America. These exhibits travel all over the country and their purpose is to teach and educate people of all ages to fight prejudice. My daily job is dealing with these exhibitions, which have also been published into books.

The hardest thing about my work is seeing how much prejudice is still out there. It’s painful to see children who are teased and really hurt every day because they have lesbian moms, or they are overweight or they have a physical challenge, or they don’t fit gender stereotypes like a boy who likes to play with dolls or loves to dance or a girl who hates dresses or loves to study math. Teasing hurts kids every day and I think it’s incredibly damaging to them.

The best part of my work is seeing and hearing that our exhibits and books change people. I love to hear that somebody came out to



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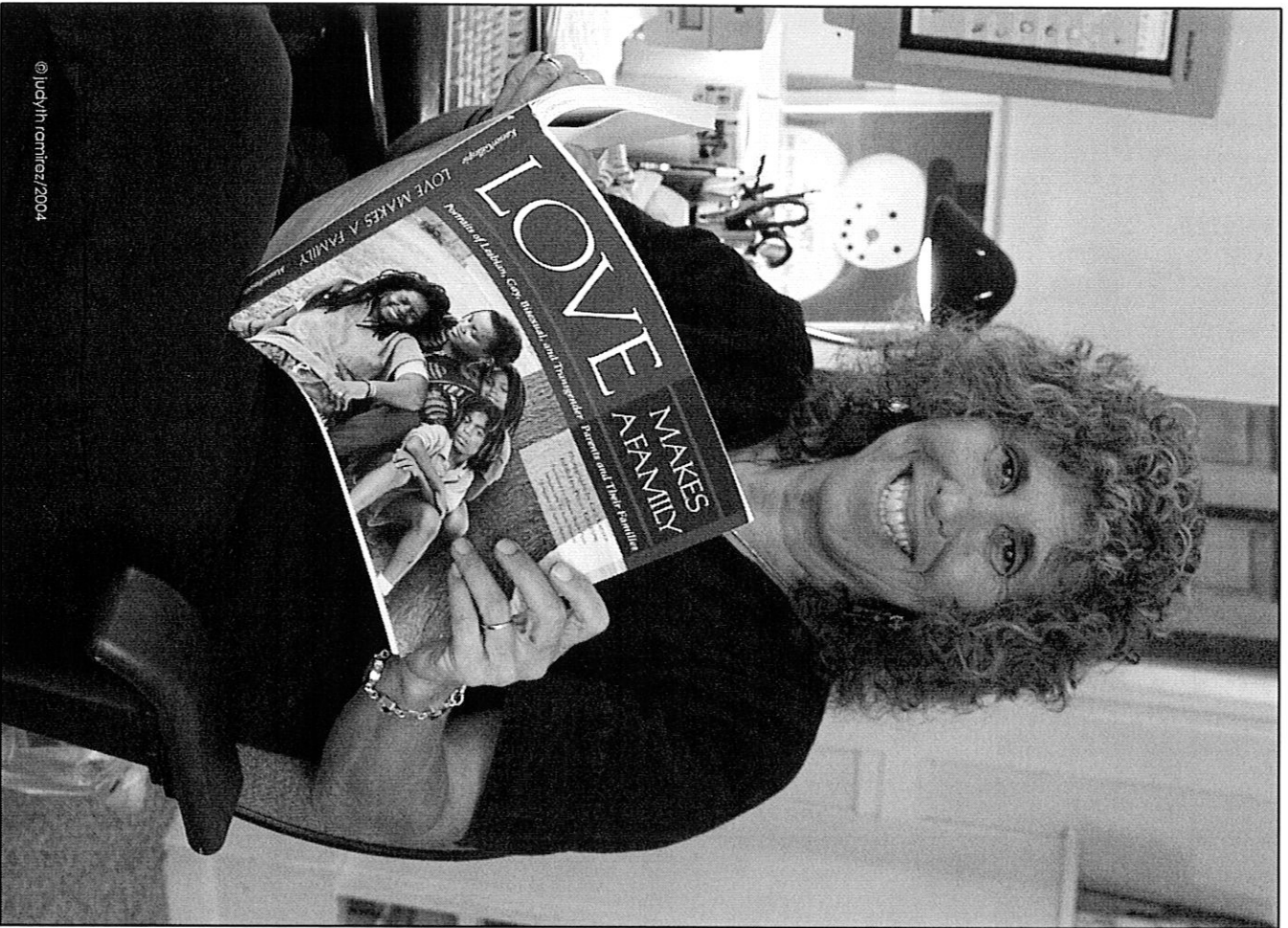
their parents as gay after seeing our LOVE MAKES A FAMILY exhibit or that somebody who is mentally ill is now able to talk to people about it without shame after seeing our exhibit NOTHING TO HIDE: Mental Illness in the Family. Those kinds of changes make me very proud.

Finding a way to talk about prejudice in a very simple, clear form that anybody from a kindergartner to the head of a corporation can easily understand is the most important thing that I've accomplished. Being able to educate people through these exhibits and books is my dream come true. I hope to benefit our local community and society in general by showing people those differences in families and in individuals are not bad things. Difference is just difference. In other words, if someone writes with their left hand, that doesn't make them wrong or bad. Everybody is unique. Everyone has something different, but underneath the differences, we are all human beings with the same feelings. No one likes to be teased or hurt. Everyone wants to be treated with respect. My values are to be compassionate, kind, generous, and caring to all people. I mean, I really care about people. I feel like this world is very scary right now with so much war and hatred. I guess it has always been scary, so you need hope if you think you're going to make a difference by making the world a little more peaceful. You have to be someone who wants to make changes in order to accomplish anything important in this world.

My goal is to reduce stereotyping, teasing, and hurtful behavior that people do when they are ignorant and prejudiced about other people. I believe that when we are young, we often learn to hate people who are different. It's hard to get rid of these ideas, so I'm really happy when our exhibits go to elementary schools, junior highs, and high schools because kids can open their minds and grow up without prejudice. Even if their parents are prejudiced, they can see that prejudice is wrong and learn to be kind and loving to all people.

P e g g y G i l l e s p i e

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e



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P e g g y G i l l e s p i e

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e

Bill Perlman

Activist
Franklin County

Bill Perlman is a very intelligent man with strongly formed beliefs and feelings. He is laid back, wears a jean jacket and a gold chain around his neck. He is absolutely a community cultivator. He pushes our community for the better and he is constantly working for his beliefs and for our community's best interests. It's refreshing to see someone who cares so much about the issues of the government, health care, education, and technology.

"One of the things we have to do is view, really everybody's lives as sacred and important."

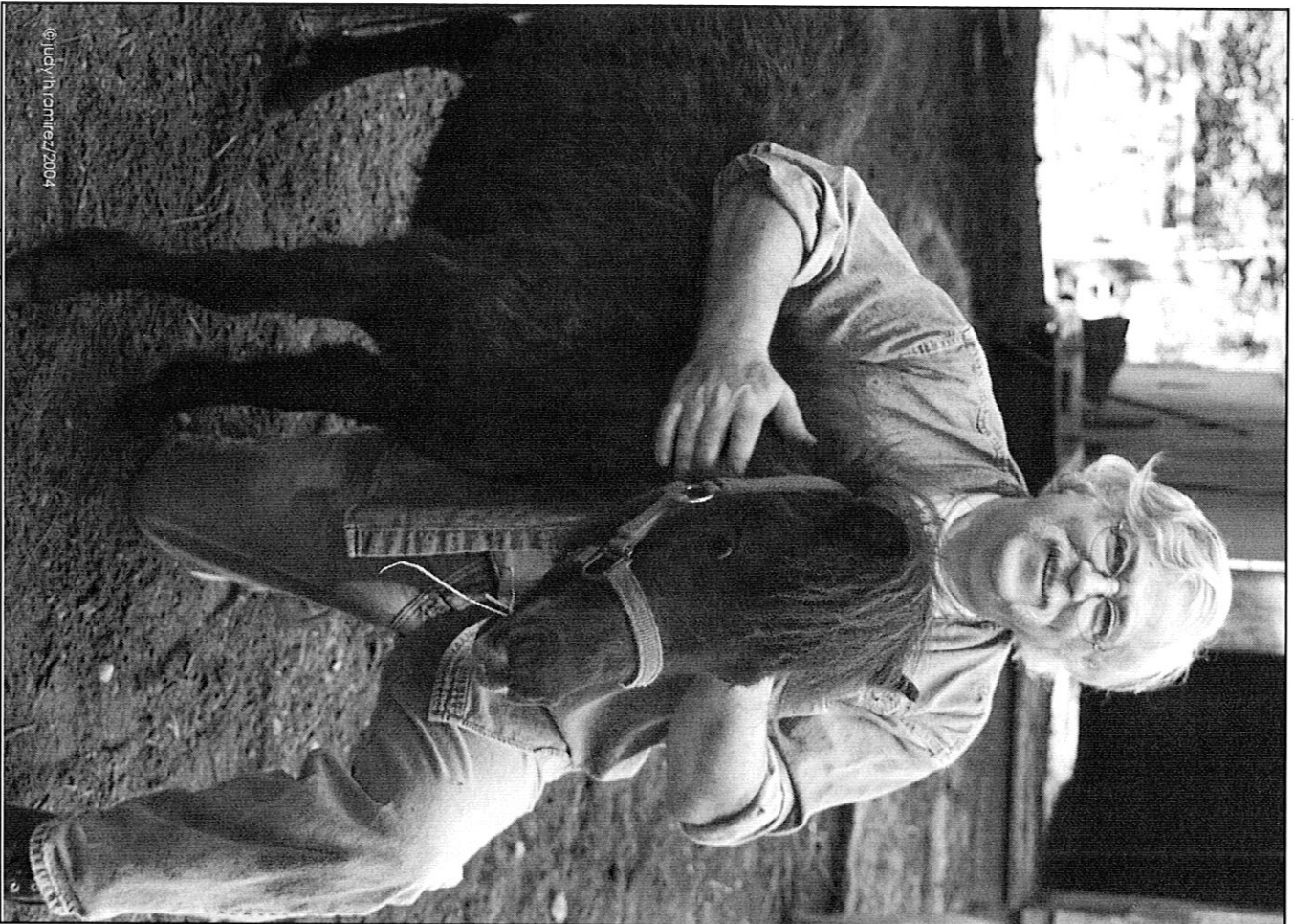
When I was eighteen I went south and worked in the Civil Rights movement for a couple of years with an organization which was called the student non-violent coordinating committee. I was on some of the original freedom rides and did a lot of organizing in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia. My parents and my uncles and aunts were also very active politically, and so I sort of grew up thinking about other people. "I always felt that everybody should have some responsibility to give back something."

