



## Tubers and Poets: Cultivating Community

Whether someone comes to Harmony Hill seeking refuge from the storm of cancer or seeking inspiration for future directions, one can always be assured that a bouquet of lovely flowers will grace the spaces in which they find whatever it is they are looking for. Essential to the creation of this colorful beauty is the community of volunteers who lovingly donate their time to keep our gardens growing, and thus our bouquets flowering, in the hearts of all Harmony Hill visitors.

A primary highlight in summer bouquets is the beloved dahlia. Last fall, with the help of volunteer Sarah Hazen and the Mission Creek Correctional Center for Women Community Service Crew, we took on the project of digging up all of the dahlia tubers in the gardens to propagate an even greater abundance of beauty on the Hill. By digging up and dividing these massive and ancient tuber clumps, we multiplied the amount of dahlias we would be able to plant and harvest in 2008.

During the countless hours that we spent dividing and storing these tubers, it became evident that dahlias were not the only thing we were cultivating. The rich smell of earth permeated the work room and created a shared experience, bridging our differences of race, religion, history, and identity. As we worked carefully to divide the massive clumps of the dahlia tubers, we found ourselves sharing stories of who we were, where we came from, where we were going, and what our dreams and hopes for the future were.

One of the women from Mission Creek commented that where she came from, there was no dirt, only a concrete jungle. This was her first time ever putting her hands in the earth, and the worms that crawled out of these ancient dahlia clumps proved to be not as romantic as the first half of this sentence suggests. It turns out that this young woman was an exceptional poet. During our breaks, she started to share some of her poetry with us. It was her first time reading her poetry aloud to anyone. Her voice was shaky at first, but grew more confident with each successive reading. Her poetry spoke of an almost palpable grief, a feeling that is not uncommon amongst many of Harmony Hill's cancer retreat participants.

So there we were, listening, sharing, learning, and validating a tapestry of diverse stories within our group. We were weaving the web of community through the transformative power of poetry and the hopeful nature of tuber propagation. We were cultivating plants and people of the Harmony Hill community, all in the name of service.

— By Rose Swan, Volunteer Coordinator & Gardener

## Your Story is Part of Harmony Hill's Story

In September, Harmony Hill will hold its 100th 3-day Cancer Retreat. We think this milestone is special and want our alumni to help celebrate with us! We could never have done this without the support of you, and our friends and donors. We invite you to contribute your story on how Harmony Hill transformed your experience of living with cancer.

A selection of stories will be compiled and shared in a commemorative booklet. Some stories may also be used on our website as testimonials or as part of our upcoming Harmony Hill Cookbook.

Please send your Harmony Hill moment, picture or story to [cathy@harmonyhill.org](mailto:cathy@harmonyhill.org) or mail it to Harmony Hill Retreat Center, 7362 East SR 106, Union, WA 98592. **All submissions need to be received by June 30, 2008.**

*All submissions are property of Harmony Hill Retreat Center and may be edited for length and clarity.*

## Raised Voices

On Sunday, April 27, 2008, the hills were alive with the sound of music as Harmony Hill collaborated with Anna's Bay Center for Music for its first of a series of participatory community music events. Raised Voices is a series of sing-along movie musical nights, periodic community recitals, and quarterly 'group sing' events featuring patriotic, campfire, folk, hymn, chorale and holiday repertoire. The first of the series was a sing-along to the classic movie *The Sound of Music*.

"We're happy to be building on what has already been such a mutually supportive collaboration with Harmony Hill," said Anna's Bay General Director Matthew Melendez Blegen. "The kick-off had such great attendance—we even had different groups singing harmony during some of the numbers."

All events are free and open to the community. This collaboration is part of

**Raised Voices** | Continued, page 2



## Harmony Hill's Sustainable Future

Recently, you've been hearing a lot about our Major Gift Campaign, with the goal of creating a sustainable future for Harmony Hill. We are excited to be in the final countdown toward reaching our goal! We're confident we will succeed, but are counting on your help and support to make it happen.

