



## ***Natural Connections at Mercy Center***

*December 2006*

Examining our practice isn't always easy. Being faithful to a practice of what we believe is helping us to grow, develop or perhaps maintain a little bit of sanity - all take time, patience, persistence and courage. This goes for yoga, meditation, prayer, dieting, knitting, running, painting or writing. We practice to create a greater connection to ourselves; reminding us who we are and strive to be.

Organizations, like individuals, must also examine their practice from time to time. At Mercy Center, we are continually examining and evaluating programs and generally the services we strive to provide as a place of hospitality. A new aspect we are adding to our examination is how we take care of This Place. How we nurture the ground, the trees and protect the wildlife. How we seek to conserve and protect natural resources. How we seek to learn more about organic land care, sustainable purchasing practices, and voluntary simplicity.

The picture above is not a pretty one. It is a reminder of how we were not always aware of how our actions impacted the world around us - in this case polluting the wetland on our property. It is a peat bog wetland, one that receives water from its surroundings. The wetland purifies our water and when we pollute it, whether it is an old mattress spring, a rusted appliance or leaves and grassclippings, we inhibit its natural ability to be. We prevent it from cleansing the water before it heads into Long Island Sound.

As Mercy Center begins to examine its own environmental practices - of how we run our operations, how we 'do business' and how we want to model more sustainable behavior - the wetland is a reminder of how we have learned from

### **Upcoming Events & Activities at Mercy Center**

- **A Meal of Simplicity**
- **Addressing Violence In, Among & Around Us: Moving to Compassion**
- **Water Conservation**
- **Transformation in Paper**
- **Energy Conservation**
- **Herbs for Winter Health**

Organizations like people can learn and can change. Be patient with us as we, as an organizational system, seek to be authentic and true with our values; examining our practices and seeking to protect the Earth, conserve and preserve natural resources and maintain This Place for others.

Stepping softly,

*Sherill*

Sherill Baldwin, Ecology Director at Mercy Center

## ***A Meal of Simplicity***

### **Eating More with Less**

At Mercy Center the meals are simple.

This isn't to say they are uncomplicated, or that they do not taste good. Quite the opposite. Our chefs work with a range of foods to create a diverse array of tastes. Our kitchen uses whole foods; foods that are not processed and thus are tastier and healthier for us. They use fresh ingredients that provides a rich offering at every meal.

So how is it simple? The idea of voluntary simplicity is to live a less cluttered, stressful life that many of us live now. It is about finding abundance and joy without needing it to come from purchasing more stuff. It's taking time to enjoy life more, spend time enjoying the company of those you love and taking the time to cook and eat well!

At Mercy Center, you don't need to do the cooking. But the chefs are taking time to simmer vegetables, gather herbs from the garden and create simple treasures for our pleasure.

We also eat 'family-style'; creating a community meal for those seeking to share as well as private spaces for those seeking to reflect on their meal alone. We also have simple dining facilities; providing you the opportunity to share in the clearing of your table and being part of the Mercy community by bringing your dishes to the kitchen.

If you haven't enjoyed the food at Mercy Center, you are missing a wonderful experience. Come join us soon for a diet of simplicity!

[Click here to find out more about voluntary simplicity.](#)

## ***Water Conservation***

## ***Addressing Violence In, Among & Around Us: Moving to Compassion*** With Michael Crosby, OFM CAP

Mercy Center  
167 Neck Road  
Madison, CT  
Friday, January 19, 7:30pm to  
Sunday, January 21, 1pm  
\$275

It has been said that violence is the ocean in which we swim. When we realize that the heart of all violence and abuse is the need to control, we discover that violence is not just "out there" but in and among us as well.

This very practical workshop will help us see that power is at the heart of all violence as well as nonviolence, control as well as care, indifference as well as compassion. In the process, we will discuss how God and religion fit into the schema, our understanding of original sin and how we can cultivate communities of compassion.

[Register for this program now](#)

## ***Transformation in Paper***

## New Toilets at Mercy Center!



Mercy Center's main building, as many of you know, has been around for a long time. This includes some of our furniture, the heating system, the windows and our toilets!

In an effort to conserve water we are beginning to reduce our water use and replace some leaky toilets.

