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EARTH DAY CELEBRATION AND PRESERVATION PROGRAMS, WINTER OUTINGS WITH OLYMPIANS, ARTIST TALKS AND A FILM PREMIERE HIGHLIGHT GRACE FARMS 2016 WINTER-SPRING PROGRAMMING

Emmy-Nominated Naturalist and National Geographic Channel Filmmaker
Mark Fowler Appointed Nature and Wildlife Ambassador

Space Grants Awarded to 42 Not-For-Profit Organizations



Olympic Cross Country Skier Leslie Krichko at Grace Farms © Kelly McGarvey

NEW CANAAN, CT, February 26, 2016 — Grace Farms Foundation announced today a full and dynamic range of programming to be offered this winter and spring at Grace Farms, a new center for nature, arts, community, justice and faith. From Earth Day events and the opening of its Community Garden, to winter recreation with Olympic athletes and conversations with artists, filmmakers and former basketball stars to justice initiatives and domestic violence prevention workshops, the programs advance the Foundation’s mission to bring people together in different ways to collaborate for good.

The Foundation also has awarded a gift of space and resources to 42 national and local not-for-profit organizations that will benefit from the facilities, grounds and staff at Grace Farms.

“Since we opened to the public in October of last year, Grace Farms has already welcomed more than 50,000 visitors and partnered with 25 not-for-profit organizations,” said Sharon Prince, President of Grace Farms Foundation. “Now, as we continue to broaden our reach and make new connections across all five initiatives of Grace Farms—nature, arts, justice, community and faith—we are delighted to partner with these additional organiza-

tions. This two-way relationship will help advance the missions of the grantees and provide greater opportunity for visitors to get involved and give back to the community.”

In addition to offering a wide range of programmed activities, Grace Farms encourages visitors to shape their own personal experiences and enjoy unstructured time throughout the grounds or in the acclaimed River building, designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning architecture studio SANAA. The nearly transparent building, which blends seamlessly into the surrounding landscape, is comprised of five glass-enclosed volumes, including a 700-person amphitheater-style performance space called the Sanctuary; a Library; a living room with a fireplace and a dining room with communal tables made from trees harvested on site called the Commons; an intimate Pavilion with tea services; and a multi-functional recreational and performance space called the Court.

Nature

The Foundation has appointed Emmy-nominated naturalist and National Geographic Channel filmmaker **Mark Fowler**, as Nature and Wildlife Ambassador, to enhance its nature initiative through inspiring educational and wilderness preservation programs.

In conjunction with the celebration of **Earth Day** on April 23, Fowler will launch a nesting-box recovery and preservation program for the **American Kestrel**, a small falcon listed as threatened on the Connecticut Endangered and Threatened Species List, which has been identified on the 80-acre Grace Farms preserve. He also will introduce Mark Fowler’s Backyard Explorer’s program and the creation of certified wildlife habitats at Grace Farms.

“Today we are more connected than ever in the digital world, but we have also never been more disconnected from the natural world,” said Fowler. “At Grace Farms, I believe we have a real chance to inspire kids and families to reconnect with the natural world that surrounds us and feel the awe and wonder that nature can provide.”

Grace Farms also will offer free public programs on Earth Day from 10 am to 3 pm, including a panel discussion titled “**A 21st Century Response to Climate Change and Modern Slavery**,” featuring Dr. James Cockayne, lawyer, author, and head of United Nations University; Martin Whittaker, CEO of JUST Capital, which specializes in tracking corporate performance and environmental impact; Diana Mao, President and Co-Founder of Nomi Network, a nonprofit organization that helps victims and survivors of human trafficking; and Benjamin Skinner, the award-winning journalist and author of *A Crime So Monstrous: Face to Face with Modern-Day Slavery*. Additional events include Mr. Fowler’s demonstration with birds of prey and wild raptors, Betsey Fowler’s “Painting Wildlife” class, tours of Grace Farms’ geothermal system, a children’s wind-chime workshop, musical and percussion performances, and screenings of documentary films.

The River building and trails at Grace Farms will remain open throughout the day for nature walks, lunch, coffee or tea. The Grace Farms Foundation **Community Garden** of 20 raised beds will open to the public for viewing and reflection and be home to a medley of plants, flowers, vegetables and fruits, harvestable for produce until October. Produce will be utilized in the Commons at Grace Farms, and offered to those in the community who need it most. Visitors will be invited to help plant flowers.

Community

Visitors of all ages are invited to Grace Farms’ first **Winter Outing** community day on March 5. The day will feature two Olympians—Champion Nordic skier **Leslie Krichko**, who will lead a Grace Farms trail tour and figure-skater **Brooklee Han**—who will discuss what it takes to compete in the Olympics, and two-time World-Champion snowboarder **Adam Petraska** will join Krichko and Han for a special meet-and-greet. Nature and wildlife programs, games and ice cream-making lessons also will be offered.