When we reach our goal of raising \$1.5 million by the end of this year, we will receive a \$500K matching grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has already provided a generous gift of \$250K in support of the campaign and will complete their gift when we reach the goal. We are nearly half way to reaching our goal.

Even though this is called a Major Gift Campaign, support and gifts of any and all amounts will ensure we succeed. Every gift helps, whether you consider it a "major" gift or not!

One-time gifts, pledges, and bequests all play an important role, whether the amount is \$25 or \$25,000 or more. Many people have purchased a \$100 brick or \$500 paver to support the campaign. This is a wonderful way to honor a loved one or special date or event. Some people have included Harmony Hill in their will with a bequest to the campaign. Others are making an ongoing pledge of financial support, allowing them to make a contribution that is significant to them while making it in smaller, regular payments that are easier to manage.

**However you choose to participate, know that your giving will be an investment that will help Harmony Hill continue to improve the quality of life for those affected by cancer for many years to come.**

At the completion of the campaign, we'll have enhanced facilities to better serve all our guests, a fund to support the cancer programs, and a reliable stream of income via facility rentals to sustain Harmony Hill far into the future.

Stay tuned for the latest news about our progress and success and plan to join us for a celebration when we reach our goal!

## From the Director



After a long winter, trees are in bloom and activity is all over the Hill as volunteers return to the gardens and our buildings fill with retreat and rental guests. I've been blessed to be able

to experience the renewal that happens on the Hill, both in the beauty of the grounds and in the uplifting spirit felt by people that come here seeking healing.

Margaret J. Wheatley, author of *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, has some valuable reflections on life. "There is a simpler, finer way to organize human endeavor." As one of the leaders of Harmony Hill, I am so often reminded of the good work that is done here.

Meg goes on to say, "This simpler way is demonstrated to us in daily life...[in] what we feel when we experience a sense of life's deep harmony, beauty, and power, of how we feel when we see people helping each other, when we feel creative, when we know we're making a difference, when life feels purposeful."

Everyone at Harmony Hill, whether a volunteer, staff, cancer alumni, or guest, actively participates in what makes Harmony Hill such a wonderful place. When a person takes part in a Harmony Hill retreat, they aren't just helping themselves but others that are at the retreat as well. When someone purchases a brick for our tribute path, they aren't just honoring a loved one or friend but are honoring the future of Harmony Hill. Finally, when a volunteer chops carrots for salad or makes copies in the office, they are helping others experience the harmony, beauty, and power of Harmony Hill.

None of this could happen without our alumni, donors, volunteers, staff and friends. I invite you to come out to the Hill and enjoy a walk on our grounds anytime and experience "life's deep harmony."

## Contact Us!

Harmony Hill Retreat Center  
7362 E State Route 106, Union, WA 98592  
[www.harmonyhill.org](http://www.harmonyhill.org) (360) 898-2363  
info@harmonyhill.org

## Raised Voices | continued from page 1

Harmony Hill's expansion of community programming. We hope that you will be able to join us for an event soon!

- **June 15, 3pm**  
Community Recital "Celtic Folk Tunes"
- **July 4, 9pm**  
Fireworks Party & Camp Fire Song Group Sing
- **August 18, 7pm**  
Sing-Along "Grease"
- **September 14, 7pm**  
Hymns, Spirituals & Chorales Group Sing

## SAVE THE DATE!

### SummerFest

**Saturday, August 16, 10am-3pm**  
**FREE admission**

Join us for a day in celebration of a Healthy Earth, Healthy People, and a Healthy Future. Enjoy music, food, community and vendor booths, garden and labyrinth tours, guest speakers and more. Watch our website for more details.

