



# Quixote Center

## Annual Report 2013

*“All life is interrelated. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”* Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1961

For 38 years the Quixote Center has worked for justice. Our mission statement identifies us as a “gathering of people” offering the “gift of our lives.” Our “gathering” extends far beyond our staff to encompass the gracious and generous network of people who have walked with us, prayed with us, shared their hopes, dreams, and needs with us, worked with us and our partner organizations, and supported this vital work.

We know that all of our work depends on relationships, and we are grateful to all members of our gathering who make our work possible.

The Quixote Center has mobilized tens of thousands of supporters to work in solidarity with the peoples of Nicaragua and Haiti, with inmates of the U.S. prison system, and with many who have been marginalized by the Catholic Church, including women and lesbian, gay and transgendered people. We have seen progress and achievements in all areas, but much more remains to be done.



# Our Vision: An Ecology of Liberation

*Ecology has to do with relations, interaction, and dialogue of all living creatures (whether alive or not) among themselves and with all that exists...everything that co-exists and pre-exists subsists by means of an infinite web of all inclusive relations. Leonardo Boff, Ecology and Liberation*

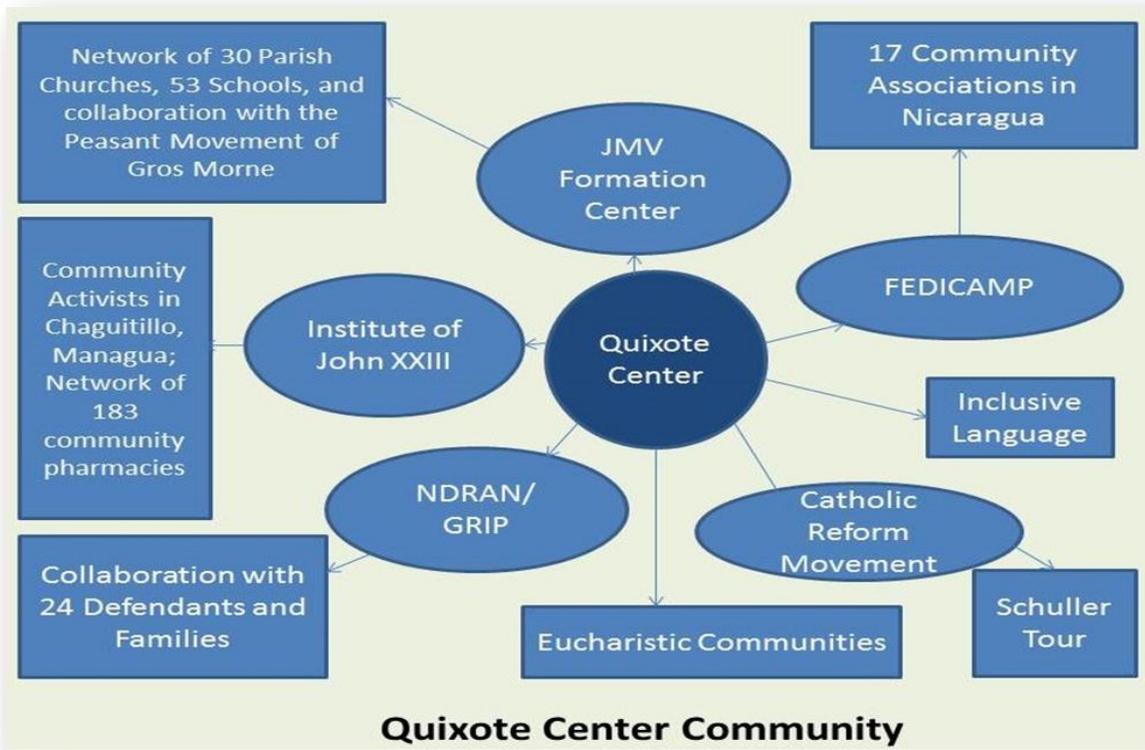
*[T]he poverty of the poor is not a call to generous relief action, but a demand that we go and build a different social order. Gustavo Gutierrez*

Over the past year, we have reflected on the history of the Quixote Center and its continuing mission as we plan our future activities and initiatives. We have come to describe the theme of all our programs as “an ecology of liberation.”

Ecology is not simply about the physical “environment,” it is a lens through which we view all relationships. It is about how people relate to each other, to other species, and to the planet. It is a framework for viewing the deep inter-dependence of all life.

