

# KIRKRIDGE RETREAT AND STUDY CENTER

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2020



Anchored  
Away from the noise of the world  
with tranquil footsteps  
I trust the path  
reclaim inner stillness

Sheltered canopies rooted  
embrace the whole of many  
the fragmented and damaged  
the seeker and discovered  
Justice and radical hospitality  
an arduous journey  
faith and courage victorious  
shield this ancestral mountain

No ownership of faith or allegiance  
this creation demands our preservation  
blessed community is vigilant  
I walk this sacred parcel  
anchored in all its promise

Anchored  
by Juanita Kirton, Board Member

### Our Mission

*Kirkridge is a place  
to be, and to become  
a people of hope,  
compassion, justice, and service.*



# SEASONS OF TRANSFORMATION AT KIRKRIDGE

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## **We Begin Again--Together**

*Winter, March 13th 2020*

Standing in the parking lot at the Farmhouse, saying goodbye to what was to be our last physical program of the year we had little understanding of what the world was soon to experience. With the coming of COVID19 the hopeful among us thought we would be closed for a few weeks, perhaps a few months. Others realized, this goodbye would have to last for a longer time than we could ever imagine.

Signs of closure posted on each building's door, the mountain was silent.

However, Kirkridge did not close. Instead, we turned to wonder. What will mean to live our mission to be and become a people of hope, compassion, justice and service during a pandemic?

Within days, we found ourselves in Zoom rooms and began to shape community in a variety of new ways. Our virtual programs and updates began to offer lifelines and connections of hope and a deepening spiritual experience within this pandemic to many in our community.

In this annual report of a year like no other, we take you through this journey of transformation and community and Kirkridge. We are grateful to all who have joined us with ideas, encouragement, financial support and most of all your presence.

Through it all we have learned -- Together, We are Kirkridge  
Jean Richardson and Diane Pettaway

# SPRING 2020 NEW SEEDS TO SOW

There were no groups gathering at the barn or drum beats echoing across the mountain this past summer. Rather, it was all strangely quiet. We turned first to gathering many who had been in our community over the years -- those who knew us and needed our support in the growing isolation. As one participant wrote, "So impressive how quickly Kirkridge found a new way to sustain their work. Still with depth, integrity and caring. And, yes with kindness."

Through those gatherings we soon realized that because of the strong Spirit of Kirkridge a person does not need to physically come to Kirkridge to experience the community of spirit and feel the connection of human relationship.

## *Seasonal Program Highlights:*

- Braving the Wilderness Circle of Trust®
- Preparing for the Solstice with Columcille
- Weekly gatherings of Sisterly and the GBT men of faith groups
- Finding Awe and Wonder at Home

*While the Kirkridge Farmhouse shelters in the afternoon shade, a spring breeze whispers on the tarn. The bell at Turning Point stands still, waiting to greet a silent sunrise. Nelson Lodge settles into sleep each evening as the last rays of light sink below Kittatinny Ridge. Yet, Kirkridge has been very busy -- building community, offering spaces of respite and renewal, and creating opportunities for our souls to shine. From this place that is rich in ancient wisdom, new forms of radical hospitality emerge daily.*

-An excerpt from our response to COVID-19 mandates



# SUMMER 2020 RISING CALL FOR JUSTICE

By summer, the world around us was coming alive with new calls for racial justice and reckoning. The Kirkridge Board responded with soul searching and a new commitment to racial equity and inclusion.

We began to see with new eyes and discovered we were reducing barriers for inclusion with expanded outreach and abundant programming. No longer did people need to be able to travel to Kirkridge to be part of the growing community, and participants could pay as they were able with our “Generosity of Spirit” offering.

## *Seasonal Program Highlights:*

- Unpacking Racism for White Folks
- Living into Social Justice amidst COVID-19
- Weekly Writing Group
- Living Welcome Circle of Trust®

*We believe that the journey to end systemic racism begins with a journey inward. Kirkridge has taken the following steps to open space for critical reflection. We gathered as a Board to reflect on how this renewed and enlarged commitment against racism and injustice is calling to us on a personal, interpersonal, and systemic level.*

*- Excerpt from our commitment to end racism and injustice*



# FALL 2020 A TIME TO HARVEST

As leaves began to let go, we realized that it was time to gather our many communities, let participants from different programs greet each other and claim that "Together, We are Kirkridge." With the help of many board members and volunteers, we pulled out all the stops and created a Fall Festival and Fundraiser! Our event drew over 100 people and raised over \$14,000. We filled the time together with music, poetry, guest presenters, beautiful photos of Kirkridge and even had an on-line auction.