On Saturdays, **Open Art Studio for Kids** at Grace Farms offers children the opportunity to learn arts and crafts, followed by free **Saturday Family Matinee** movies for families to enjoy together in a unique and inspiring setting.

The art of tea is regularly explored through programs such as the **River Walk & Tea**, **Journey Into the World of Tea** and a 90-minute **Japanese Tea Ceremony**. Additionally, a new **Junior Chefs 101** culinary course will be offered in April.

In addition to weekly open pick-up basketball and volleyball games in the Court, Grace Farms offers winter recreation sports that are free for the public, weather permitting, including snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and ice-skating. Tai Chi for adults 50 years and older will start in March, and pickleball will begin in April.

Since November, the Foundation has hosted monthly **Community Dinners** in the Commons offering an opportunity to savor an affordable (\$6–10 online) meal with friends and neighbors while enjoying performances by local artists. Each meal is accompanied by a free public program highlighting one of the Foundation’s core program

areas. Upcoming Community Dinners will be held on March 18, followed by a conversation with former basketball star **Walter E. Lockett, Jr.** A Memorial Day barbeque will be held on May 28.

The Grace Farms Library offers books to borrow and purchase and provides the setting for the monthly **Fairytales Fridays** and **Preschool Poetry** reading series, extended public readings of novels and poetry, and resources connected to the Foundation's five initiatives.

Justice

The Foundation's General Counsel & Director of Justice Initiatives, Krishna Patel, and Director of Safety & Advisor for Justice Initiatives, Rod Khattabi, are spearheading the development of an integrated, multi-disciplinary model designed to eradicate child trafficking. Monthly classes for more than 20 officers across the state of CT provide training in how to use **Traffic Jam software** to aid in the identification and rescue of sex trafficking victims. Grace Farms Foundation launched the Justice Initiative in November with a two-day program that brought together more than 700 professionals and experts working in a variety of disciplines and introduced the plan to marshal resources, leverage big data platforms, and identify innovative techniques to help law enforcement officials combat child exploitation.

In April and May, the **Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention class**, providing information and practical tips for women and girls, will be offered again after a sold-out five-week course launched in January for 50 people.

Arts

On April 15, award-winning filmmakers Lee Isaac Chung and Samuel Gray Anderson will present their film **Munyurangabo**, called "a masterpiece" by Roger Ebert. This narrative feature tells the story of two young Rwandan boys, journeying together in the aftermath of national trauma. The filmmakers will also premiere a new film *I Have Seen My Last Born* in a matinee screening the following day. Both screenings will include discussions with the filmmakers.

On March 31, Grace Farms will host **Ilya Kaminsky**, a poet featured in Grace Farms' inaugural book, *and souls are candles*, to read from his works and discuss his highly acclaimed anthology, *The Eco Anthology of International Poetry*.

In February, initiating its new "Practicing" series which explores spiritual and ethical practices through artistic collaboration, Grace Farms Foundation invited a diverse group of musicians and dancers including guest director **Bill T. Jones**, to create a new collaborative work examining the nature, possibility and limitations of empathy. The three-day intensive, including workshop, rehearsal and discussion, culminated in a performance and conversation before a live audience. The weekend was punctuated by the contributions and insights of guest artist Bill T. Jones, the Tony Award- and National Medal of Arts Award-winning director, choreographer and dancer. The Practicing series will include upcoming intensives examining *Awe*, *Silence* and *Joy*.

For Earth Day, contemporary artist **Kysa Johnson**—known for creating immersive works which explore patterns in nature that exist at the extremes of scale—will create a temporary, site-specific installation inspired by the landscape at Grace Farms. On view through May 2016. Also on Earth Day, visitors to Grace Farms exploring the landscape will encounter Indian Classical Music performed by Pawan Benjamin (bansuri) and Shivalik Ghoshal (tabla).

A number of art commissions and installations are currently on view throughout the Grace Farms site, including Thomas Demand's *Farm 56* and *Farm 88*, large-scale photographs of SANAA's architectural models for Grace Farms arranged into abundant, layered compositions; Teresita Fernández's *Double Glass River*, a site-specific installation made of thousands of small, handcrafted silvered reflective glass cubes that bring the landscape indoors; Susan Philipsz's three-channel sound installation *New Canaan*, a music notation designed to facilitate congregational and community singing; Olafur Eliasson's *Mat for multidimensional prayers* (2014, editions 1 – 7 of 24), woven from the wool of Icelandic grey sheep and on view in the Sanctuary; and Beatriz Milhazes' *Canela* (Cinnamon), 2010. The Foundation also has commissioned *Suspended rain*, a light-based work by Eliasson, and a collage by Milhazes.