Liberation cannot be achieved simply by changing an economic or political system. It is only possible within an *eco-system* of supportive relationships, both human and environmental.

At the Quixote Center, our work is to create relationships that support development and foster sustainability, providing true liberation. This is the work toward justice, toward liberation, and toward building a world more justly loving.





## Haiti Reborn: Jean Marie Vincent Formation Center, Haiti

Our partnership with the Jean Marie Vincent Formation Center is now in its 15th year. The core elements of the program are creating the model forest on Tet Mon, maintaining a tree nursery that delivers 60,000 saplings a year to regional partners, developing the garden at the Formation Center, and outreach and education.

Tet Mon was once a barren hillside: now it is home to a quarter of a million trees that make up the thriving Jean Marie Vincent Forest. This signature project of our reforestation effort is changing the ecology of Haiti every day: stopping water runoff and erosion, providing habitat for birds and wildlife, removing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from the air, and providing human visitors an inspiring space for education and meditation. Over the last year the forest was expanded by the purchase of adjoining parcels of land.

The tree nursery produced 60,000 saplings this year and delivered them for planting through a network of community organizations and student groups. Demand

for the saplings has grown beyond our original capacity, and in 2013 we created two satellite nurseries in collaboration with the Peasant Movement of Gros Morne. In January of this year, we began a second expansion with the Green Schools network in nearby Gran Plenn. Students in Gran Plenn have taken part in the reforestation effort since 2006 – but until now have had no nursery nearby. Support from Haiti Reborn will allow them to construct one.

Marcel Garçon is the outreach coordinator for the Formation Center and a fellow dreamer. In 2013 he launched a ‘patio garden’ project to enable Haitians to grow food in small spaces. Marcel and his team provide participants with the basics: training, suggestions for improving the soil, seeds, and in some cases containers with improved soil. These courtyard gardens are organically grown, without the use of imported fertilizers or pesticides. This method helps families move towards liberation from hunger and dependence on foreign aid by growing their own food.



## Quest for Peace: The Institute of John XXIII, Nicaragua

We have worked with the Institute of John XXIII, based at the University of Central America in Managua, since 1984, through the Contra War, the 1990s neo-liberal restructuring, and Hurricane Mitch and its aftermath. Now we are continuing our partnership with an ambitious housing agenda to address the desperate need for affordable housing in Nicaragua and other programs to assist educational and community needs. The Homes of Hope Initiative had another successful year. In 2013, the community of Chaguitillo selected 17 families to receive a new home. In May, we visited the building site and met some of the beneficiaries. At that time, the ground was being prepared for the foundation on most plots. The beneficiaries and work crews were busy ensuring the sites were ready for building. By the end of September, all 17 homes were complete and occupied!

In April we delivered more than 500 school supply packets directly to students in the rural district of Terrabona. The Institute had recently completed a major education program in Terrabona, and the school supply packets will aid the efforts of their newly trained teachers and administrators.

In August, we had the honor of hosting Edwin Novoa, the Director of the Institute of John XXIII, for a Quixote Center cook out. The party was the capstone of a nationwide fundraising tour for the Institute's projects in Nicaragua. At the picnic, Quixote Center supporters had an opportunity to meet Edwin and hear first-hand about the work of the providing homes in Nicaragua. Thank you to all of you that joined us!



## Quest for Peace: FEDICAMP, Nicaragua

The Federation of Campesinos, or FEDICAMP, is an association of 17 community organizations working in northern Nicaragua. FEDICAMP grew out of the Quixote Center's work with the Institute of John XXIII as part of the Quest for Peace. Each of the community organizations was a member of the Networks of Hope that came together after Hurricane Mitch to coordinate the Institute of John XXIII's relief efforts. Following a five-year "Countdown to Independence," each of the associations self-incorporated in 2006 as an independent organization, and together they formed FEDICAMP as an umbrella organization to facilitate collaborative projects and fundraising.

In May the Quixote Center was able to respond to an urgent request for assistance from our FEDICAMP partner community in Palacaguina. Quixote Center supporters gave

generously and saved the eye of a young boy who needed surgery to reattach his retina after an accident.

In April we partnered with FEDICAMP's outreach director, Miguel Marin, to deliver a workshop at Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington D.C. on the theme of [Building an Ecology of Liberation](#). The workshop also included Marcel from the Jean Marie Vincent Formation Center. The workshop highlighted the work of both organizations in creating alternative economies for structuring agriculture. The workshop was packed and well received!