I am distressed about what our own government is trying to do to the rest of the world and to us. What does it mean to be elected governor? It's an important thing, it means that someone got more votes than another person. Does he deserve those votes? I have no idea. Now that he's elected let's see what he can do. Is he making things better? I don't think so, so I'm going to work from the inside opposing him. Proving I do have a suit and tie and all, I can go to Boston and have a meeting with these people. Not that there's anything wrong standing outside the state house with a sign, but you still need someone with your best interests at mind on the inside.

Often I make statements to go further than I want just to get people thinking; why bother funding education at all if you're

not going to teach people? Let them go out and learn, let them plant things. Put a bunch of kids on a farm and say, "Here are some seeds, there are a couple of shovels, a rake, and you've got water over there. Go feed yourselves." Why do we need to read Moby Dick? Why do we need to know things like this? What are they going to learn from that? If you're not going to give them a good education, why bother at all? That's how I get people going because they know that kids need an education to get through life.

What I'm hoping is that Boston will finally realize that Franklin County exists and that we need help with our education. There are fifty states. In terms of how much money is allocated to education, we are number forty-four out of fifty. We are down at the bottom. We have great colleges like M.I.T. and Harvard, but we don't spend any money on education. Boston does not spend one penny of its own property taxes on education. It's all state funded. Boston is legally required to fund school transportation at the level of 100%. They are currently giving us 32%. Our illiteracy rate is huge and there are people graduating from high school who literally can't read. We shouldn't have to pay for private schools like Deerfield Academy. We should be able to go to schools like the charter school or Mohawk and still get an excellent education.



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B I L L P e r l m a n

Our community needs a reason to progress. I see two things that need to progress and should go hand in hand: Health care and technology. People are constantly putting one before the other when they are connected, and we need both equally. Without the research technology provides we would not have the healthcare that we have today, but technology is being put first when there are thousands of people without healthcare. Some may see technology as a waste of time and money, but without it our world wouldn't be what it is today. Through space exploration the circuit chip was invented and without it we wouldn't have computers or calculators. Computers help hospitals and colleges do research and computers keep track of medical records. So again, technology provides knowledge and knowledge helps health care mature.

The hard thing about working for these causes is when you've accomplished something and then reports show it's becoming undone. Then you realize that you can never really give up working for these things. One of the things we have to do is view, really view everybody's lives as sacred and important.

"I always felt that everybody should have some responsibility to give back to something."

Lucinda Brown

Community Relations Coordinator
Greenfield

Lucinda Brown's office is windowless, but bright, creating a welcome feeling. Her soft voice shows no signs of hostility or judgment. Her manner is informal and welcoming, her attire hints on her professionalism as well as her casual side. She seems ready to open herself to the community.

"The district court is like the emergency room of the court systems."

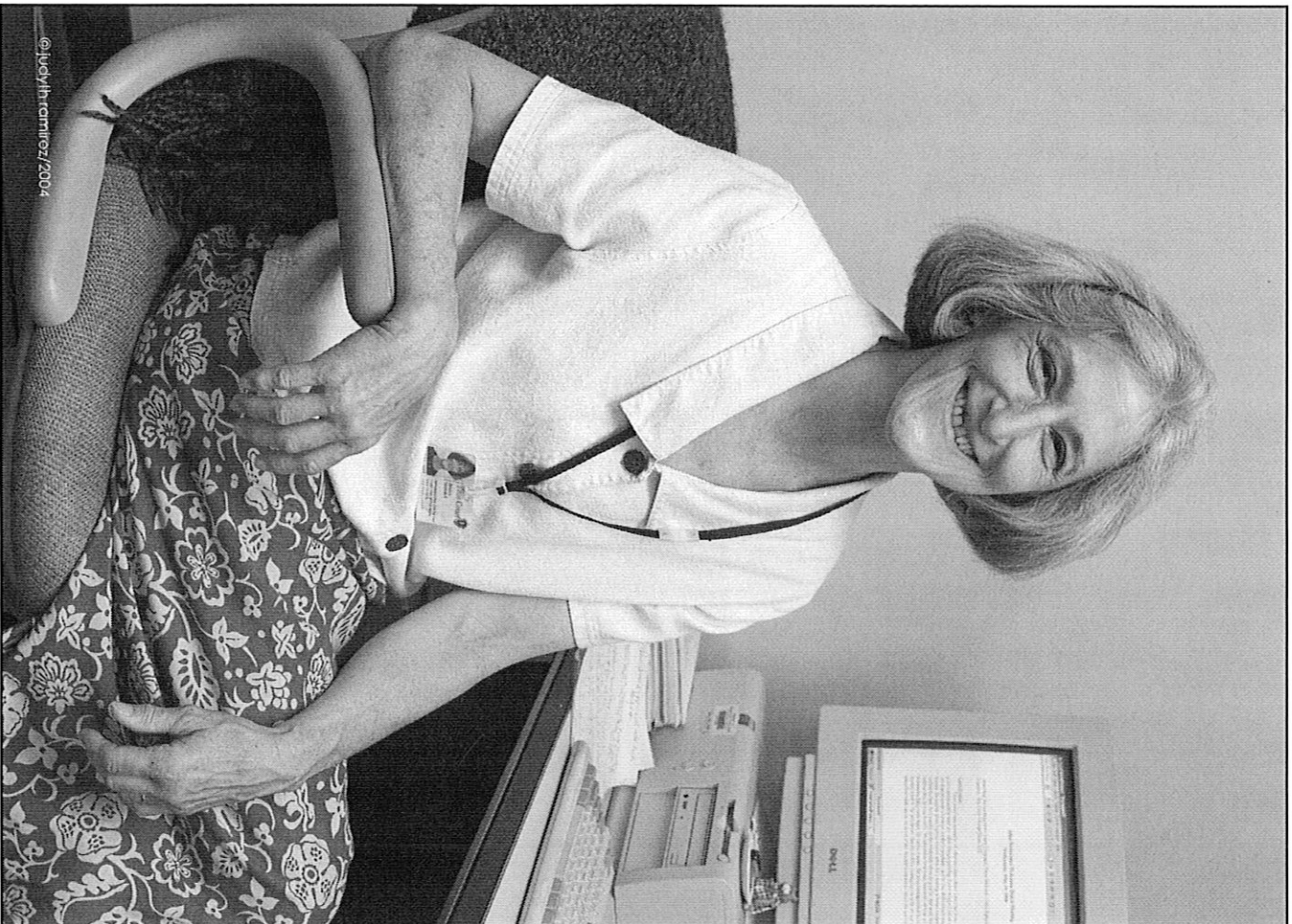
I've been here for 10 years and it's because I love what I do. I think it started in 1992 when the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts felt that there needed to be some accountability of the courts to the public. I started out as a volunteer, and then we got a small grant for a part time position that morphed into a full time position.

The place where I have become most involved in the community is the Restorative Justice program. Restorative Justice looks at a crime from the human perspective instead of from the legal perspective. This program gives people a second chance by continuing a case without a finding, which means that on a job application, on a financial aid application, on a college application, they will not have to answer that they were convicted of a crime. If you can say, "Yes I have been charged with a crime, but was not convicted," that keeps doors open. The individuals that opt for Restorative Probation meet with a board of community members. My job is to find the community members to serve on the Restorative Justice board, create groups, organize the days and times when they're going to meet, set up the schedule and do all the paperwork.

When people come to the restorative board, they need to own what they've done and come up with a plan to make amends

to the individuals they harmed and to the community. We ask an individual to really think about what he or she has done and not just minimize it. We try to get individuals to figure out what they're good at so they can figure out where they can best serve the community. When you see a group of people with a corrections officer you know they're in trouble. That's not what we mean by community service. What we want is something that is going to strengthen the community, and that means we use our strengths. There was one individual who discovered he could actually do some cooking. He became an extremely important part of the community meals program and continued long after he had to. That is what the board is really after. We're asking people to give the community a gift.

The district court is like the emergency room of the court system, so most of the individuals that have come through the district courts are 17-23 years old, most of whom have dropped out of school, most of whom don't have a job, many of whom have no stable place to live. What we see is a social divide through the court system, the underlying issues that the court identifies are lack of education, lack of housing, lack of employment, poverty. These are people that have been alienated from the main stream. What we need are people who are in their corner to say; how can we help you? What do you need? I'll go



with you. The value of that kind of support comes because people want to, not because they're being paid. My hope is that in the fullness of time board members will start to understand some of these dynamics and some of the difficulties of growing up today. We have a long way to go, and it feels as if we're really in our infancy, but that's the direction we want to be going and that's what keeps me happy in this office with no windows.

"Restorative Justice looks at a crime from the human perspective instead of from the legal perspective."

Lucinda Brown

A Little More Than Just People

Al Norman

Community Activist
Greenfield

Al Norman has a positive outlook, and he thinks what he thinks. He strikingly resembles an everyday person, wearing jeans and a button down collared shirt. When he speaks to us, his tone is firm but friendly and inviting. He is relaxed, comfortable, and keeps his tone and attitude neutral throughout the interview.

“There are some people who love what I do, and some people who hate what I do.”

My value system tells me to support little people who don't have a lot of power; to work with people who are hurt by other people. One person says we can make a difference.

