

THE
GLOBE
STAR

NAVIGATOR

mentoring a spirit of gentleness for individuals with disabilities

Stories of Summer: bringing a Gentle Teaching workshop to SHARE Foundation; attending Theraplay's Conference

Globe Star traveled to Sharing Meadows in Laporte the first week of June to facilitate a *Gentle Teaching* workshop for SHARE Foundation, a non-profit Christian organization, founded in 1982 by Father Dennis Blaney, who continues to act as president of the board and oversee the 185-acre community that serves the residential, vocational and social needs of *other-abled* (mentally challenged) adults, that live and work with peace and dignity.

Executive Director Kathleen Kelly teamed up with Globe Star's Director Anthony M. McCrovitz, for a week of intensive training on basic caregiving navigation that applies the framework of Gentle Teaching with the skillful use of our tools (hands, eyes, words, presence) to teach, value and protect.

In addition to a few crewmembers from Globe Star and the main group of Sharing Meadows *stewards* that live side-by-side with the resident *villagers*, the workshop was also attended by several caregivers from Bradstow School in the UK where Gentle Teaching is well-established and practiced, and we also welcomed a group from Providence Center in Maryland who recently discovered the international community of Gentle Teaching, and are eagerly learning how to integrate the principles and practice into their own care program.

The workshop week began with Father Blaney welcoming everyone and dedicating a mass to the memory of Dr. John McGee, one of the founders of Gentle Teaching who spent the greater part of his life practicing its principles of unconditional love and modeling its transformative nature.

In McGee's own quest to understand and relieve suffering, he formed the questions that we continue to ask of ourselves today in our work with Gentle Teaching. Who is *the other*? What gifts can I open in my own heart that will release my capacity to meet the needs of an other? Can I invite an other into the community? Can I accept the ever-present invitation to love, unconditionally?

Throughout the days of the workshop, special attention was paid in observing how we ask ourselves these questions and affect the dialogue. Becoming more aware of how we, ourselves, influence and contribute to conversations, even in the slightest of ways, carry an impact with our words and presence and affect the invitation for others to engage.

We looked at some of the ways our present thought patterns and habitual responses were ingrained, and quietly considered them as we discussed different ways to adjust "the lens" of our thinking and restructure thought forms, using our "tools" to affirm a sense of belonging to the community. Through the loving, teaching relationships of Gentle Teaching, we learned more about how to shift perspective and move toward accountability-based engagement that holds the space of invitation, moving into a greater capacity of service.

Keeping in mind that conversations tell stories and influence the formation of communities, attendees were encouraged to observe and listen more acutely, not to the answers given to others, but to the questions we form and ask of ourselves when engaging in dialogue or interacting with others. This direction of awareness can shape one's view and guide one's words so that

one can better contribute to the creating and transforming of community.

As we discussed effectively relating to one another and integrating these relationships into a true sense of community

and belonging, Dr. McCrovitz introduced us to author Peter

Block's insights into caring for the well-being of our communities. In his book, *Community, The Structure of Belonging*, Block chooses everyday questions that lie at the heart of community building.

"Whom do I choose to come into the room? What is the conversation that I both become and engage in with these people? And when there are more than two of us together, how do we create a communal structure that moves the action forward?"

It is the way these one's own sense of that shapes one's patterns of thought that can broaden and affect the subjective elements of situations and ultimately transform lives.



wild flower garden at Sharing Meadows...



In Chapter 12 of his book, Block groups constructive conversations for structuring belonging into six areas: *invitation, possibility, ownership, dissent, commitment and gifts*.



Throughout the Gentle Teaching workshop, McCrovitz emphasized and particularly illustrated how framing conversations around *invitation, possibility* and *gifts* (rather than exclusiveness, problem-solving and deficits), can invite engagement and move individuals toward a new future that expands with community potential.

"The communal possibility is that space where a collective exists for the realization of all the possibilities of its members," says Block. "The possibility conversation gives form to one way the gifts of those in the margin get brought into the center. Each person's possibility counts."

