

# FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY



## MEMBER'S BROCHURE



A number of years ago an elderly couple began to visit the Fellowship Community, coming initially as patients of one of the physicians practicing in the community and to attend conferences in the area. They visited several times a year, traveling from their own home in rural Connecticut. As the years went by, the woman had increasing difficulty with her health, having a number of major operations, so that managing her own large household grew more and more problematic. She and her husband also looked forward to the possibility of becoming more involved in the activities in and around the Fellowship. Eventually this couple made the decision to move into an apartment in the Fellowship Community, and they began the preparations to winnow out their lifetime belongings to fit the space of a smaller dwelling in Pine Lodge. When it came time actually to move into their new apartment, the gentleman, requiring some care for an unexpected illness, moved into Hilltop House, while his wife moved as planned into their apartment.



For some time they lived this way: the man was cared for by coworkers and by his wife, who was able to spend a great deal of time with him while still remaining quite active and independent in the community. When it became clear that this man would never be able to move to their apartment, his wife moved again, with the help of coworkers, to a smaller apartment in Lady Slipper Lodge. She developed many close friendships with other older members and with coworkers, and one coworker's young son instantly adopted her as his "Spring Valley Grandma." Never having had children herself, she reveled in her lively relationships with the many children in the community. In addition to helping care for her ill husband, she was always willing to help in the community in whatever way she could, whether helping fold laundry, playing Joplin rags on the piano, answering the telephone, baking her famous stollen for the Christmas sale, or helping with fund raising. Her husband was also included in as much of the daily life as possible, always up for meals in a social setting and participating in the cultural events in the community.

One unusually warm spring day, she suddenly had a stroke while eating dinner with her husband and some coworkers, and she was taken to a room in Hilltop House. Gradually her condition became more stable, and she was able to move to a room next to her husband of fifty years. Now she too required the care of the coworkers who had become her friends in the preceding years. At Easter time, all the young children she had befriended came to her bedside with flowers and sang to her. Though both she and her husband were not well, they were always grateful to see one another when it was possible, and the woman was constantly aware of her husband's presence.

Early one winter evening, the husband quietly passed away, and his wife was able to sit by his bedside in her wheelchair and bid him farewell. His service was held in the Goethe Room, right outside their two rooms, so that his wife

was able to participate fully despite her illness, surrounded by friends from outside and within the community.

This woman continues to live at the Fellowship, leading a quiet existence in her light and colorful room, surrounded by pictures from earlier days, listening to the classical music she loves, looking out over the leaves on the hillside, now turning golden as the air begins to bite and the cider press outside her window releases gallons of fragrant apple cider from this year's bounteous crop. She is still able to attend the cultural events and the common meals, to go outside for walks, and even now to develop new friendships and maintain those that have lasted a lifetime.



These two individuals are just two of the many members who in the past forty years have lived, worked, grown ill, and passed away at the Fellowship Community. For many different reasons they choose to become members in a community that for years has striven to offer an essential alternative to the standard rest or retirement home, nursing home, home care, or hospice and the disorienting shuttling from one facility to another that await the elderly and ill in our time. At the Fellowship it is always the hope to address the entire human

being, not just an illness or handicap or a stage of life. Thus the community is not a place to retire but a place to live, from birth to death, in health and in illness. It is not, then, an isolating community for older individuals -rather, it is a community where every attempt is made for the elderly to be surrounded by and embedded within a full range of life's ongoing activity. Young and old live and work together, and there is ample opportunity for an individual to be actively involved in a real work until this becomes impossible.



For some older members this means carrying on with their own concerns, while volunteering part of their time in activities at the Fellowship. For others it means a real commitment to the work here in one or more of these areas: the weavery, pottery, woodshop, candle shop, metal shop, gift shop, greenhouse, bakery, Mercury Press, or library; it could also mean helping in the foundation office, gardening, playing music for others, food processing, cooking, meal clean up, herb preparation, flower arranging, caring for the chickens and sheep, beekeeping, laundry, or helping other members.