## *Seasonal Program Highlights:*

- Welcoming Home: A Gathering for Families with Trans\* and Gender Non-Conforming Children
- Black Women's Radical Self-Love Retreat Series
- Rest, Renewal, and Resilience programs
- Breathwork programs (Breathing one Page at a Time and Breathing in Peace)

*"During this COVID season, Kirkridge has given me creative ways to express hope. Every program I have been part of has inspired, nourished, and opened the spirit with healing creativity and compassion." October Retreatant*



# WINTER 2020 TURNING INWARD

Winter can be long at Kirkridge. The holidays offer a season of light and gratitude. We were clear that the recovery from this pandemic was still in the making and a return to life as “normal” was still months away.

Through the winter, our programming we provided sustenance for the time of waiting. We enjoyed gifts of music, poetry, and shared remembrance that warmed us through the cold months.

## *Seasonal Program Highlights:*

- Embracing Darkness and Beholding Light
- Meditative Art with Zentangle and Mandalas
- The Courage to Live Divided No More
- Turning Inward and Self Care

*"I enjoy connecting with people from all over. I live in a very small rural country area and when I get on zoom with Kirkridge, I feel so a part of the universe and that there are likeminded people here or people to share differences." - November Retreatant*



# IMPACT



Total Online Programs and Gatherings:

143



Total Participants:

2,359

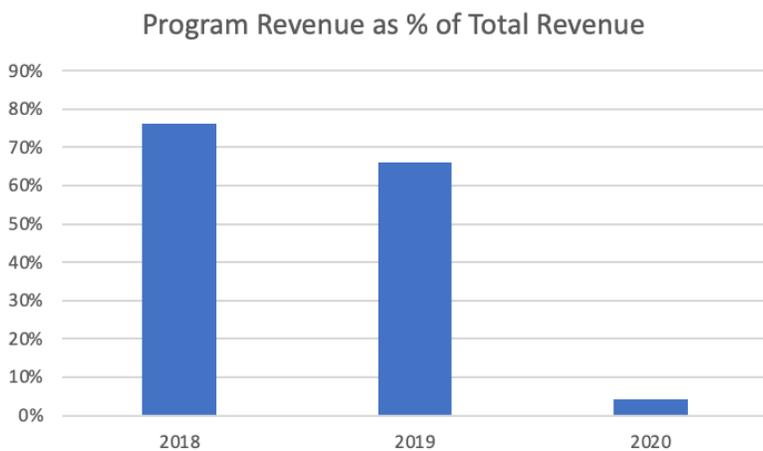
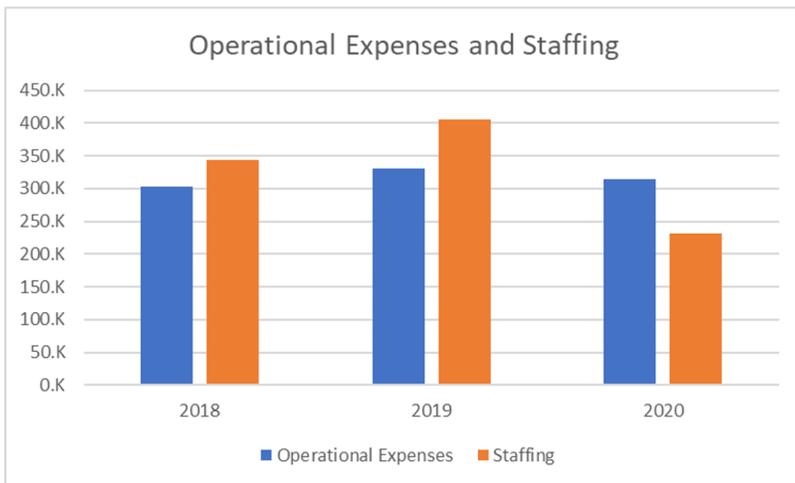
Dozens of facilitators, program leaders and board members have volunteered countless hours over the past months. Together we have witnessed the importance of spiritual renewal, emotional support and lessons of justice to the wider world.