There are ten basic *Elements of Companionship*¹ that a Gentle Teaching teacher learns about and strives to develop in the Gentle Teaching relationship between caregiver and individual. These elements are based on unconditional valuing of the individual, and are also used by the caregiver in an ongoing self-assessment of their own skills as a gentle teacher.



Dr. McCrovitz directed in-depth review, dialogue and group exercises that gave attendees the opportunity to practice developing reflection and discussion questions, based on the structure of belonging and drawing from some of the six areas, identified

earlier, from which meaningful dialogue can be developed. This provided further, valuable insight into the way questions, themselves, are the essential tools of engagement. They are transformative. In creating new dialogue, if we form our questions and engage from a basic, communal structure of belonging, the question becomes an invitation and conversation can shift toward possibility and authentic, cultural change.



A Vision for Globe Star



Globe Star's vision was inspired by the true story of Captain Marvin Creamer, a college geography professor who navigated around the world (1982-1984) while relying solely on primitive navigational skills, namely, practical experience, an understanding of the environment and a knowledge of the sun, moon and stars.



In 1985, Captain Creamer was awarded the Blue Water Medal for his extraordinary story and success, recognized as a most meritorious example of seamanship.



Creamer's remarkable story began when he was a young boy, dreaming of such a voyage and believing it was possible. In following his heart, he realized his vision and showed the possibility to the rest of the world, offering new perspective and valuable insight for fields of research that study early navigation, patterns of migration and development of civilizations.

As early navigators had an understanding of the sun's path through the sky and an awareness of environmental clues from the sea and air, Globe Star caregivers learn to navigate by heart as an understanding of living environments and a valuing of diversity in human nature is practiced daily.

The framework of *Gentle Teaching* is constructed as a model of compassion that mobilizes a vital, collaborative relationship between caregiver and individual, establishing a vertical hold for the journey.

Caregivers, along with all crewmembers, rely on some of the most "primitive" of human tools (*eyes, hands, words, presence*) for communicating and moving in a manner of compassion, anchoring the heart of Globe Star's vision, which is to *value, teach and protect*.

In providing services for individuals with disabilities, Globe Star works closely with their families and communities. By following the unique patterns and brightness of an individual's path and facilitating their

safety, a designated caregiver is on board to pick up on more specific movements and indicators from the individual's environments, and assist them in navigating toward destinations formed or reformed by unconditional love and patterned



with a potential for human development.

For marginalized persons, day-to-day movements and transitions are humanely mobilized with Globe Star services. Environments that define both the inner and outer worlds for an individual, are compassionately arranged as accessible dwelling spaces that hold meaningfulness, enriching one's quality of life and one's inherent ability to exist as a whole human being.



PUPPET TALK

what they said...

During the Gentle Teaching workshop week in June, the group made use of a large collection of puppets. They were introduced to the group on the first day, as each of the participants returned to the main room after lunch with a puppet in hand, not necessarily one of their preferred choosing, but one that became their *companion*.



With the presence and spontaneous animation of the puppets over the next few days, we made some interesting discoveries about ourselves.

Incorporating a playful element into our work provides opportunities for us to take on different roles that can be useful in creating an invitation, a context or fresh focus for interaction and engagement. The diverse creativity and possibility that invites one to be curious, to step outside of "the box" (or one's *shell*), moves participants to a space of dialogue and shared experience. This structure can also challenge ideas and perceptions in creative ways.



As the workshop progressed and we worked on dialogue and writing exercises in our smaller groups, we remained focused in thinking about "possibility" conversations--- spaces for dialogue that could be created through elements of value and a culture of hope, sparking a natural flow of energy and joy.

Being aware of how we value each other and who we perceive *an other* to be, affects the space of our encounter with one another. The atmosphere that is influenced by the use of our tools (hands, eyes, words, presence) within that space that creates a *here and now* experience, is the one that we offer as we accept the invitation to engage in the perceptions and feelings of an individual. Before we enter this "space," we can ask ourselves: 'are my interactions warm and loving? Or cold and indifferent?' As we practice aligning our thinking with valuing, teaching and protecting, a culture of gentleness continues to grow and develop.