### Annual Dinner and Auction Featuring Xinh's Clam & Oyster House Sunday, August 24, 6pm

Last year's event was a huge success and this year is sure to sell out! Dinner will be provided by Chef Xinh Dwelley, and music by local cellist, David V. Pierik. Tickets are \$100 per person and include dinner and entrance to the auction. Purchase your tickets or reserve a table today by calling (360) 898-2363 or emailing [jolene@harmonyhill.org](mailto:jolene@harmonyhill.org). All proceeds from this event benefit Harmony Hill's Major Gift Campaign.

### Golf Tournament & Dinner Fundraiser Thursday, September 18

Join us again this year for an amazing day of fun in the sun. Get your winning team together to golf, eat, and raise money for Harmony Hill's Major Gift Campaign. To learn more, email your name, phone and contact information to [cindy@harmonyhill.org](mailto:cindy@harmonyhill.org).

### Harmony Hill Board of Directors

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## Meeting at the Hill is a Win-Win

Facility rentals at Harmony Hill provide much of the needed funds to support our mission and programs. With the recent expansion of our campus, each year we are able to serve more groups as a conference and retreat facility, offering generous hospitality and excellent service in a spectacular natural setting.

The American Leadership Forum (ALF) of Tacoma/Pierce County recently conducted a retreat at Harmony Hill. This national non-profit organization has nine chapters throughout the country. Its mission is to join and strengthen leaders to better serve the public good. ALF works to enhance individual leadership skills, to

increase each participant's commitment to community leadership and service, and to create a growing network of leaders with the skills, trust and relationships to work collaboratively for the public good.

"We had previously held our retreat at another retreat center. Their dramatic price increase led us to look elsewhere. After exhaustive research, we thought Harmony Hill's spaces and warmth best suited our purposes," said Sharon Babcock, Executive Director.

The group includes participants from the public, private and independent sectors and represents a rich cross-section of the county's ethnic, cultural, gender and geographic diversity. Program graduates represent leaders from all walks of life who have dedicated themselves to working collaboratively to genuinely improve the quality of life.

"With its variety of inviting spaces and non-institutional hospitality, Harmony Hill helps to build relationships, a key part of our mission," continued Babcock. "It serves as an effective gathering place for our retreat needs. The view, accommodations, staff, and food are all conducive to achieving our goals."

Once groups experience a retreat at Harmony Hill, they return again and again. Our beautiful location, great hospitality, delicious food, welcoming accommodations, and commitment to sustainability have made us a favorite meeting and event facility. When your group rents at Harmony Hill, you are also supporting our mission to improve

the quality of life for those affected by cancer, creating a win-win for all.

Contact us today to reserve a date to bring your group to Harmony Hill for your next conference, retreat or training. Visit [www.harmonyhill.org/grouprental](http://www.harmonyhill.org/grouprental) or contact [anna@harmonyhill.org](mailto:anna@harmonyhill.org) or call (360) 898-2363. We still have dates available this year and are taking bookings for 2009 and 2010.



## Your Will to Help

A will is one of the most important documents that you will ever sign. Having a will allows you to invest and manage assets for your beneficiaries and to provide for the future of your loved ones. A will can also help you distribute more of your assets and save taxes and unnecessary expenses on the administration of your estate. Also, did you know its easy to make charitable bequests to your favorite causes through your will?

If you don't have a will, obtaining one is as simple as writing out what you want to accomplish and calling your attorney. Whether you already have a will or are just planning one, we hope that you will consider including Harmony Hill in your estate plans. Your gift could impact lives far into the future.

We welcome the opportunity to recognize your generosity, so please let us know of your commitment. Contact Jill Rose, Development Director, at [jill@harmonyhill.org](mailto:jill@harmonyhill.org) or (360) 898-2363 to join the Harmony Hill Legacy Circle.

## Upcoming Programs at Harmony Hill – 2008

For more details or to register, visit [www.harmonyhill.org](http://www.harmonyhill.org) or call Cindy at (360) 898-2363.