In August FEDICAMP hosted Quixote Center staff member, Andrew Hochhalter, during a two week trip to explore expanding the relationship between our two organizations. We begin this next phase with a delegation in February 2014.



## GrassRoots Investigation Project (GRIP), U.S.

The GrassRoots Investigation Project (GRIP) of the Quixote Center has provided assistance to defendants on death row or facing life without parole and their families since 2000. One of the unique aspects of GRIP is that it empowers family members to find ways to be directly engaged in the investigation. The Quixote Center publishes *The Capital Defense Handbook for Defendants and Their Families*. This booklet is a vital tool for people navigating the criminal justice system and the appeals process.

The project is currently investigating cases in nine states for over 30 defendants. A major focus is on cases involving police misconduct in Michigan, mostly in Detroit. Of the 20 cases currently included in the inquiry, five involve people who were juveniles at the time of arrest. Ten cases involve the misconduct of one former Detroit homicide detective. The other 10 cases include the use of informants, ballistics fraud, erroneous eyewitness identification, coercion of witnesses, perjury,

withholding of exculpatory evidence, and ineffective assistance of counsel. These cases are all at least 20 years old, and they are not death penalty cases, so there is little press interest in the stories or the defendants' search for justice.

As GRIP has had some successes resulting in release of prisoners, we have become increasingly concerned about what happens to people when they leave prison. Post-incarceration re-entry is a challenge facing close to 700,000 people a year! Few states invest in programs to assist re-entry, and, in recent years, those programs that do exist have been easy targets for budget hawks looking to slash funds. In order to assist prisoners soon to be released to find any re-entry programs that might be available to help them, we launched an online re-entry data base that provides information on official programs on a state by state basis. In the coming year we will add additional non-profit service providers and make the information more easily available to those preparing to leave prison.



## Catholics Speak Out for a New Church Ecology

Throughout our history, the Quixote Center has been a constant advocate for full equality for women and for lesbian, gay, and transgendered people in the Catholic Church. Our first project was Priests for Equality, which called on priests to openly advocate for gender equality in the Church, including the ordination of women. The Quixote Center helped launch New Ways Ministry in the late 1970s, and has used the vehicle of Catholics Speak Out to mobilize members of the church community to support women's equality, LGBT rights, and reform of church governance.

The Quixote Center joined with other Catholic Organizations for Renewal to sponsor a national, 15 city speaking tour for Helmut Schüller, an Austrian priest who has been one of the most vocal advocates for broad based reform.

Fr. Helmut Schüller is the founder of the Austrian Priests' Initiative (Pfarrer-Initiative) organized in 2006 to address a deepening shortage of priests that was forcing many Austrian parishes to close. His work inspired the establishment of similar

priest groups in Germany, Ireland, France, the United States and Australia. Schüller's U.S. tour comes in the midst of a steadily worsening priest shortage. A 2009 study from the National Federation of Priests' Councils found that for every 100 U.S. priests who retire, only 30 are available to replace them. In June 2011, the Pfarrer-Initiative issued a "Call to Disobedience" calling for lay leadership and preaching in parishes without a priest, for permitting divorced and remarried Catholics to receive sacraments, and for support for the ordination of women and married men.

We here at the Quixote Center have also been watching with tremendous hope as Pope Francis challenges church leaders to re-emphasize core economic justice issues as a priority for church evangelism and to de-emphasize divisive cultural issues such as abortion and marriage equality. The new emphasis on economic justice is welcome, though we are clear that in the absence of a full acceptance of women and the LGBT community into the church and society more generally, there can be no true justice in the Church.



## Faith and Food Justice

During 2013 the Quixote Center worked with churches in the District of Columbia to establish a network of faith institutions committed to building alternative food economies. The focus of the work was the establishment of “Fresh Stops.” Fresh Stops operate as a modified form of Community Supported Agriculture, whereby members of the church community buy “shares” to facilitate bulk purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables. Share prices are based on a sliding scale, allowing for subsidization of purchases for folks with lower incomes.

Fresh Stops were launched at Mosaic Community Church and the Table in Washington, D.C., as well as Tabernacle Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis. As part of the development of the Fresh Stops, a series of workshops was created to provide

background on the food economy and theological grounding for work on food justice.

At its heart, the food justice work is a community building exercise, with the common meal heritage of early Christian communities as a backdrop. Accordingly, one of the last events for the Food and Faith Network was a concert that brought together food justice organizers for a concert called Fresh Beets, headlined by the D.C. based hip hop ensemble, Will Rap for Food.