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Gentle Teaching

The Gentle Teaching approach teaches caregivers to embrace a "culture of life" over a "culture of death." What are the elements that constitute these cultures?

Culture of life...

- * Based on companionship
- * Leading to community
- * Centered on the person
- * Mutual change begins with us

A spirit of gentleness is about...

- * Our nonviolence
- * Our sense of social justice
- * Our expression of unconditional love
- * Our warmth toward those who are cold
- * Our teaching others to feel safe, loved, loving, and engaged
- * Our teaching a feeling of companionship with the most marginalized
- * Our forming community
- * Our sense of human interdependence and solidarity
- * Our option to be side by side with the most devalued

Culture of death...

- * Based on control
- * Leading to compliance
- * Centered on behavior
- * Imposed change under the guise of choice a feeling of companionship with the most marginalized

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU? TO TALK WITH US OR LEARN MORE, CONTACT US. WE ARE HERE.



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GLOBE STAR, LLC is a service provider that views caregiving through the scope of Gentle Teaching. Through this framework, we navigate with a compass of compassion on our course to Value, Teach, Protect and Reciprocate.

As navigators, we strive to facilitate the Individual's journey to destinations where they are able to experience and dwell in the destiny and dignity of being human.

-Dr. Anthony McCrovitz, Director

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Stories of Summer, continued from page 1...**Theraplay conference...**

For more information on SHARE Foundation resources or to learn how to volunteer or be involved, visit their website at www.sharefoundation.org.

In mid-July, Globe Star attended the Theraplay Institute's 6th International Conference, held in Evanston, Illinois. The Theraplay Institute is a non-profit organization that has been dedicated for more than forty years to "Building Better Relationships" in the field of children's mental health.

Theraplay is a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement. It is based on the natural patterns of playful, healthy interaction between parent and child and is personal, physical, and fun. Theraplay interactions focus on four dimensions found in parent-child relationships: Structure, Engagement, Nurture, and Challenge, with the goal to enhance attachment, self-esteem, trust in others and joyful engagement.

Globe Star discovered some common ground with Theraplay's exceptional work with children and their core values that facilitate the building of better relationships (structure, challenge, nurture, engagement), resonant with the heart of Globe Star's vision in mentoring a spirit of gentleness through the developing of teaching relationships that value, teach, protect and reciprocate.

Theraplay is especially effective as it delivers meaning and builds a relationship. And the outcome of Gentle Teaching is all about building the relationship between caregiver and individual. Theraplay invites the person to initiate, incorporating skills into games and creative activities that teach.

Globe Star uses Theraplay's assessment tool, the *Marschak Interaction Method* (MIM). This is a structured technique for observing and assessing the relationship between two individuals (like a caregiver and an individual), using a series of simple tasks



Theraplay co-founder Phyllis Booth with Globe Star Director Anthony M. McCrovitz, July 2013

designed to elicit a range of behaviors in the four dimensions. This provides insight into how the teacher/caregiver can plan to interact with the individual in ways that provide meaning and develop the relationship. The learning is for everyone involved. It is a collaborative approach.

In late spring, we had the privilege of a meeting with Theraplay's Clinical Director, Phyllis Booth and Executive Director, Gayle Christensen. It was an opportunity to personally express gratitude, on behalf of Globe Star, for Theraplay's significant contribution to the field of children's mental health and for its resourceful presence and useful assessment tool for our work at Globe Star.

Booth began her career as a nursery school teacher at the University of Chicago in 1950. In 1967, she was among the initial consultants for Chicago's Head Start programs. It was here that Phyllis began her long collaboration with Ann Jernberg in developing the Theraplay method. She has provided training throughout the United States, Australia, England, Germany and Sweden.