### Cancer Programs

**Loving Yourself through Cancer: A Thriving Beyond Cancer Program**  
October 6, 10am-4pm

Dealing with cancer can strain your connection with your body and your heart—just when you need to take good care of yourself. It can seem impossible to return to enjoying your body again. We will explore several ways to affirm and deepen your sense of wholeness and pleasure in your body, mind, heart and spirit. Caregivers and companions are welcome.

### Cancer Retreats

- \***July 18-20** for men & women
- September 19-21** for women with breast cancer only
- \***October 10-12** for men & women
- \***November 7-9** for sexual minorities
- \***December 7-9** for men & women

Harmony Hill's three-day residential cancer retreats help those facing cancer, and their loved ones, cope with the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges of cancer. Through stress reduction techniques, guided imagery, daily support groups for learning and sharing, yoga, art, and massage, participants facilitate their own healing and restore quality of life, regardless of physical capacity.

**Tools for the Journey: Living with Cancer**  
June 16, August 25, October 20,  
December 1, 10am-4 pm

This one-day mini-retreat offers a full day of practical resources and strategies for how to live fully despite the challenges of cancer. It includes simple movement, guided imagery, and information about healing tools and resources.

**All Harmony Hill cancer programs are offered at no cost to participants and are made possible by individual gifts and foundation and corporate support. To donate, visit our website at [www.harmonyhill.org/donate](http://www.harmonyhill.org/donate) or call Jill at (360) 898-2363.**

\*spouses/companions may also attend these sessions

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## Upcoming Programs | *continued from page 3*

### In Harmony Programs

*One day workshops to refresh & revitalize your mind, body & spirit – open to everyone.*

*For more details or to register, visit [www.harmonyhill.org](http://www.harmonyhill.org) or call Victrinia at (360) 898-2363.*

#### Exploring the Labyrinth with Melissa West, MS

**June 14, 10am-4pm**

\$90 includes lunch

Join Melissa for a day of exploring the sacred and healing uses of labyrinths. Through a combination of presentations and contemplative time in the Hill's labyrinths, you'll learn how to use labyrinths for deepening your spiritual life, enhancing healing, increasing creativity, sharpening intuition, and connecting with new goals and dreams.

#### The Joy of Yoga: Balancing Yin & Yang with Denise Carrico, RYT, BFA

**July 5, 10am-4pm**

\$90 includes lunch

In the context of traditional yoga practices, Yin energy manifests in stillness, in coolness, in meditation, and in flexibility. Yang energy is expressed through movement, through heat, through the physical postures (asana) & through strength. Enjoy a morning of more active (Yang) practice, complemented by an afternoon of quieter, more meditative (Yin) practice, thereby balancing the two aspects of Yin & Yang—moon & sun, relaxation & action, dark & light—within our own selves.

#### Weekday Yoga

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30pm-5:30pm**

**Wednesday, Noon-1:15pm**

\$10 per class or \$80 for a 10-session pass

Drop-in yoga is offered three days a week at Harmony Hill. The classes are held in the Elmer & Katharine Nordstrom Great Hall

and cover basic yoga techniques including breathing, stretches, and yoga postures, with the goal of enhancing strength, flexibility, and relaxation. All classes are suitable for all levels and beginners are welcome. Tuesday classes are also suitable for those with mobility challenges.



#### Extend your stay at the Hill!

When you register for any of our "In Harmony" programs, you can add overnight accommodations to your stay and enjoy a mini-retreat. Cost is \$65/night and includes accommodations, light continental breakfast, and access to cooking facilities.



## Looking for Auction Item Donations

Harmony Hill's second annual auction is just around the corner and we are looking for auction item donations to make the event a huge success! Last year's event raised over \$40,000 and our goal for this year is to raise \$100,000 to benefit Harmony Hill's Major Gift Campaign and qualify for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation challenge grant. All donors will be recognized in the auction program and in Harmony Hill's 2008 Gratitude Report. If you have an item that you are interested in donating, please contact Jolene at (360) 898-2363 or [jolene@harmonyhill.org](mailto:jolene@harmonyhill.org) by July 15, 2008.



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Union, WA 98592

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