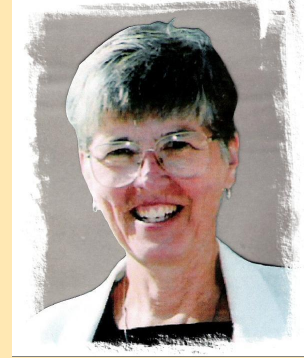
To date we have purchased and replaced 23 old toilets, which used 5-9 gallons of water per flush, with toilets which use 1.6 gallons per flush. We are already seeing a dramatic change in our water use. These new water efficient toilets are designed with a comfortable height and also meet the American Disabilities Act requirements.

In a home, it has been estimated that with a 1.6- gallon flush setting an estimated 2,000 gallons of water are saved per year per fixture. This would mean an estimated 40,000 gallons of water saved per toilet. However, with over 12,000 visitors a year, changing 20 toilets should save even more water.

But we're not stopping yet - we hope to buy 20 MORE toilets at the beginning of the year!

## With Mary Daly, RSM and Sherill Baldwin

Mercy Center  
167 Neck Road  
Madison, CT  
Thursday, January 25  
9:30am - 3pm  
\$45



The ancient process of making paper can become an expression of our inner life. Papers of various designs and colors will be created with reflection on what this process evokes in us, what the papers may wish to say to us. The day begins with stillness and continues in a reflective environment.

**Register for this program now**

## Energy Conservation

Moving towards greater efficiency!



If you visited us during this past month you may have seen one of two workers from Efficient Lighting Maintenance (ELM) busily retrofitting our energy guzzling fixtures. ELM, through Connecticut Light & Power's (CL&P) Small Business Energy Program, spent many weeks at Mercy Center upgrading our fluorescent bulbs, installing LED exit signs, changing to leaner and more efficient light fixtures in our conference rooms, offices and residence quarters and installing an energy efficient fan for our walk-in freezer.

This project will help reduce our energy costs, improve the quality of light in our rooms and hallways, and decrease our maintenance costs. Mercy Center's investment in energy efficiency will cost an estimated \$45,000. With financial assistance from CL&P, our cost is lowered to about \$27,000 and we should expect to see an Annual Savings of over \$22,000.

ELM has projected we will see an Annual Energy Savings of 145,233 kWh per year. In addition to saving energy, we will also reduce the production of carbon dioxide. Using a calculation on [www.earthorganization.org](http://www.earthorganization.org)'s website, we can convert our estimated 145,233 kWh saved per year into how much carbon dioxide we are NOT producing!

It is estimated that each kWh generated produces 1.5 pounds of carbon dioxide. This means by reducing our energy use we're also preventing the production of an estimated 217,850 pounds of carbon dioxide annually!

### Job Opening - Program Administrative Associate

A full-time position, accountable to the Program Director.

The Program Administrative Associate is responsible for developing and maintaining customer relations with people inquiring about and registering for Mercy Center's programs and with presenters and retreat directors who provide the programs. Keeping accurate and up to date records of information, timely follow-up and clear communication are critical to ensuring participant and presenter satisfaction. Qualities, Skills and Experience

- Commitment to hospitality and teamwork

## Herbs for Winter Health

With Cynthia Kazmirsky

Mercy Center  
167 Neck Road  
Madison, CT  
Saturday, January 27  
9am - 12noon  
\$25



Learn to strengthen your immune system with herbal remedies and winter health foods. We will explore herbs, foods, and tonics to help keep the immune system strong and healthy during the dark and cold days of winter. Program will include tasting foods and herbal remedies.

*Join us for lunch for an additional \$10; please make a reservation with Guest Services.*

**Register for this program now**

### VOLUNTEER NEEDS

#### RECYCLING & REUSE

Looking for help to sort through materials to ensure items are reused or recycled - saving items from the landfill or incinerator and money for Mercy Center

#### RESEARCH

Looking for someone to help research projects. For example ecologically sound icemelt that is also cost effective, alternative cleaning products to try at an institutional level.

#### MARKETING & PROMOTION

Looking for someone to help create flyers and help promote

- Ability to interact with a wide variety of people
- Ability to communicate clearly and respectfully
- Excellent computer skills
- Ability to organize work to accomplish diverse tasks
- Ability to work both collaboratively and independently

ecology projects and programs.

**If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Sherill at 203.245.0401 or [sherill@mercybythesea.org](mailto:sherill@mercybythesea.org)**

**To apply or for more information, please contact Jim Emswiler**

Mercy Center at Madison  
167 Neck Rd.  
PO Box 191  
Madison, Connecticut 06443  
Phone: 203.245.0401

Email: [info@mercybythesea.org](mailto:info@mercybythesea.org)

Web:

<http://www.mercybythesea.org>

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