In June of 2013, when the originator of the Food and Faith Network, Jeremy John, left the Quixote Center, the three Fresh Stops were fully functioning. They will continue to operate independently in the future., providing a living example of a community ecology of liberation.



## *Jousters for Justice and the Quixote Center Constituency!*

We are honored to share this road with you. You have supported the Center with your friendship, your fervency, and your funds. As the Center moves forward, we believe that its viability and continued success will depend on core groups of supporters who are involved in many ways with the work of its programs.

There are many ways to participate in our quest for a world more justly loving.

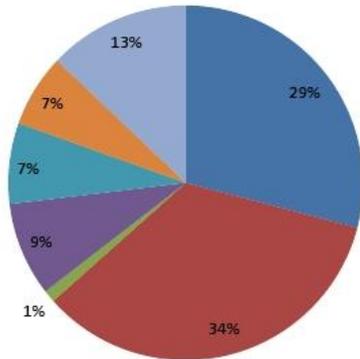
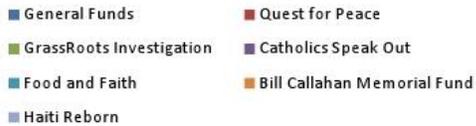
- Join a delegation to Nicaragua or Haiti to visit our project partners.
- Invite a member of the Quixote Center staff to speak at your church or community group about our work toward an Ecology of Liberation.
- Host a sustainable dinner party – gather friends and discuss the food economy.
- Get on our email list to keep informed of our work, and pass the information along to friends.
- If you use Facebook or Twitter, follow/like us and share our posts with friends.
- Make other contributions as your interests, resources and time allow.
- Share your ideas with us!
- Make donation to support the work of the Center.

### **Became a Jouser for Justice!**

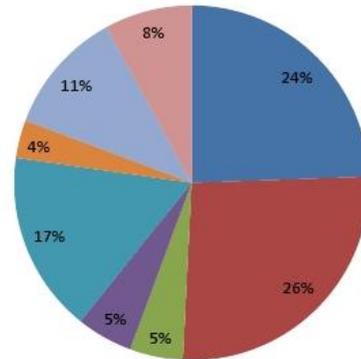
The Jousters for Justice Initiative was launched in the fall of 2013, and at the end of the year we already have 22 Jousters of Justice committed to supporting the Center with donations of \$1,000 or more. A sustaining gift of \$88 a month is enough to become a Jouser, and it helps us plan and budget appropriately for the upcoming year. Please consider this gift as an investment in our work together – an investment whose dividends are measured in forested hillsides, new homes, and renewed hope for freedom. As a quick look at the financial information that follows will reveal, the need exceeds our supply of cash. We spent about \$90,000 more on programs in FY2012/2013 than we took in, and we cannot continue to do so. If our income does not increase, our program work will have to decrease, and we don't want that to happen. We are counting on Jousters to make it possible for us to continue tilting at the windmills of injustice wherever we find them.

# Fiscal Year July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

## Income \$432,555



## Expenses \$523,606



## Quixote Center People 2013

### Staff

Kelly Dassow – *operations manager*  
 Roz Fischer – *program support*  
 Andrew Hochhalter – *associate director*  
 Ericka Holland – *grassroots investigator*  
 Jeremy John – *food and faith coordinator*  
 John Judge – *fundraising support*  
 Dolly Pomerleau – *cofounder/program support*  
 Tom Ricker – *executive director*  
 Claudia Whitman – *GRIP coordinator*

### Volunteers/Interns

Mercy Coogan (volunteer)  
 Cathy Jaskey (volunteer)  
 Marie Keefe (volunteer)  
 Jennifer Prillamen (intern)  
 Yancy Rivera (intern)  
 Nancy Sulfridge (volunteer)

### Board of Directors

Noel Hanrahan (chair)  
 Dolly Pomerleau (vice-chair)  
 Frank DeBernardo (treasurer)  
 Nancy Sulfridge (recorder)  
 Jim Burchell  
 Tom Ricker (ex-officio)

### International Partners

Ketxu Amenzua (Institute of John XXIII)  
 Edwin Novoa (Institute of John XXIII)  
 John Mooney (Institute of John XXIII)  
 Miguel Marin (Director, FEDICAMP)  
 Pat Dillon, RJM (Gros Morne, Haiti)  
 Claude Cine (Jean Marie Vincent Nursery)  
 Marcel Garçon (Director, Peasant Movement of Gros Morne)