During 2020, Kirkridge broke down barriers of access and our community grew beyond the East Coast and even the United States, having participants from Australia, Scotland, and Canada.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

We are committed to sharing our financial status with our community. COVID-19 has been a difficult time for us, while we decreased our staffing, we continued to maintain our buildings and nurture the land.



We saw a dramatic increase in participants, and a decrease in program revenue, as we made the intentional shift to serve our growing community regardless of ability to pay. At Kirkridge, we living into a culture that is focused on gifts freely offered and to live beyond a transaction economy.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

824 Total Number of Donations

397 Total Number of Donors

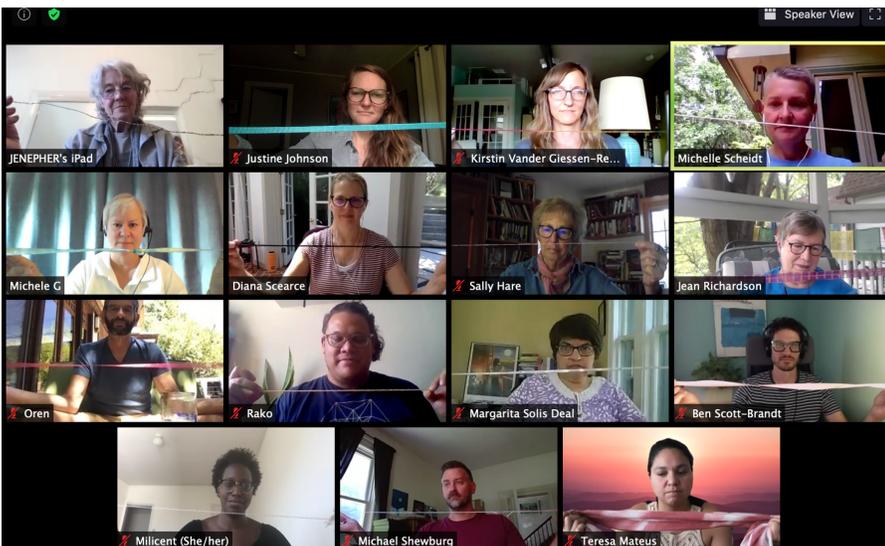
We increased our donors by 93% from 2019.

*"What a gift Kirkridge is.  
Kirkridge is hope.  
Kirkridge is love.  
Thanks to each and every  
one of you for being a  
part of this community."*

-Retreatant,  
November 2020

*"Can't even  
express adequately  
in words,  
Kirkridge has been  
a tremendous support.  
Welcoming and kind  
in all ways."*

-Retreatant,  
December 2020



We are thankful for grant support from the following grant making foundations and operating foundations that have enabled us to expand our programming and advance our work in the world.

- E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation whose support underwrote The Welcome Home series for families with gender non-confirming children.
- Fetzer Institute whose invitation and support enables Kirkridge to play an active role in the Retreat Center Collaboration of North America.
- Louisville Institute whose gift is making it possible for Jean Richardson to take time to engage in a study project of Iona related centers.
- Northampton County for supporting our medicinal herb garden through an Agrotourism grant and funding supplies to re-open safely with a NORCO grant.