Theraplay has gained international respect as an effective application for treating relationship problems that stem from emotional attachment and trauma-based issues.

To learn more about Theraplay, visit www.theraplay.org.

Letter from the Executive Director***Journeying with Gentle Teaching...***

The privilege of being able to direct awareness toward the present moments of our daily, caregiving relationships creates the opportunity for meaningful dialogue. These moments hold value, inviting, through dialogue, the possibility for creating new moral memories that continue to develop trust in the relationship as it forms and becomes defined.

In this way, we create spaces of safe and loved that welcome one's steps on the journey of Gentle Teaching, from which one can learn that we are here to help them, and also learn to trust that we are walking every step of this journey **with** them.

The process of allowing one to work their way toward the answering of questions through life's lessons of safe and loved, and discovering the foundation on which they are able to reciprocate, guides them into answering elementary questions that meet them at the beginning of the Gentle Teaching journey: *I am not only safe, but do I feel safe with the person? Can this person help me? And can I learn from this person? Unconditionally, without the fear of it costing me anything?*

Traveling with the tools and the practical, daily curriculum of Gentle Teaching, we ask open-ended questions rather than demand answers. While an individual can indeed engage and even learn from demands made of him, this approach does not work toward strengthening one's foundation of intrinsic worth.

The foundation of intrinsic worth is essential to have in place for one to be able to benefit and progress through the collaborative relationship of Gentle Teaching. This foundation needs to be especially grounded during times of confrontation.¹

In the framework of Gentle Teaching, we look at three, interactive areas of functionality that emerge in shaping the relationship and endowing a culture of hope. These "3 P's" are discussed as the **Point** or knowledge; the **Practice** or navigation; and the **Promise** or nurturing.

The consistent application of the Gentle Teaching model in our caregiving practice, shapes the relationship, establishing direction and synergistic movement that spirals through each step on one's path of learning and growing.

The process of working through this framework, based on unconditional valuing and the building of trust, facilitates the journey and the ongoing practice and assessment of how as we use our tools to create a sense of companionship and community.

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Journeying with Gentle Teaching...
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sustaining a culture of hope that promotes understanding and encouragement while supporting one's awakening. Walking with marginalized persons on the journey of Gentle Teaching enriches one's quality of life.

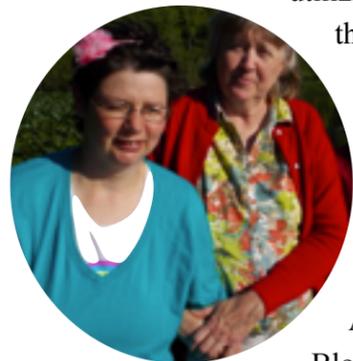
It has been our privilege these past few months to collaborate with caregivers from other agencies, Sharing Meadows, Providence Center and Bradstow School in the UK, that are also walking with marginalized persons on the journey of Gentle Teaching. We continue learning together through workshops, dialogue, and sharing travel notes and stories with one another about the journey of Gentle Teaching. Also, being able to share notes and insights with like-minded people working with other, progressive programs and therapies, like Phyllis Booth and Gayle Christensen at *Theraplay*, Jake and Nancy Greenspan with *FloorTime*, and Ross Greene's work with *Collaborative Problem Solving*, we continue exploring the congruency of relationship models and apply and practice the components that are integrated into our assessment work and relationship-building tools at Globe Star.

The skills and strategies of these models parallel the foundation (safe and loved unconditionally) and framework (value, teach, protect, and reciprocate) of Gentle Teaching with an individual as we lay this foundation of trust, memories of helping, and meaningful moments of teaching.

As we explore the journey of Gentle Teaching together, we are finding support in connecting with others whose work also relies on the relationship-building between the person and the caregiver, teacher or therapist, bridging parallel ideas and collaborating on research projects. This direction helps us to outline how we use our tools to create meaning through the elements of companionship, paving a concrete path for the Gentle Teaching journey, and also helps us in illustrating how transformation can take effect through the Gentle Teaching framework.