For still others, who are perhaps no longer capable of engaging actively in one of these areas, it means that these activities are always going on in their midst, so that they can participate simply by being present. Though members' degree of involvement in community life varies considerably, those who might wish to remain totally detached and to live in the community only when not wintering in Florida would probably not be comfortable at the Fellowship.

The underlying basis of the efforts at the Fellowship Community is a conscious spiritual striving emerging from the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher, scientist, educator, and seer, whose anthroposophy has provided insights for new impulses in health care, education, social life, agriculture, and every realm of human life. Many who live and work at the Fellowship, members and coworkers alike, are supported in their work by study of anthroposophy, but the community is nondenominational and includes individuals from every possible spiritual and social background.

Drawing together community members of varied interests and backgrounds, there is an active cultural life that takes place in the heart of the central care facility in Hilltop House, where everyone is able to take part. There are a number of study groups, concerts, informal chamber music, dramatic offerings, festival celebrations, and classes for members in painting, singing and other arts. For those who are more mobile, the community surrounding the Fellowship also has much to offer in the way of work opportunities, cultural life, and social interchange. In the immediate neighborhood



of the Fellowship Community are located the Green Meadow Waldorf School, an independent school from kindergarten to twelfth grade, the Eurythmy School, the Sunbridge Institute and the Apothecary. There is also an active community college nearby, and New York City with its riches is accessible by car or bus.

Within the Fellowship Community itself, there are a number of different living arrangements available to members, reflecting the wish to create a multi level care community. Three buildings contain a number of apartments for those capable of and interested in more independent living. These buildings also



house coworkers and their families and a workshop space of some kind, whether the weavery or the foundation office or the like. These buildings are maintained by Fellowship coworkers.



In Hilltop House, there are individual rooms with full baths for those who still care for themselves but choose to have more support in daily life, whether in maintaining their spaces or simply having more ready access to common meals and other activities. For those in need of increasing daily care, there are rooms in the care unit, which is located

in the very center of Hilltop House. Some of these are double, some single rooms. These rooms are available to those who find themselves needing increasing care and support from trained coworkers. Because we are seeking an experience in community life, those entering the community are generally still independent and able to care for themselves in basic ways. Naturally a person's medical condition must be one that can be managed within the context of an adult home, which is how we are licensed by the New York State Department of Social Services. While our hope is to be able to live with a member to the end of his life, there are occasionally illnesses that require hospitalization and that we are not equipped to manage at the Fellowship.

The different types of living spaces are reflected also in the three types of fees at the Fellowship Community. To begin with it is assumed that the fees of an older person cannot by themselves support an adequate care circumstance. The economic basis of the community assumes that those active in mid-life can, through their activity, support those not yet or no longer able to support themselves fully, whether young children or the ill or the elderly. The fees are kept as modest as possible and do not cover all the costs at the Fellowship, and donations of time as well as money help to



support the entire community. In addition, the many activities at the Fellowship help provide an economic base for the giving of care.

The Fellowship Community has three basic fees. The first is the life lease fee, which is a one time payment generally given at the time of entering the community. This fee is given to support the existence of the community in regard to its larger physical needs. Therefore, these monies go into our large capital expenses of construction, maintenance, and large durable purchases. This fee varies, depending upon the size of the space in which one comes to live. This sum accrues to the community at a rate of 20 percent per year, and if someone leaves the community, the balance, that which has not accrued to the community, is returned. At the time of death, whenever it may occur, the total sum becomes part of the community's assets. Given the extended refund period, we seek to assure simply because a large sum of money has exchanged hands.

The second fee is the monthly fee. For those living in Hilltop House, this fee helps to support the cost of food and its preparation, general maintenance, utilities, transporta-





tion for medical purposes, and weekly shopping trips. For those not living in Hilltop House, the fee does not include the cost of meals, although meals at Hilltop House can be arranged at an additional modest fee.