# STAFF & BOARD OF TRUSTEES

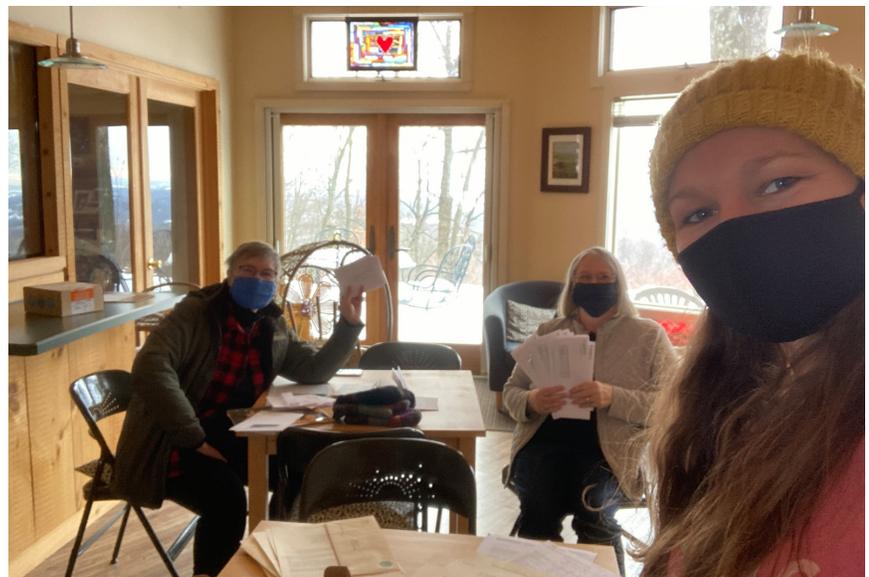
## Board of Trustees

Fareena Alam  
Donna Bivens  
Bob Coombe  
Donna Elia, Treasurer  
Micah Fialka-Feldman  
Kathy Gille  
Sally Hare  
Gillian Huebner  
Neill Johnson, Secretary  
Juanita Kirton  
Marissa Metelica  
Vicki Metzgar  
Fred Monteith  
Diane Petteway, Chair  
Jean Richardson, Ex-Officio  
Ernie Roundtree  
Jim Sims  
Robb Whitmoyer



## Staff

Joe Germick  
Justine Johnson  
Janet Lewis  
Jean Richardson  
Joyce Weishaupt  
*\*All staff worked part-time in 2020*



Photos from Top to Bottom: Board members at a in-person retreat in September 2019, and staff in December 2020

# OUR GROWING COMMUNITY

Kirkridge is a gift, left in trust by those who went before us so we and future generations might remember our wholeness and listen for our true names as individuals and as a community. This is a radical reality. Since its conception in 1942, there has been no claim on the ownership of Kirkridge. There is no denominational oversight, shareholders or others with financial investments at stake. Rather, over the years Kirkridge has depended upon a parade of people who donate and volunteer, serve on the board, and work and care for this place based on a common understanding of its unique contribution to our world.

First, a thank you to each of you for your donations that supportive our financial well-being during this time. When the revenue from housing and programs was absent due to COVID-19, your 'generosity of the heart' gifts and general donations were our lifeline. We are deeply grateful for your notes of support and gifts sent in love.

We are grateful for the Kirkridge Courage Faculty who have donated many hours of leadership and facilitation for our many on line programs. Our strong virtual presence would not have occurred without their support.

This year we truly have lived into "Together we are Kirkridge" whether in person on the mountain or as a virtual community. Gratitude is our only offering to your generosity of love and service.

*Together we are Kirkridge*



Under a blue sky on a cold clear day  
she is looking at her Circle of Trust growing away there  
as faces appear in the Kirkridge Zoom Room actively, hoping their Souls will show up if there is enough  
silence and if we move slowly enough.

If you tend them properly, if you remind them that we have all the time we need,  
if you honor the Field Markers,  
As we meet in this Field that is not Here or There,  
The Field Rumi says is beyond wrong-doing and right-doing,  
The Field in which you are not virtual and I am not virtual: we are both Real.  
If your computer is updated and your internet connection is stable,  
if your microphone and camera work,  
then there is a chance there will be inner wisdom, but at each participant's  
own internal clock.

Weave real connections, create real nodes, honor true seeds of self.  
Live a life you can endure: find ways of connecting in this Circle  
that is a rectangle. Embrace the paradox of community  
with no physical proximity. Be gentle with your Self. See with soft eyes.  
Be as present as possible even as you keep tangling  
and interweaving and holding the knowing of these Moments  
on the Online Mountain: that each person is here to do her own work –and that it is too hard to do  
alone.

Cherish the glimpse of Kirkridge as more than a place. This retreat center has opened  
its threshold in this pandemic to Become a new kind of Thin Place,  
One that is beyond Farmhouse or Turning Point,  
even beyond the mountain itself.  
The space between us is real. The silence between us is audible.  
Hear the song of ubuntu: that I am I because you are you.  
Understand this computer screen is no longer the place  
where you simply check email, but holds the promise of Kirkridge.

Moments on the OnLine Mountain  
by Sally Z. Hare  
with much gratitude for Marge Piercy  
and a 2021 Kirkridge Circle of Trust®