The Gentle Teaching journey engages us in building the relationship, utilizing skills and assessing our tools



throughout the process. This enables our ability to adjust the lens from modification of one's behavior to stabilization of the relationship that supports one in the journey of authentic development.

As described by Phyllis Booth² and Peter Block,³ the interactions and opportunities that come about in these relationship models provide an invitation to listen to what is truly going on beyond the functional approach of attention seeking, escaping, seeking something tangible, or seeking a sensory need. Individuals bring to the invitation their story, and yet it might provide their own subjective view that blinds them from the objective reality. It's important to understand these dynamics, yet the focus is to create meaning and value, by listening for what they perceive as the foundation and act as their leverage of ownership for the invitation by building *with* them.

We can be aware of how the interaction has meaning while, at the same time, understanding that moments of conflict are rooted in one's beliefs. With this understanding, we realize that we do not need to seek these observable behaviors as a way to modify. Although it might provide a short-term opportunity for changed behavior, it misleads us in one's growth that is due to their *lagging skills* as described by Ross Greene⁴ and referenced by Alfie Kohn.⁵

The invitation to work with Kathleen Kelly of Share Foundation and Jane Conrad of Providence Center at the Gentle Teaching workshop, provided possibilities of one's ownership in the role of caregiver, as we created meaning and value. We discussed and role-played with the *skills of engagement* that assist us in focusing on the teaching dimension of the relationship and thinking through, with the individual, about the change that becomes necessary for growth.



Working through the energy of these moments with Gentle Teaching, the caregiver discerns that one's dissent can create conflict and confrontation that attempt to sidetrack the natural process of becoming wholly human. Being able to own and embrace these moments, navigating through them and keeping the invitation open, supports the dissent aspect of the journey and keeps one moving along a path of authentic development.

Being aware of the necessary stages of change on the journey of Gentle Teaching and holding these moments as central to the process of transformation, creating new moral memories becomes possible, and the destination of feeling safe and unconditionally loved becomes aligned with *a whole life* plan, enriched with companionship and community.

Tony

Anthony M. McCrovitz, Executive Director

¹Rogers, Carl. (1969). *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become*. (1st ed.) Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill

² Booth, P. (2005). *Marschal Interaction Method*. The Theraplay Institute, Chicago, Illinois.

³ Block, P. (2008). *Community, The Structure of Belonging*. San Francisco, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

⁴ Greene, R. W. (2010). *The explosive child: A new approach for understanding and parenting easily frustrated, "chronically inflexible" children* (Revised 4th edition). New York: Harper Collins

⁵ Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co

"As navigators, we strive to facilitate the marginalized person's journey to destinations where they are able to experience and dwell in the destiny and dignity of being human."
-Dr. Anthony M. McCrovitz



PUPPET TALK (continued from page 2)

Over the course of a few days with the subtle invitation of *puppet talk* remaining present to be explored, it was noted how space for Gentle Teaching formed and expanded as caregivers/stewards interacted with the subjects as extensions of themselves, entertaining the greater idea of interconnectedness rather than separateness in conversation and community.

It was also observed how a conversation one might have with a puppet can be much more objective than a conversation one might have with himself. Again, illustrating the open realm of the imagination.

Human beings, by nature, are a playful, imaginative species. We can become skillful with our inherent gifts to be curious and full of wonder, in making meaningful connections with another while teaching the respect and freedom to express oneself.

what they said...

"I'm cleaning up the road," whispered the VULTURE, jokingly. "There are 20 species of my kind. The vulture flies high, has a high vision and is a bit clumsy, like me," he said, vulnerably, as his eyes once again met the face of the vulture, looking directly back at his (reciprocating).

"Charlie (the SNAKE) is very patient, and I identify with that (value). When I saw Charlie, there was just this welcoming connection. He made me smile."

"I am the RAT ('a mole by a different name,' chimed a fellow creature); and the rat says 'thank you'... a whole pack of thank you!"