The third fee is the support care fee. This fee comes into existence when an individual develops increasing needs in terms of care. We have tried to handle money so that these fees are not seen as a “fee for service” that one pays for what one receives. Rather we make every effort to render services as a gift. The fees then can be considered a donation to support such a circumstance. We are making an effort to avoid the purchase of human service, which renders the service, as well as the human being involved, as a market commodity. We consider the qualities of charity and donation as constituting a better basis for care than being paid for services rendered. Our current fee schedule is available upon request.

Living spaces are individualized by the member’s own furniture and belongings. Independence is also fostered by offering services that can assist an older person without supplanting his own efforts: transportation to shopping areas is



provided several times a week for those without vehicles; transportation to dentists and other medical or social services can also be arranged through the foundation office; a common meal is shared three times a day at Hilltop House for those who wish to participate in a broader social experience, and snacks are served at Hilltop in midmorning, mid afternoon, and evening, again providing opportunities for young and old to mingle and share their experiences.

Special diets can be provided for those requiring them. Medical services are available within the community for those who choose to use them. Two physicians live and work in the community, and their active, anthroposophically oriented medical practice handles the needs of those in Hilltop House while also extending into the wider community. There are laundry rooms for members' use in Hilltop House and each independent building. Mail is hand delivered within Hilltop House and is delivered to individual boxes in Hilltop House for those living in the surrounding buildings. Many also choose to have individual telephones. There is, in addition, a library within Hilltop House for the use of members and coworkers, and also a number of pianos and practice spaces throughout the community. Visitors are encouraged

for either short or long stays, though for longer stays arrangements need to be made through the Fellowship's administration.

Maintaining a community of this kind, with such varied activities and real responsibility to care for people, animals, and the land, requires that many individuals be active in administering the community. The administrative structure of the Fellowship reflects this need, with its interlocking circles of individuals who choose to carry a responsibility for a particular concern or activity. In addition to smaller groups responsible for each work activity, there are more comprehensive administrative circles, including the Executive Circle, Human Care Circle, Fraternal Circle, Education Circle, Financial Circle, Therapies Circle, Child's Garden group, and Cultural Council. In addition there are meetings where issues and concerns can be shared. There are also regular community meetings to share matters that concern everyone at the Fellowship Community. As a not for profit foundation, the community has its own Board of Directors. Daily administration is handled by those in the Foundation Office and by a rotating group of dayplanners, one for the care of people and spaces in Hilltop House, and one for the other work required to maintain the community. Each day there is a House day





planner and a Fraternal dayplanner responsible for carrying the particular needs of the day, and daily questions and concerns can be addressed to these individuals.

In addition to the pressing daily concerns of the community, there is considerable interest in planning for the future. The community has grown steadily since its inception in 1966, and new building projects and expanded activities are an integral part of routine life at the Fellowship.

Those interested in finding out more about the Fellowship Community are strongly encouraged to write to us for more information or to call to make an appointment to visit. Generally, an individual or the family of someone interested in becoming a member at the Fellowship receives information about the community and arranges to visit. Friends and family of the interested members are also encouraged to visit the community. There is a simple application and medical exam required to apply for membership, but the main requirement for someone wishing to come as a member is a sincere interest in actively taking part in the concerns and way of life in community with others.

## **Available Information about the Fellowship Community**

### **Fellowship Community Brochure**

Brief and general overview of the community.

### **Volunteer Brochure**

Description of volunteer programs and current needs.

### **Coworker Brochure**

Description of community life and work written for those interested in joining our work here on a full-time basis.

### **Mercury Press Catalog**

Description of publications available from our Print Shop.

### **Fellowship Candles**

Information is contained in the Mercury Press Catalog.

Our Foundation Office would be pleased to help answer questions, schedule visits, or send information.

For further information please call or write to:

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