Sprawl-Busters was an accident. I believe in keeping places (such as Greenfield) small, and anti-big corporations. The only reason I got involved with it, 11 years ago, was because somebody in the town council of Greenfield asked me to get involved. Sprawl-Busters is a consulting operation that I do out of my own house but I have people who work with me all across the country. They give me information and updates on the battles that are going on in their state, so it's a national network of people. They are not on my payroll, they are just people volunteering. Much of my time is volunteering to do this. There are some people who love what I do, and some people who hate what I do.

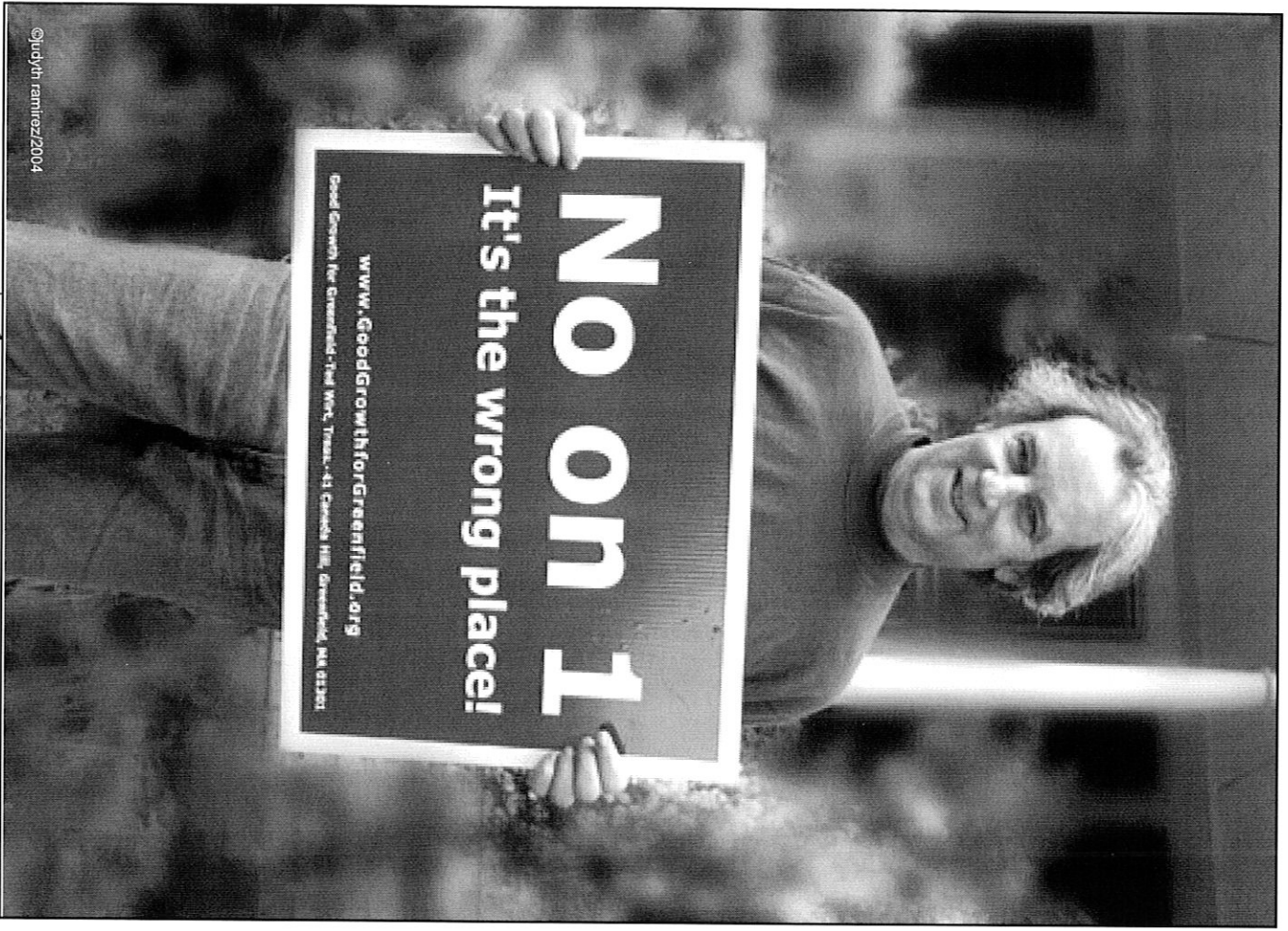
If I go and buy from one of these local stores in Greenfield, they put three times more money back into the community as a big store like Home Depot will. Home Depot is the vacuum cleaner that sucks dollars out of Greenfield. The most important thing I've done is stopping the sprawl of big retailers from coming into Greenfield. For example, stopping an office park from coming here allowed the Four Rivers Public Charter School to happen. Eco-

nomically and environmentally, it's not good to have these huge stores. They are too big to have in Greenfield. Too many cars, air pollution, water pollution, it's just not good! I think I've helped thousands of people across the country take another look at what these businesses are doing to our towns.

There is something inside me that didn't come from any other place. I have met a lot of wonderful people across the country who inspire me: the people who call me up and say, "I'm trying to save my town from being dominated by this big store"-they inspire me. In America people tend to feel that they have no power, and you can't fight the big corporations; you can't fight city hall. So I get excited when I see people taking power.

I think I've helped thousands of people across the country take another look at what these businesses are doing to our towns. You have to educate people before you activate them. I would never go and support a Wal-Mart to buy anything. I don't care where they are located. I support big cities like San Francisco which rejected a Wal-Mart; Chicago is having problems now to.

I support the little people who don't have a lot of power to work with people who are hurt by large corporations. I compare Wal-Mart to not just a chain store, but like a chain of exploitation that stretches all



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the way to China.

My father worked for Newsweek, the magazine, so I grew up with current events in my house. We were always talking about what was happening in the world and things about the community. Growing up as a kid I didn't pay much attention to economics or my community, but my father told me to ask questions. A reporter basically asks questions and challenges people when they say that something like Wal-Mart is good for the community. The reporter says "Why?" instead of saying something like "Oh that's nice" Instead they challenge it. That's where I learned to challenge authority. Whatever people tell you, always say "Show me, prove to me that's the case."

"My value system tells me to support little people who don't have a lot of power; to work with people who are hurt by other people."

A I N O R M A N

A Little More Than Just People

Christine Forgey

1st Mayor of Greenfield
Greenfield

Christine Forgey is a really intelligent, kind and compassionate person. She talks about South Park, which you would not expect the Mayor of Greenfield to do. She is casual and comfortable with kids. She also has the same hobbies that anybody would have. She really likes to meet with people and just talk and get to know them. She likes to get a chance to unwind and relax, which our interview seemed to accomplish.

“There’s never a day where it’s the same as the day before or the day to come.”

It’ll be a year in July. At this time in the year my friends and family remind me that I had just made it through the preliminary election. The confidence to win builds slowly as you progress. When I started running I did it because I wanted to work on physical solvency and economic development. Also, I wanted to learn certain pieces of knowledge and information that I didn’t know already.

Going to Smith College helped me become the mayor of Greenfield. It was a wonderful experience, and it was really scary and a different thing to do for a woman of my age because I had kids that were growing up. I was a history major and it was funny because I was working as an accountant for the town of Greenfield and people would say to me, “That’s great that you’re going back to school to be an accountant!” and I would say, “No! I am an accountant! Why would I want to learn something that I already know? I want to learn something that I don’t know about.”

My big inspiration in life was my mother-in-law. She inspired me because politics was one of her great loves. She was a nurse that became a good friend of mine and was very good to me. She was always a compassionate person and always wanted to help everyone that was in need. She worked and had a family and a marriage during the Second World War. Originally, she was from Bos-

ton but moved to Franklin County to work as a nurse. And she would always make jokes and act just like everyone else you know . . . I think of her often because she died in 1995.

The thing that’s really hard about my work is receiving criticism. Criticism is very hard to cope with, but I also understand that it’s a part of my job. That especially doesn’t feel good when I have to make big decisions like the budget cut I had to make so that a lot of people wouldn’t be laid off, but all the income for people just kind of stopped, meaning that people couldn’t get raises and such. Non-trust is also very hard to cope with. I just want people to be able to trust me. So yes, criticism is very hard to deal with. But, on a brighter note, the best part of my job is what I’m doing right now. Meeting with people in the community makes me feel good. Also, when people make suggestions that I can respond to in a positive way is nice. Doing things that I’ve never done before like when I took a ride in a hot-air balloon, or when I got to milk a goat at the County Fair is fun as well. But there’s never a day where it’s the same as the day before or the day to come.



"When I started running, I did it because I wanted to work on fiscal solvency and economic development. Also, I wanted to learn certain pieces of knowledge and information that I didn't already know."

Christine Forgey

A Little More Than Just People

E f r i a m E i s e n

J e w i s h C o m m u n i t y S p i r i t u a l L e a d e r
G r e e n f i e l d

Efrim Eisen's dedication to Judaism is easy to see by the Yalmikah he wears on his head. He came five minutes early, while the interview equipment was still being set up. He spent those five minutes wandering the library looking at books. He seemed very interested in education. After the interview he went to see one of his community members whose father had just died.

"I visit people in the hospital or in nursing homes; today I will go to people's houses to see if they have needs that have to be met. I am sort of like a community social worker"

I have been a Jewish spiritual community leader for over 7 years. When you take on this role, part of what you're doing is creating events that bring people together and better the community. I try to get as many people involved as possible. I'd like to see more people, especially young people, become involved in community projects. I'd like to see the community more ecologically sound. I try to encourage recycling and the use of alternative power sources that do not harm the environment.

My goals are primarily focused on the Jewish community. One of my main goals each week is to get at least 10 people at the religious services on Saturday. I try to educate my community about justice and peace and turn them on to God. I do this by setting up exciting and interesting programs. I try to treat everyone the way I would want to be treated, even those who are not Jewish or members of my community. I try to be kind, loving and thoughtful. One of my main jobs is as a teacher. Each year I prepare the students in my Hebrew class for their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. I try to teach them to be a part of the Jewish community and that their Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not a graduation but a transition into the adult community. I also do work with the younger kids in the school by teaching them traditional Jewish songs and music.

