

Sustainability and Solidarity: Deepening Social Justice Leadership for These Times

Created by stone circles & OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc.

Program Description

stone circles and OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. have partnered to design a new and bold leadership program rooted in the values of sustainability and solidarity. We aim to deepen relationships and develop the leadership capacity of 18 social change agents in North Carolina by building solidarity across lines of difference, strengthening practices for personal and organizational sustainability, and generating a shared vision for our state and the movement for social justice.

Why This? Why Now?

The time for courageous leadership and breakthrough social justice is now.

Opportunities are emerging throughout our state and beyond for greater multi-racial movement building, more effective organizing across issues, and a shared commitment to sustainable practices that support integrating our work with our humanity. Piecing together tentative solutions from broken structures is not a viable strategy – we need enduring alternatives that call us to harvest our collective wisdom, integrate our experiences and perspectives, and imagine what is possible without ignoring the reality of our landscape or the intensity of our struggle.

How do we bring about the end of the age of cynicism, silos and fragmentation? We need sustainability and solidarity and social justice leadership. We need you. Please join us in this journey.

Organizational Partnership

stone circles (www.stonecircles.org) sustains activists and strengthens the work of justice through spiritual practice and principles. Founded in 1995, we recently created The Stone House, a center for spiritual life and strategic action on 70 acres in Mebane, NC. We are catalysts, joining with others who hear the call for a new paradigm of social change work, one that honors all of who we are and what we bring, one that puts our collective and individual liberation at the center.

OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. (www.opensourceleadership.com), a national consulting practice based in Durham, builds organizational and leadership capacity for breakthrough social change across the globe. We amplify the impact of social change agents through strategic planning and thinking, transform organizations through strategic culture change, and advance the social change sector through strategic field building.

Historically, our two organizations have worked in tandem to evolve a deeper understanding of social justice, movement building, transformational change, and spiritual practice. We are pleased to present a leadership development program that embodies the edge of our organizational paths.

Our Framework for Social Justice Leadership: Pillars of Understanding and Action

Over the last decade, we have witnessed the need for more profound and collective leadership development that builds strong and healthy multi-racial/multi-cultural organizations, groups and coalitions working to create a world in which we all can thrive. The Sustainability and Solidarity curriculum has three pillars of understanding and action:



Learning Objectives

- **Build** deeper relationships of solidarity across significant lines of difference as a foundation for stronger strategic collaboration and movement building.
- **Engage** individual and organizational obstacles that limit sustainability, and counter these through a deepened understanding of transformational practice and practical tools for more intentional workplaces.
- **Generate** an attainable vision for social change in North Carolina and share it more broadly with communities throughout the state.

Program Components:

Learning Retreats: We will convene the cohort for 4 weekend learning retreats, once per season beginning in the fall of 2008. We will meet at The Stone House, a perfect environment for reflection and interaction. Each weekend gathering will combine elements of teaching, practice, reflection, dialogue and documentation.

- **SEPTEMBER 12-14, 2008:** Setting the Space
- **JANUARY 23-25, 2009:** Building the Fire
- **APRIL 3-5, 2009:** Holding Tension
- **JUNE 12-14, 2009:** Walking the Path

Regional Community Forums: In between the weekend learning retreats, program staff and cohort participants will co-convene a series of one-day regional gatherings for a larger audience of colleagues. The theme and design for these Forums will be participant-led.

Ongoing Tools for Integration: A series of four weekend retreats over a year provides a unique opportunity. We believe our work will be maximized with tools for ongoing reflection and integration:

- **Cooperative Inquiry:** Participants choose a question to collectively explore over the year.
- **Peer Coaching:** Members of the cohort will support one another between weekend retreats.
- **Virtual Reflection & Check-ins:** Using technology, we will evolve an ongoing virtual community.

Facilitation Team

Cynthia Brown

Cynthia Brown is the founder and principal consultant of The Sojourner Group established in 2001. She has engaged community and non-profit organizational leaders in coalition building, organizing and advocacy on economic justice issues like worker's rights, worker health and safety, welfare reform, anti-oppression (racism, sexism, class-ism, hetero-sexism, etc.), living wage work, environmental justice, sustainable development, etc. With 25 years of social justice activism, she has used training to increase grassroots people's capacity to build their own organizations, build effective alliances, and advocate for public policies that addresses their needs. Cynthia is a former city council woman in Durham, N.C., a 2002 US Senatorial Candidate, and recently co-chaired the first US Truth and Reconciliation Commission based in Greensboro, N.C.

Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey

For Jesse, a life of liberation flows between strength and suppleness, struggle and rest, and wisdom and love. He enjoys helping individuals and groups skillfully explore this dynamic in their lives and work. Jesse is a dedicated meditation practitioner, board member of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, artist and war-tax resister.

Evangeline Polly Weiss

Evangeline is a master facilitator and social change instigator with a twinkle in her eye! Evangeline enjoys building community in organizations, holding paradox and supporting individuals on a path towards greater wholeness, intentionality and purpose. Evangeline is passionate about waging peace and brings this lens to all that she facilitates.

Cynthia, Jesse, and Evangeline will be joined by a range of co-facilitators and guests.

Accommodations and Hospitality

Our weekends will take place at The Stone House: a center for spiritual life and strategic action. Located on 70 acres of pasture and woodland in Mebane, North Carolina, The Stone House offers beautiful and scenic spaces, nourishing meals, and a welcoming staff who believe hospitality is a daily practice. The Stone House invites guests to participate in the care and tending of the land and the space, and we invite Sustainability and Solidarity participants to provide help with simple tasks during our weekend stays. Sleeping accommodations are a combination of single and double rooms, with semi-private baths. All sleeping accommodations, the kitchen/dining room and most of the meeting spaces are accessible to people with disabilities. We are committed to parents being available to participate in this program and in this spirit, we will support child-care needs.

Application Process

Applications are sought from social change agents in North Carolina. In order to encourage sustainable change and deepen relationships of true solidarity, we are inviting applications from **participants in pairs only**.

Please reflect on your recent social change work. Consider applying with a partner, formal or informal, based on your prior work together and a mutual desire to strengthen your collective impact as social change agents. You do not need to work for the same organization or live in the same town; we invite you to consider this aspect of the application as a first step towards sustainability and solidarity. **Individual applications will not be accepted.**

The impact of this leadership program will rely on the full and concentrated engagement of all cohort participants. We ask that you make note of the schedule and apply only if you can commit to the entire program.

Applications must be received by May 1st, 2008. Participants will be notified of our selection decision by June 1st, 2008.

Fees

stone circles and OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. are committed to making Sustainability and Solidarity accessible to social justice leaders in North Carolina. With generous support from the Seasons Fund and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, we will select participants without regard to ability to pay. Once selected, participants will be invited to contribute, financially or otherwise, in personally meaningful and feasible ways.

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APPLICATION 2008-2009

Applications must be received by May 1st, 2008. We will notify selected participants by June 1st, 2008. Please return completed applications to Margie Hattori at stone circles via email, fax or mail:

stone circles at The Stone House
6602 Nicks Road
Mebane, NC 27302
phone: 919/304-5000
fax: 919/304-1300
margie@stonecircles.org

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip code_____

Day phone_____ Eve phone_____

Cell phone_____ Fax_____

Email_____

What is your preferred method of contact? _____

Organizational affiliation, if any, and/or primary work responsibilities:

With whom are you applying and why? Briefly describe your relationship and what motivated you to choose your partner? Please note: Each partner must complete an application form.

Our process will be stronger if we understand the backgrounds and identities of the participants. To this end, please share with us your personal and social identities – for example, but not limited to, your age, race/ethnicity, religious/spiritual affiliations, sexual identity, class background and identity, gender identity, etc. – that you believe strongly influence your perspective. Please note that stone circles and OpenSource Leadership

Strategies, Inc. do not discriminate on the basis of any identities, and we actively include diverse identities and perspectives in all of our endeavors.

stone circles and OpenSource Leadership Strategies, Inc. are particularly committed to ensuring a multi-racial cohort. Please tell us how you identify racially/ethnically.

Please reflect on your life experience and share with us in response to the following questions. The combined answers to these questions should not exceed two pages.

- **YOUR WORK**

Please describe your work in North Carolina communities. How might Sustainability and Solidarity help you to amplify the strengths and address the challenges?

- **YOUR LEADERSHIP**

Please explain one of your leadership strengths and one leadership challenge in your life at this time.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**

What are the main forces/experiences that sustain and support your work? What more do you need?

- **SOLIDARITY**

Describe an experience you've had as a member of a multi-racial/multi-cultural group or community and how that has shaped you. What tools or support do you need to engage in multi-racial/multi-cultural movement building?

- **VISION**

What would you most like to see accomplished by bringing together leaders in NC social justice work?

THANK YOU

for your leadership and commitment to NC and the movement for social justice!