"I value Brownie" (the COW), he said. "I'm inspired by the nourishment that her milk provides for the community. I love how she is very community-oriented ---with her herd mentality."

"The ELEPHANT is protective and I like how they bond with their families that protect them and keep them safe...they are loving creatures."



to love unconditionally means no strings attached...

"TEMBO is the name for ELEPHANT in the language of swahili, where 'tembo' represents unity." (engaging)

"PUPPY is joy, and security when he can guard the house. Loving and protective."

The GOAT says, "I need to protect others..I'm also very affectionate, because at heart, I'm just a kid."

(pause) "The CAT makes me feel safe." (paws)

"Carl, the tiny red DOG-like thing seems like he is loyal. I picked him out from his sitting out by himself." (loving)

"The ELEPHANT is known for having a good memory, so I'm hoping it will help me remember much of what I have learned here." (teach)

'Miss Pink' will not ever tell you that she is a FIG. She is Miss Pink! Miss Pink! She is a perfect color and a perfect

companion. Miss Pink is soft and cuddly and, especially at rough times, will protect you." [That is the nature of pink.]

'Bubble' (a TURKEY) is his name because he is very happy and cheerful and reminds me to be the same.

With his red hair, FOX reminds me of my dad's side of the family, which is a calm and peaceful feeling. Because of this, FOX has personal meaning for me.

"BEE has a pleasant, happy and joyful face ('and fits like a glove,' her fellow creatures kicked in like a chorus line). Also, BEE is round and fully padded, like me, and doesn't sting."

"PENGUIN works together with his family. Penguin is gentle and protective and responsible, too, because after the mother lays the egg, the father protects and cares for it."

"PENGUIN reminds me of my daughter because when she sends me cards, it's always one of a mommy and baby penguin, and I thought, 'what an intelligent and loyal little animal.'"

[nothing is ever as black and white as it may seem]

"The DUCK says quack! I watched the ducks yesterday morning and how the mother rushed around, taking care of the little goslings and it was like seeing myself at work. I'm like the mother duck at work, rushing around and giving people information and stuff like that." (this UK traveler quacked us up, too, when she also shared that she 'saw Boston by going on a guided duck tour.')

"BUNNY is very fast and I can relate to that. Bunnies are beautiful animals [like you!] and I would like to have the freedom that they have, just to run around in nature. I also like and relate to the fact that they eat healthy food, like carrots and lettuce." (value)

"I connected with this CAT because cats are independent, but also give unconditional love. I feel these are qualities that I have, so saw a lot of me in the cat." (reciprocate)

"KANGAROO is very loving, caring, and embracing. I can see myself being both the mom and the baby, giving love and receiving love at the same time."

"Rainbow (the TOUCAN) reminds me of diversity; The people we serve are diverse. Rainbow is a reminder that disabilities have no boundaries... rainbows are like bridges."

"Afff-laaack! (DUCK) is colorful and unusual and reminds me of ME, loving." (loving, protecting)

HIPPO..."I understand her strife because she deals with the weight issue, like me."

"The DOLPHIN says 'I am safe.'"

"Little LAMB is about being warm and loved."

"The SHEEP reminds me of the good Shepherd, who is at the heart of Gentle Teaching."



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on page 6



“No one likes me at first,” said Oscar (GOAT) to his friends, Ginny the rooster, Frank the monkey and Omaha the elephant, because I have a reputation of being stubborn and not being nice. But this community makes me feel that I belong, and I do!”

“I am Ginny (ROOSTER). I like Sharing Meadows. I get up in the morning and have lots of structure and it makes me feel good because I am not confused. So I feel loved and protected.”



“Well, I am Frank (MONKEY). I am hard of hearing, but just wanted to talk a little bit about how awesome Blake is. I like him. He is growing like I am. We’re growing together. There are so many ways that Blake helps me. Blake makes me feel okay about my flimsy arms. He even takes me out into the community where I meet others. Some of them have flimsy arms, too.”