The person who inspired me the most was my Rabbi, Shlomo Carl bah, who died in 1994. He inspired me in a great many ways. He was one of the last Rabbis who were familiar with pre-Holocaust Europe. He was a very kind and joyful person despite seeing the Holocaust first hand. He passed on stories, music, and teachings of the Torah to me. My job is to pass on to others what he gave to me.

In my childhood my mother was a very big inspiration. She was very involved with Hadassah, the Jewish woman's organization building communities in Israel. They were involved with building hospitals. It was my mom's community development dream. I learned from her that it is very important to support Israel.

As a child I greatly enjoyed being around the Synagogue especially during the Saturday morning prayer service. All my friends thought I was a little weird because I liked to go to temple, they all didn't. I especially enjoyed the music and singing that happened there. Now I tried to include music and stories in my services. I try to make Judaism joyful and meaningful at the same time.

The hardest thing about my work is that my community sometimes doesn't care what is going on. In order to develop an enthusiasm or excitement, I have to be the one to generate it. Sometimes when I develop a program, and only one, two or even no people show up it can



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get really frustrating. You may have good ideas or intentions, but because of a bad date or not enough publicizing you may get very few people. To me that is the hardest part.

The easiest part is that I get to do exactly what I want to do. I get to teach what I want to teach and plan my own time. Because it is such a small community it is relatively easy to please many people. Nobody is really telling me what to do, and that is both a blessing and a curse.

I try to help Franklin County as a whole in addition to the religious community. Two weeks ago I was involved in an event where youths erased some anti-Semitic and racist graffiti from under the railroad tracks. After that we had a big Holocaust memorial service. A month ago we were involved in feeding the homeless and the poor at a community meal in Greenfield.

I try to help the community on an everyday basis. On a typical day I go to the office, answer my phone calls, and prepare the Saturday morning service. I make sure to visit people in hospitals or in nursing homes, who are members of my community, and I also visit people in their homes to check and see if they have any specific needs that have to be met. You could call me a community social worker.

I would like people to know that we are open and friendly. We are willing to let people who are not members of our religious community come and learn whatever they want from us. This last month when we had the Holocaust memorial, members from the different churches of Greenfield came and it was very open and friendly. It felt very good to know that so many righteous people support the anti-hate idea. I was greatly encouraged by this, and by the fact that so many young people were there.

E f r i a m E i s e n

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e

Susan Durkee

Assistant Director at Four Rivers Charter School
Greenfield

Sitting in her green 1950's swivel chair, Susan Durkee anxiously wants to get things done. She has a stern expression and is very eager to help the interviewers with their project. Susan Durkee believes strongly in what she does, always going out of her way to accomplish small but important goals. Susan's understanding of quality helps her live life to its fullest.

"I want to create a support web for kids, so that if they reach and then fall, we will catch them. Pretty soon they will reach and we will not need to catch them because they are gone, flying!"

My values are what I do. It's not that my values affect what I do, rather what I am doing are my values. It's my passionate belief that communities are made stronger by the individuals in communities and there seems no more powerful place for me to work with that idea than with kids. Kids are the future and if they go into the future with a diminished sense of themselves and their capacity to act and to be awesome human beings, then the community will be diminished in its capacity to be great. Kids need to have a really clear sense of what quality means; quality in every sense of the word: quality of being, quality of presence, quality of work, quality of attitude; If people understand quality then the community will be of greater quality. To work with kids for that reason is really important to me. Convincing kids that there is a reason to strive for quality and to do that is important.

When I used to work at Umass I taught writing to freshmen and it was really stunning to me how many kids were coming to college really unprepared to work. They did not know what to do or how to do it. There would be exceptions, kids who did have that inclination or ability to work, but most of them just sat waiting for me to tell them what to do. They were always shocked when they found out that college is not about sitting that you have to do a lot of

it on your own.

There was one kid who came into my office in tears, crying because she had been asked to do only one paper in all four years of high school and here she was in college where she was taking a writing class that was asking much from her. She just did not know what to do because she had been bailed on by teachers who never asked her to do anything.

There was another kid who was incredibly smart, smart in the sense that he was very intuitive and he understood how things were connected, but he did not believe he was smart; he did not believe that he could succeed. He thought if he asked for help it would prove he could not make it on his own. He was black and he believed white kids did not ask for help, so if he did then he was being "less than." No matter how much I told him white kids asked for help all the time, he could not absorb that as truth and he did not believe that everyone who makes it gets help. He thought making it meant standing alone. I tried so hard to help him get connected at the University and to feel like he had a place, but he left. He dropped out. So these experiences with the kids at Umass were what convinced me to do this project, to teach high school.

One of my goals is to reach every kid or make sure that they are

being reached by someone; to try to figure out how to help them take a bigger bite of the pie, so to speak, to really dig in a little more to figure out how far they can reach or what's keeping them from reaching.

Officially my title is assistant director at Four Rivers but I want to create a support web for kids, so that if they reach and fall we will catch them. If they reach again and they fall we will catch them again, and pretty soon they will reach and we will not need to catch them because they are gone, flying!

"There seems no more powerful place for me to work with that idea than with kids. Kids are the future."



Susan Durkee

Ed Porter

Executive Director of the ARC
Greenfield

Ed Porter leans forward in his chair, eager to talk and tell his story. He is very kind and hard working. He has graying hair and is dressed comfortably. Ed seems very honest with himself and others.

“My job is full of challenge every day....I feel the pain when things don't go well and the joy when things do.... To me my work is a very personal thing.... I live it 24 hours a day.”

I was going to work at the ARC for a maximum of one year. That was 27 years ago. I started working there in 1976 and I have been there for 27 years, doing the same job the whole time, as the executive director. The ARC used to stand for the Association for Retarded Citizens. There was a lot of concern from folks about getting the word retarded out of our name. But the organization was known as the ARC so they kept the name although it doesn't mean retarded citizens any more. Anyway, the ARC doesn't only work with people with mental retardation. We work with people with other disabilities, especially with kids and families. Some common disabilities are dyslexia, autism, cerebral palsy, and a variety of other things. Our adult services are mostly for people with mental retardation, and for kids we have school services. For example, one woman we work with was born with Downs Syndrome. She can do a great many things on her own, but she will never be able to act and function without assistance, so we provide services for her.

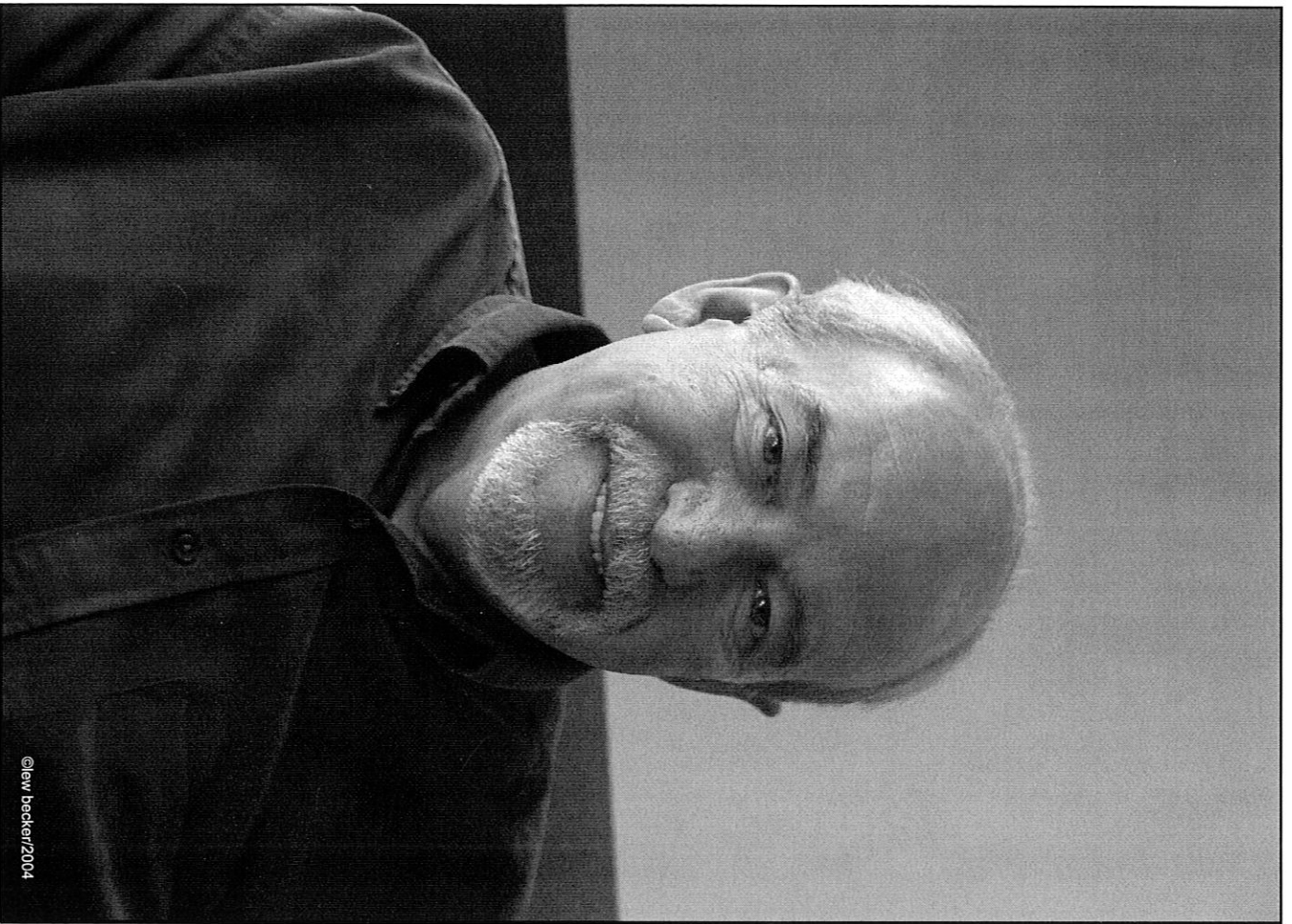
I always felt like the job chose me. I was a teacher for 4 years. I liked the kids but I didn't like all the other stuff, like supervision, study halls, lunch duty, and most of all, bathroom duty. The reason why I didn't like bathroom duty was because I would have to catch kids in the bathroom smoking, and it made me crazy. I also

used to coach football, wrestling, swimming, and track. When I was coaching football there was a kid named Dale who played tackle for me. He was the kind of kid that if you put him in the game you won but if you didn't you lost. One time he put his knee out and back in, 3 times in one game. When I walked away from that experience, it taught me what I would do to win, and that was really unacceptable to me. What I should have done was take him out of the game and iced his knee, but I chose to win. Because the job made me do things I didn't want to do, I stopped coaching.

I really felt like I wanted to contribute more. This was the early 1970's and there was a lot of change going on. It was the time of the Vietnam War and a lot of other things and it was a very socially active time. I felt compelled to participate and wanted to make a difference in people's lives. I went to graduate school and visited sites of human service programs in the area. The place that made the biggest impact on me was the Girls and Boys Club in Springfield. It was in an area that was filthy; there was garbage and graffiti everywhere. The streets looked like a war zone. But the Girls and Boys Club was a refuge. The man who ran it knew every kid who came in. He created an environment where kids felt safe and they respected him. They were involved, and didn't write on the walls, and got along with each other because

they owned it. There was a sense there that one person could make a difference. I knew I wanted to help the world as much as the boys and girls club was helping. That's when the job at the ARC came up.

I love my job because it gives me the ability to make a change in people's lives. You feel responsible for assisting other people. My job is full of challenge every day. I feel the pain when things don't go well and the joy when they do. To me my work is a very personal thing. I live it 24 hours a day. I don't make a lot of money, but to me, working at the ARC is very worth while.



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"I was going to work at the ARC for a maximum of one year. That was 27 years ago."

E d P o r t e r

A Little More Than Just People

Dorothea Sotiros

Community Gardener and Greenfields Market Bookkeeper
Greenfield

Dorothea is a pleasant person to be around. She thinks as much as she speaks. Her voice is clear and easy to hear. She wears gardening clothes to work. She cares about the natural world and other people.

“We have a community in the work place. I feel like we’re working together.”

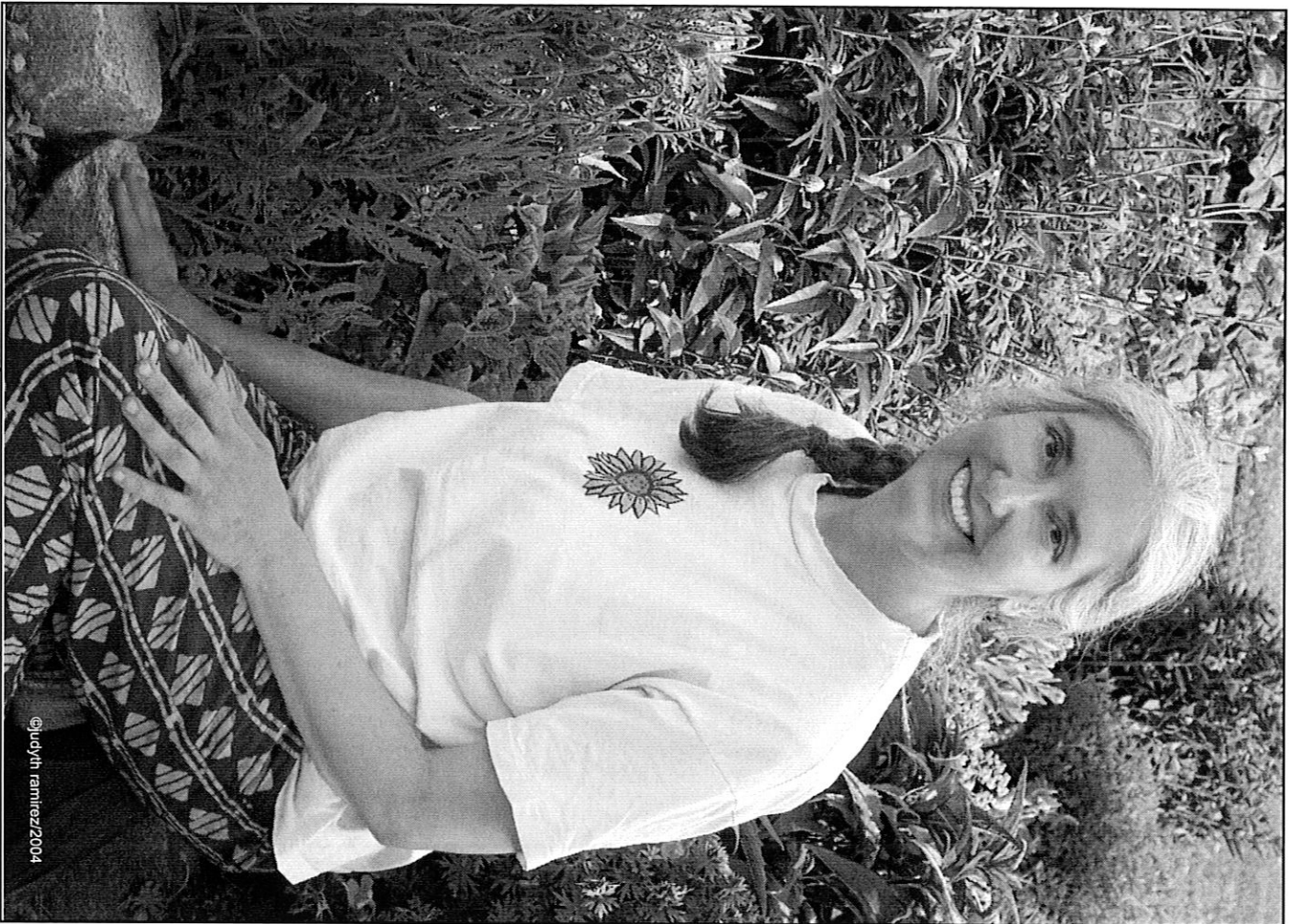
I grew up in the suburbs of San Diego in southern California. San Diego really got bigger during the time I was growing up. I really missed having a smaller community where I would know all the people. You feel more part of things when you’re in a smaller place. The town I grew up in got so big and so sprawling that it didn’t seem as nice of a place to live any more.

I help with the community garden on the corner of Pleasant Street and School Street because I love to work with the soil and watch things grow. It is really something that cultivates the community. The community garden is a place where people who garden get together and ask each other’s advice and grow their own food. If we have too much food we share with other people and take it to the food pantries.

One time I was in the garden and this woman walked by and said “Is that plant flax?” There was one plant with blue flowers. I don’t know what country she was from, but she said they made fabric, linen, from it. That was really cool.

I value how the Co-op benefits the community. It’s an alternative economic model, where people who purchase the products make the decisions about the store. I’m really grateful to have a job that helps support the cooperative model: when the business

makes a profit, it goes back to the business, it doesn’t go to a corporate headquarters in another state. I’m inspired by the idea that that the Co-op is an alternative to a corporation owning a business and taking money out of the community. The money stays in the community with a cooperative type business. The people who use it make the decisions about what to prioritize. Our members tour the store, and they would say what they want to change. We have a community in the work place, and I feel like we’re working together.



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“The community garden is a place where people who garden get together and ask each other’s advice and grow their own food. If we have too much food we share with other people and take it to the food pantries.”

Dorothea Sotiros

A Little More Than Just People

Joan Featherman

Psychologist and Activist
Greenfield

Joan is a very nice woman with a caring heart and has big eyes that draw in your gaze. She has shoulder length, curly blonde hair without a part. She speaks easily and freely but remains careful with her word choice. She uses a story-telling voice that makes you want to know what she is all about. On the phone Joan speaks in a polite formal voice, and in person she speaks more "laid back." The best part about Joan is that she not only cares about herself and the people close to her, but she also cares about the community as a whole.

"I really believe that it's never too late to go back to school and get another degree, or change professions, or do whatever you want to do because learning should be a lifelong process."

I am a psychotherapist. That means I meet with people that have a variety of different kinds of problems like, loss, trauma of some sort, or just because they are having a hard time keeping their life on track. They meet with me and we problem solve and figure out how to help them take charge of their life and feel better about things. I help point out to them what their strengths are and I help them clarify their choices. Watching people grow and change, and being a small part of that is the most rewarding thing because I see amazing transformations take place in people's lives. I often compare it to watching a bud open up into its flower.

It's very inspiring work. My clients inspire me more than anybody because they prove that it is never too late to grow and change your life for the better.

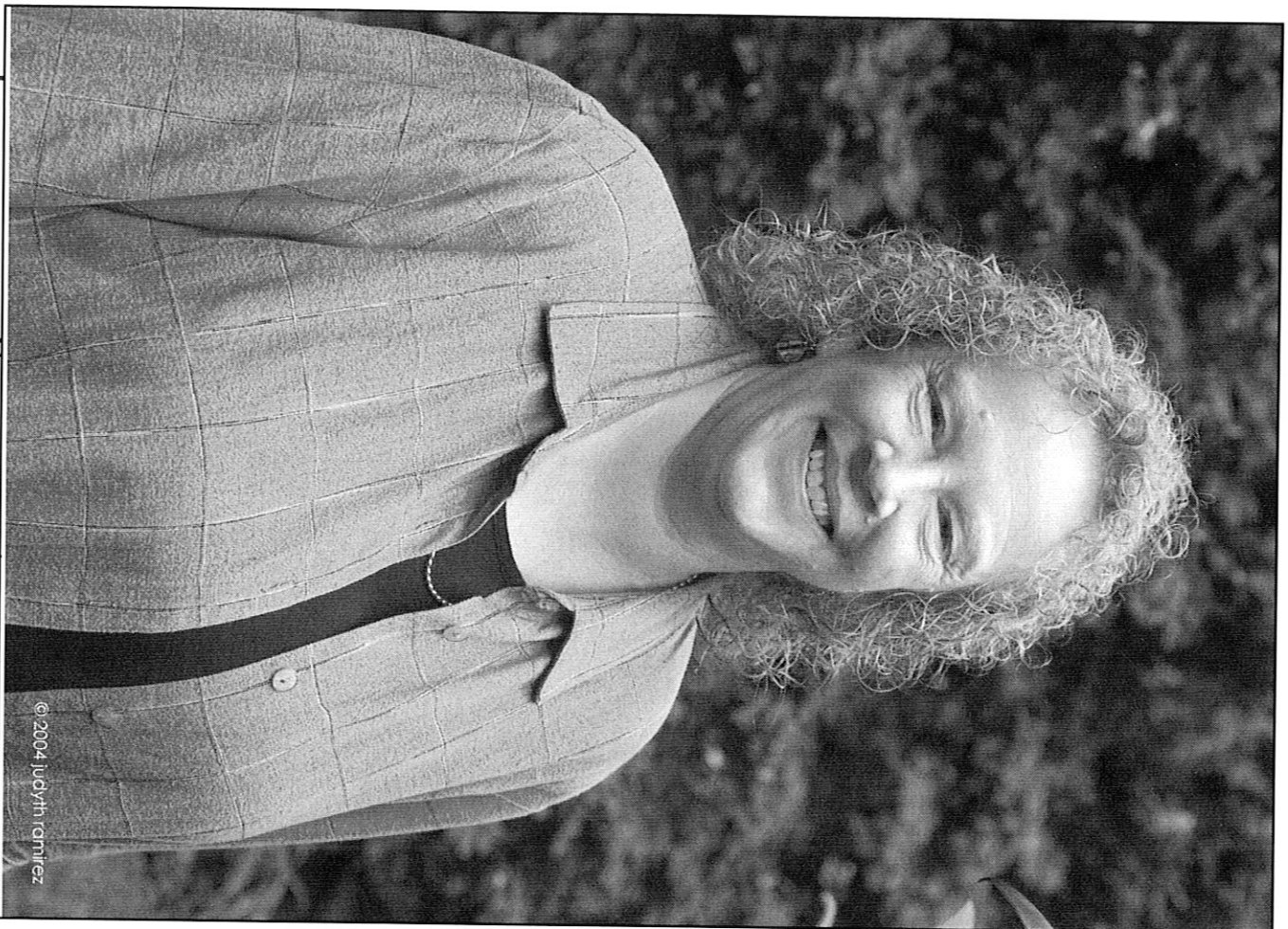
However, the hardest part of my job is hearing story after story of pain and despair and how people are mistreated. Sometimes it gets hard to hear all that and hold it for the person and not have it affect me personally. One way I deal with the pain is singing with Amandla, a community chorus that sings songs of freedom and justice. This I also consider activism, because I do it for me but I also do it to make the world a better place. When we take our songs into schools and hospitals and prisons, especially prisons, we give

people hope.

I'm not only a psychologist. I'm also an activist, and I've been an activist on behalf of various causes for many years. For me that goes hand in hand with being a psychologist. An activist works to make the world a fairer place.

When I was in high school there were two influences that made me be an activist. The first thing was the Civil Rights Movement. Although it was not going on in my town, it was in the news and I saw it on television. I saw the brutality that was being directed against people in the south who were demonstrating for equal rights, and I read in the newspaper about people being killed for standing up for human rights and civil rights. That had a profound influence on me. The other influence was the assassination of President Kennedy. He represented a great idealism and commitment to making the world a better place. The fact that he was assassinated was a huge personal tragedy for almost everyone I know who was old enough to feel like a part of the political process at that point.

Later on in my young adulthood the Women's Movement was a very important influence on me too. Because of this experience I've really devoted my life to combating violence against women and children, domestic violence and or sexual assault. That very much came



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from my witnessing the devastation that violence can wreak on a life. Seeing that there was a lot of suffering that went on in people's lives is really what motivated me to become more skilled, to be able to help in a situation like that.

I was the founder of NELCWIT (New England Learning Center for Women In Transition) in the mid-seventies. I joined together with a group of women and we put our time and effort into naming the problem of domestic violence. I mean quite literally naming; there was no vocabulary to describe it. People's reactions when we would say "Wait, women are being beaten up in their homes, this is not ok" sometimes would be, "Don't be ridiculous, that doesn't happen here" or, "It's not your business what I do in my home". So we organized, and in fact while we were organizing here in Greenfield, people were organizing statewide and all over the country. We were really part of a whole movement. That work has continued for me till this day. I will always be involved. In fact, now I am helping the mayor of Greenfield facilitate the domestic violence task force. We had our first meeting recently and it was very exiting. It felt to me like the culmination of all of my work.

I've been in the field of human services and mental health for over thirty years now. When I was working in human services, I had a master's degree. Then in my mid thirties I went to school to get a doctorate degree because I wanted to be able to work independently and develop a specialty. Working on a doctorate, in addition to course work, you do various internships and original research. As a working mother who was also going to school, it took me eight years to complete this degree.

But I really believe that it's never too late to go back to school and get another degree, or change professions, or do whatever you want to do because learning should be a lifelong process.

J o a n F e a t h e r m a n

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e

Chris Rowell

Public School Resource Officer
Greenfield

Officer Rowell sits in a comfortable position but manages to look very formal all the same. He wears normal civilian clothes, but he oddly resembles a police officer: his hair is cut short, he looks muscular, and his manner is polite, straightforward, and serious. He seems calm and focused.

"I don't feel like a community cultivator, I feel like I'm more of an enhancer."

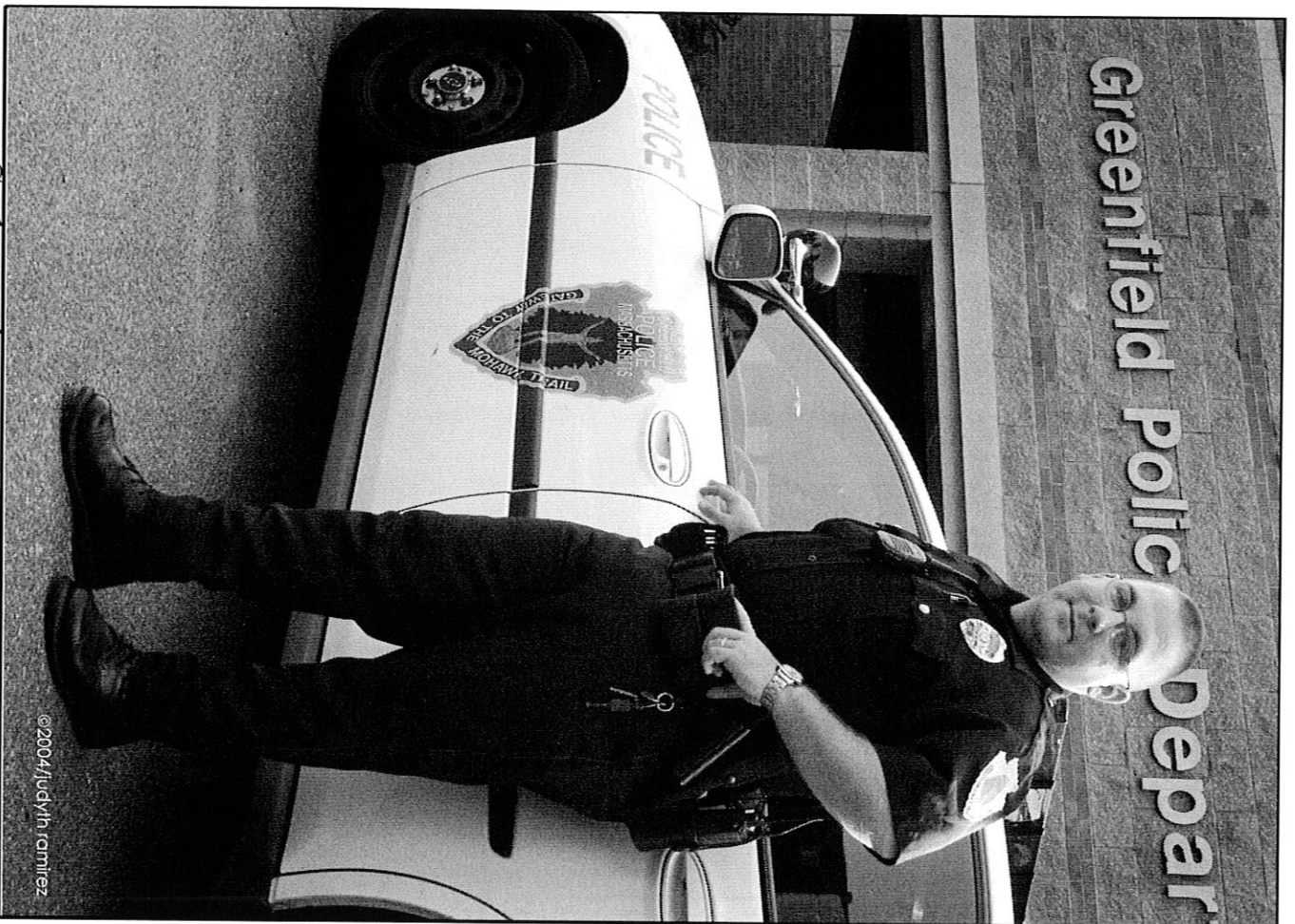
I had the police influence in my life as long as I can remember. When I was growing up, my uncle was a police officer, and he just recently retired about five years ago. Some people don't like cops. When you're a police officer, you have certain things that you have to do and certain ways that you have to act, even if it's not the way you were brought up to be. I wasn't brought up to yell and scream at people, but there are times on my job or out in the community when I have to. You tend to become somewhat of a robot at that point.

When I was in college, I was almost mugged my first night there. I wasn't going to college as a police officer, I was going for something else. I didn't deserve to have someone try to take something of mine that I worked for, which was money. They didn't do anything to earn it except to try to take it from me. I don't think anybody should feel like that.

I work as the school resource officer in the Greenfield public school system. To be a police officer you have to be in somewhat good shape. You have to be able to look at something and know what you saw. Most of the job is a common sense type of thing. The values that I have pretty much led me to do what I do. When I first came to the job, I wanted to help everybody and do everything

I could. I didn't want people to be unhappy with the way I performed my job. As you go on, sometimes there are people who you just can't help. It took me two or three unattended deaths, deaths which nobody has been around for, to realize that you can't do everything for everybody.

My community goals are more realistic. If I can help one kid who is on drugs to get off drugs, I've done my job. If there's one kid who is thinking about doing drugs, and I stop them from doing drugs, then I've done my job. If I can help one person in the community, then I've done my job. When I first started, I wanted all drugs gone, but that's not a realistic goal. It will never happen. The amount of respect that I have for people tends to diminish depending on the respect they give to me. I try to treat everybody on the same level, and if somebody brings me down a notch, then I bring them down a notch. So I really don't feel like I'm a community cultivator, I feel like I'm an enhancer. I enhance the safety of the kids at the school, but I'm not the reason for their safety: I'm not the one that makes kids safe, I'm the one that keeps them safe.



"I didn't deserve to have someone try to take something of mine that I worked for, which was money. They didn't do anything to earn it except to try to take it from me. I don't think anybody should feel like that."

C h r i s R o w e l l

A Little More Than Just People

Jolene Glabach

Nursing Supervisor
Greenfield

Jolene has a great heart that she shares with every one. She's brave, smart, and well spoken. Her job is not just her job; it's her life. She is helpful and is quick to oblige. Jolene is outgoing, knows what she wants out of life, and talks openly about it.

"I have to say that I love being a nurse; just knowing that I help people feel better every day"

It really takes a 110% to be a nurse. In 30 years of nursing I have learned in my experiences that every day is different and every challenge is different. Every day brings a new challenge.

There's a lot you need to learn. You have to learn how the body functions when it's healthy and when it's sick, and what methods you have to use to improve one's health. It's a lot of trial and error. All nurses have to follow doctors' orders and do exactly how they say to do it. You need to know if what they are saying is correct or not; for example, if they are giving you or your patients too much medication. Also you need to know all the side-effects of every drug you give your patients. Assessments are the biggest part of nursing. Just by looking at someone you can usually tell if they aren't themselves.

And that's exactly what nursing is. A lot of people think it's just pushing medication, but it's not. As a nurse I have to assess them from head toe to find out what's not right. It's a process of elimination. Then you have to call and update their doctor for further instructions. What's hard about my job is not having enough time to complete the things I want to. Nor the time I want to spend with my patients.

The biggest accomplishment in my life was becoming a nurse, just like I said I would. I wanted to become a nurse ever since I was 13 years, old standing on a couch behind my maternal grandmother, combing her hair. She was blind and a diabetic. That day I said

"Someday I'm going to be a nurse so I can take care of people just like you." that was my biggest goal.

With nursing I appreciate and dislike it all at the same time. I appreciate the fact that I give good care to my patients, and teamwork. What I dislike most is when I have to discipline a staff member.

The values of teaching honesty and respect are probably the most important in my work. Part of my job as a community cultivator is working with patients and making them feel better. You have to prove your respect by respecting the person you're working with. A community cultivator is someone who provides or helps the community in more than one way. When you are a community cultivator as I am, people will look up to you and want to be like you. They will also trust you. They can follow your examples.

I have to say that I love being a nurse and just knowing that I help people everyday and make them feel better. I also take my work and my experiences home with me along with everywhere I go. It's been an awesome experience for me to learn so much about people.



“Just by looking at somebody you can usually tell if they aren't themselves, and that's exactly what nursing is. A lot of people think it's just pushing keyboards, but it's not.”

J o l e n e G l a b a c h

A L i t t l e M o r e T h a n J u s t P e o p l e

Sister Claire

Buddhist Nun
Levertt Peace Pagoda

Sister Claire is a very calm, shy, quiet lady. She speaks very softly so one must listen really hard to hear her. Sister Claire's voice is calming. She expresses her thoughts clearly and completely. She is fairly young, but does not let her hair grow long. Her life stories show that she likes people.

"Kids' humanity really has no limits, your humanity has no limits, and it's a beautiful thing."

When I was 27, I was at a 3 day, 3 night vigil in Boston. People stayed awake for as long as they could from Hiroshima day to Nagasaki day, in a big public space in Boston. It was my first time to see what Hiroshima and Nagasaki really meant. It blew my mind. Something happened to me at that time and it was so compelling. I didn't want to leave this vigil.

At the very end, a monk came along. I had studied Buddhism when I was in college. Buddhism had drawn me, but I couldn't really comprehend what Buddhism was. This monk appeared, beating a drum in a beautiful kind of loudness. He just walked over the horizon and joined. I'd never seen any monk before, but I knew it was a Buddhist monk. I didn't really understand, but said: "Yes, this is something really important." I felt like; "This is it, Claire." Then I saw him at another peace gathering a week later and invited him to my friend's house for supper and he said; "Ok, if you're interested, come to the Morning Prayer."

I first met the order in 1977 and ordained in 1981. It changed my life profoundly from within. Suddenly the world started to come together for me, and my internal world came together. I can't explain it all but somehow everything opened up for me inside, and I didn't feel disconnected from other people, disjointed and alienated.

I felt very connected with other people and with life. It was immense and it felt like; "Wow, this is a great way to work for peace." So here I am today.

I have been so grateful because I was not a traveler but through connection with this order, I've been to almost every continent except for Australia and New Zealand. I've traveled to Asia, Sri Lanka, India, and Japan. I have been on peace walks through Europe including one from Auschwitz to Vienna. I've also walked through Western Europe, England, Ireland, the Mexico-Texas border, and all over the United States, particularly in the North East. I've attended peace rallies in Germany, France, and Italy.

I have had to experience different ways of living in parts of the world where material power is not so big, food is scarce, and water is poor, leading to dysentery. I've lived for a number of months in places like that, in Central America and Southeast Asia, as well as Southeast Africa. It has been a real challenge for me, to let go of some things, in order to develop humanity and widen understanding. So I feel it is my focus to practice in this country.

There was one town in Alabama that we had planned to stay at, and the church that had originally agreed, backed down. One of the friends of the peace walk ran ahead and found an abandoned house to

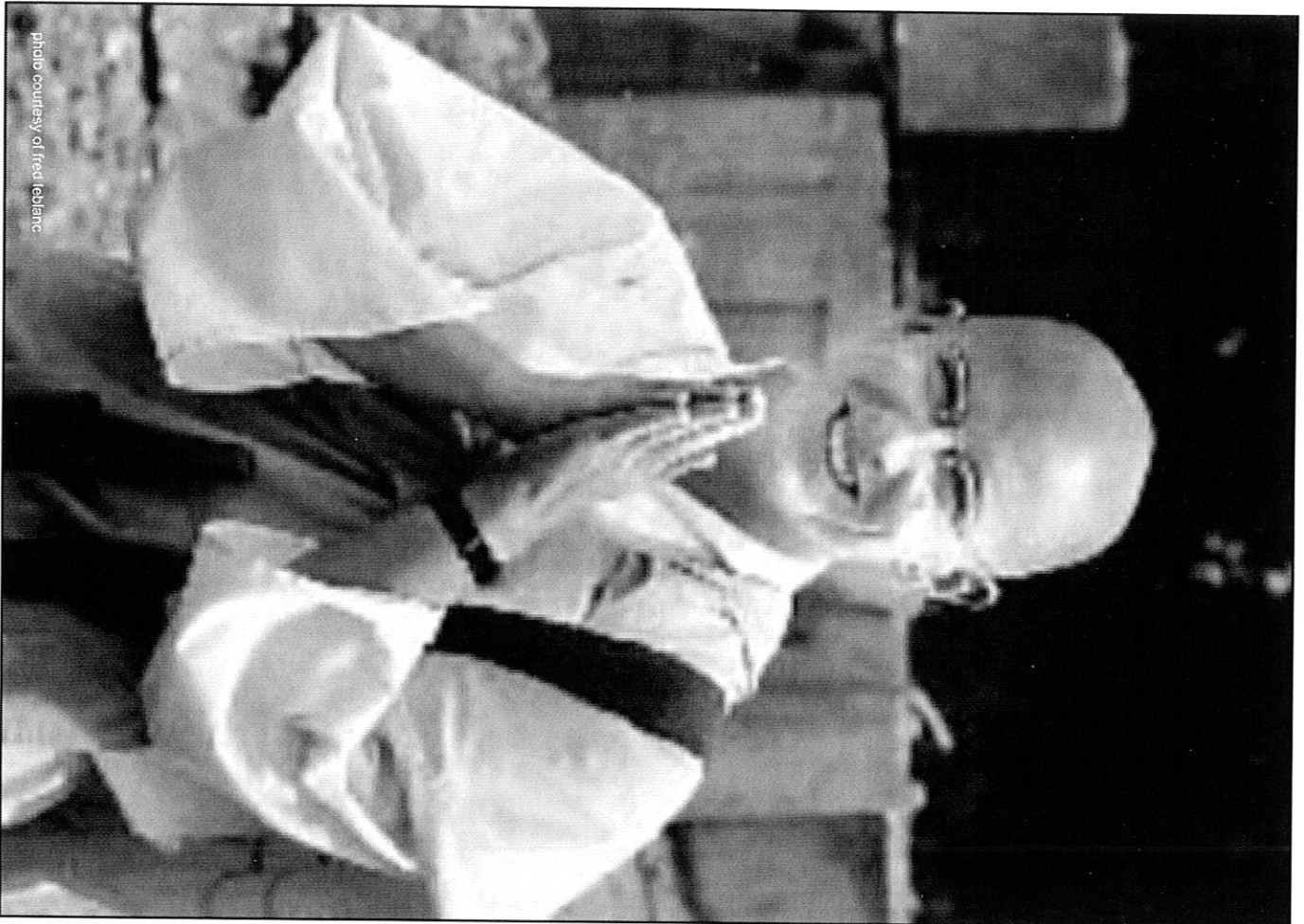


photo courtesy of Fred Leblanc

stay at over night, but we quickly got a message that the sheriff wanted us out of town in the morning. After we had left, we discovered that the field across the street from the house we stayed in was a rest stop for a black rights march, led by Martin Luther King.

I encourage everyone to keep in touch with their spiritual side, especially under the current pressures on everyone, our youth in particular. Kids' humanity really has no limits, your humanity has no limits, and it's a beautiful thing.

"Buddhism had drawn me, but I couldn't really comprehend what Buddhism was."

Sister Claire

A Little More Than Just People

E p i l o g u e

Throughout the year our teacher has been trying to show us the importance of community, but textbooks alone couldn't do the trick. Chapter after chapter we sought to grasp the definition of community. So out we went, straight into the flow of our society.

When first hearing about this project many students in our class wondered why we should bother talking to these people. We asked, "Will the public care about these people? Will they even bother talking to us?" Well, it turns out that these people do care and were more than willing to help us.

With the issues of today's world it is very easy to forget that there are people in our community with our best interests at heart. After learning about these cultivators we realize how much they affect the atmosphere of our homes, enhancing the spirit of Franklin County. This area would not be the safe, enjoyable place it has become without these unique individuals.

If Franklin County was a giant puzzle, these cultivators would be the corner pieces, the pieces that hold the puzzle together. One person could not hold it together alone, but when unified we can continue to create a stable and growing environment. The effects they have had on us will remain embedded in our thoughts for our lifetime. It takes truly amazing, devoted people to have impacted our lives the way these people have.

After meeting the Community Cultivators we realized that these were normal people, not the super-humans some of us had imagined. They were your everyday, regular individuals doing a job that, in some cases, we wouldn't do. Some do it because it's part of their profession. Some do it simply because they love it, and some had a formative experience that led them to their work. In any case, because of their examples, we now understand the true meaning of community and the people who help us maintain it.

Transcript to Monologue: A Process

The readings in this book come out of an intense process of learning about helpful people. We were trying to learn about their lives and capture their distinctive voices in writing. *Voice* is the personality in the writing, or what is unique about the way a person expresses him or herself in words.

Over the period of three weeks we conducted interviews with our Community Cultivators. After recording the interview on audio tape, we had to make a *transcript*, which is a written or typed record of what was said during the interview. Typing the transcript takes a while, and occasionally a 20 page transcript was condensed into a 1 and 1/2 page monologue.

For this book we had to piece together the important parts of the interview transcript, which for our purposes included the person's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences. We still wanted to capture the person's voice in writing, yet we also had to make sure that what they said would be clear to the reader. Using the interviewee's own words, we then wrote the monologues which are in this book.

If you are going to write a monologue, make sure to have a clear sense of what you are looking for. A *monologue* is a narrative told from one person's perspective, in our case, the interviewee. It is written as if the person was speaking those exact words in that particular order and then put them directly in writing. The process of writing a monologue is even more difficult than you might think. You have to try to make sense out of it first, and then organize it so that it flows like a story.

What follows is an example of how we would edit a transcript to show how life experiences shape a person:

From the transcript of Mark Dore, Vocational Counselor for Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

Student: How do your values affect what you do?

Mark: I think as I told you on the phone I was born deaf and because of that I decided that I wanted to work with folks who were deaf and hard of hearing because of my own experience growing up and also because of my expertise and my interests that really is compatible with me. I feel that I can help deaf and hard of hearing people be successful in the world because of my experience. There are not many professionals out there who can work successfully and efficiently with deaf and hard of hearing people. I have the experience of being deaf and I feel that is compatible with my work and serving deaf and hard of hearing people.

* * * * *

The piece as the monologue:

Because I was born deaf and because of my own experience growing up, I decided that I wanted to work with folks who were deaf and hard of hearing. My experience is compatible with my work, and not many professionals out there can successfully and efficiently serve the deaf and hard of hearing.

The Interviewers

Adam and Sara - Juanita Nelson
Max and Eli - Richie Davis
Lena and Ed - Peggy Gillespie
Caitlin and Autumn - Bill Perlman
Kyle and Morgan - Lucinda Brown
Rachel and Lindsay - Al Norman
Evan and Kyle - Christine Forgey
Eli and George - Efriam Eisen
Kendra and Amanda - Susan Durkee
Rachel and Hannah - Ed Porter
Alex and Sean - Dorothea Sotiros
Sarah and Dominic - Joan Featherman
J.R. and Devin - Chris Rowell
Andrew and Ashlei - Jolene Glabach
Francis and K.C. - Sister Clare

A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

Many people have been a tremendous help in this project. They took time out of their lives to help us and enriched our lives as a result. We would like to thank the following people:

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There are other people whose assistance has been invaluable to our process. We wouldn't have been able to make this happen were it not for them as well.

Judy Ramirez, who travelled around Franklin County on her own time to take pictures of all the Community Cultivators. Currently a student at Hallmark Institute of Photography, Judy showed us how to work all the equipment and took our class picture.

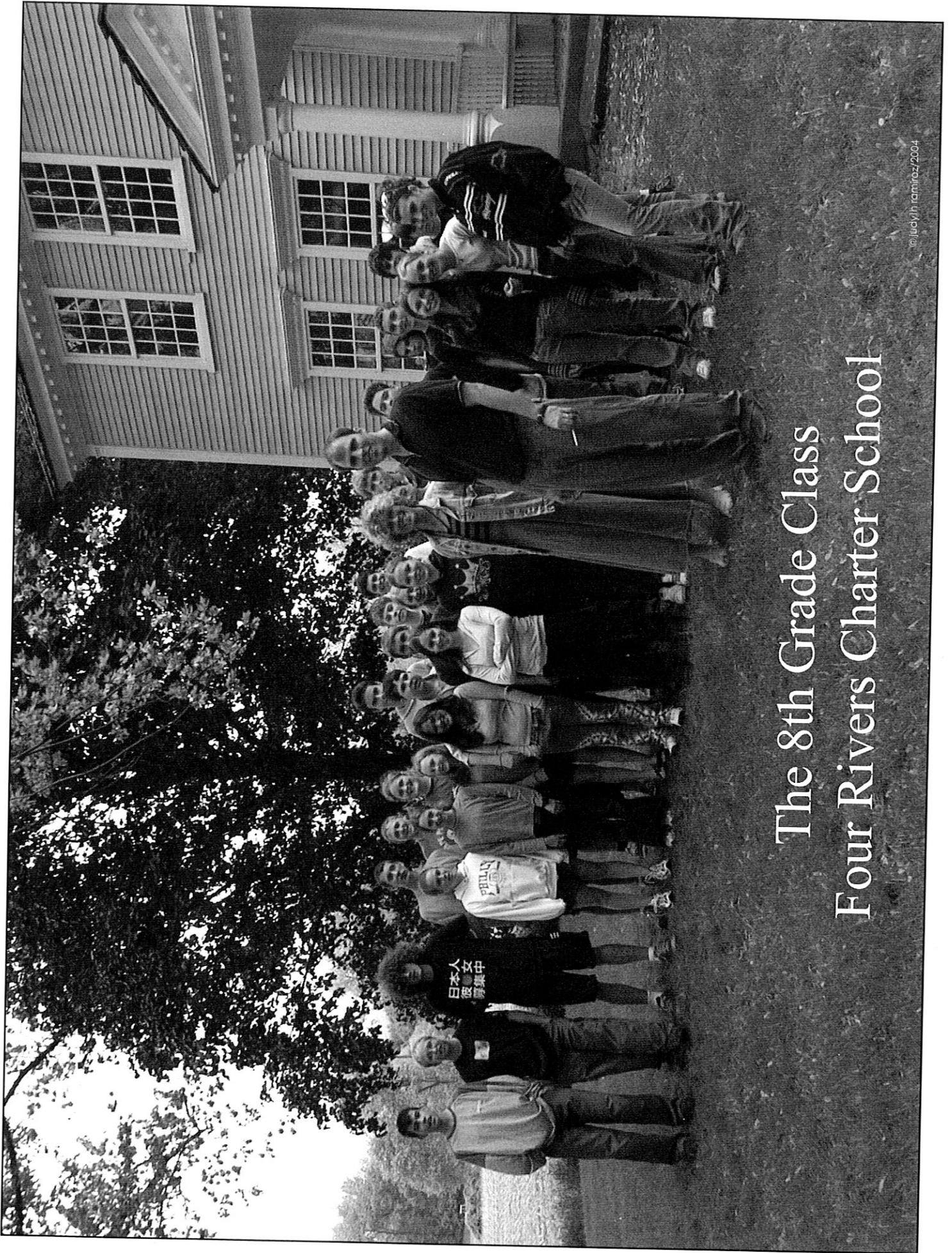
Peggy Gillespie, for showing how to set up, give, and produce a well-developed interview which was crucial for this publication. This also was out of her own time.

Ben Murray and Steve Howland, for teaching us how to use Adobe InDesign to do layout and design. Without this, we wouldn't have been able to have a high quality book.

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Claudia Phillips, for coming to the GCC TV Studio away from her busy schedule to help us out with our "kick-off". She works with Healthcare for the Homeless.

Finally, we would like to thank the **King Middle School** and **Shutesbury Elementary** students, whose work has served as our models.



The 8th Grade Class Four Rivers Charter School