Faith

Grace Farms provides space for spiritual learning and questioning through programming that includes the provision of Faith and Meaning resources in the Library, and **Monthly Faith Conversations** with Greg Zehner, Foundation Board Member and Yale Divinity School graduate, who leads faith-based topical discussions.

The Foundation continues to program thought-provoking discussions, such as the talk led by Reverend Justin Crisp—co-editor with Miroslav Volf of the new book *Joy and Human Flourishing: Essays on Theology, Culture, and*

the Good Life—that brought together scholars Charles Mathewes, Jürgen Moltmann, Mary Clark Moschella, Marianne Meye Thompson, and N.T. Wright to consider the role of joy in life and faith.

On Sundays, the local non-denominational Grace Community Church holds services in the Sanctuary.

Space Grants

Offering a gift of space and resources, Grace Farms announces its first round of space grants awarded to 42 not-for-profit organizations including 10 national and 32 local Connecticut-based organizations. Grantees and programs include **Voices of September 11th** (for a 15th anniversary gathering focused on resiliency presented in partnership with Grace Farms Foundation on September 12, 2016); **Arts for Healing** (bi-weekly special needs music and art therapy); **Future Five** (a pilot math intervention program for low-income high school students); **STAR, Inc. Lighting the Way** (a weekly book club for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families); **Discovery Center of Ridgefield** and other local nature centers (an ongoing educational nature program that will kick off at Grace Farms' Winter Outing); and **Full Court Peace** (a three-month weekly basketball program to unite, educate and strengthen youth from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds). Organizations such as the **NOMI Network, International Organization for Adolescents, Keep America Beautiful, ICONN** (International Institute of Connecticut), **Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Silvermine Arts Center** and **New Canaan Land Trust**, will hold board meetings, galas, leadership meetings and retreats that will lay the foundation for potential programming at Grace Farms. For a full list of space grant recipients, visit gracefarms.org/partners.

About Grace Farms Foundation

Grace Farms Foundation is a private operating foundation with 501c3 status, established in New Canaan, Connecticut in 2009 to support initiatives in the areas of the arts, justice, community and faith. Supported by individual gifts and program revenues, the Foundation carries out its work principally through the facilities and programs of Grace Farms, an 80-acre property that the Foundation owns, has developed and is managing for the benefit of New Canaan, the local nondenominational Grace Community Church and the greater community.

gracefarms.org

[@gracefarmsct](https://twitter.com/gracefarmsct)

[#discovergracefarms](https://www.instagram.com/discovergracefarms)

Spring Events Calendar (in chronological order)

For a full calendar of events, visit gracefarms.org/calendar.

WINTER OUTING AT GRACE FARMS

Saturday, March 5, 2016: 10 am–3 pm | Free admission

MARCH COMMUNITY DINNER

Friday, March 18, 2016: 6 pm–8 pm | Children - \$6; Adults - \$10 (when purchased online)

CONVERSATIONS AT THE RIVER WITH WALTER LUCKETT, JR.

Friday, March 18, 2016: 7:30 pm–8:30 pm | Free admission

POETS IN THE LIBRARY: ILYA KAMINSKY

Thursday, March 31; 7 pm–9 pm | Free admission

APRIL COMMUNITY DINNER

Friday, April 15, 2016; 6 pm–8 pm | Children - \$6; Adults - \$10 (when purchased online)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT VIOLENCE PREVENTION CLASS

Four-week course starting Tuesday, April 19; 6 pm–7:30 pm | Free admission, Registration Required

SCREENING & CONVERSATION | *MUNYURANGABO* WITH THE FILMMAKERS

Friday, April 15, 2016; 7:30 pm–9:30 pm | Free admission

PREMIER: *I HAVE SEEN MY LAST BORN*

Saturday, April 16, 2016: 2 pm | Free admission

EARTH DAY

Saturday, April 23, 2016: 10 am–5 pm | Free admission

JUNIOR CHEFS 101 CULINARY CLASS

New Recreational Programming

SNOWSHOEING

Tuesday-Sunday: opening–dusk | Free (rentals available)
Rentals: Children - free; Adults - \$5. Poles are also available.

ICE SKATING

Thursday-Friday: 3-5 pm; Saturday-Sunday: 11 am–5 pm | Free (bring your own skates)
Note: Children under 6 yrs old must be accompanied by an adult

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Tuesday-Sunday: opening–dusk | Free (bring your own skis)

TAI CHI FOR ADULTS 50 YRS AND OLDER

6-week course starting March 23, 2016: 9:30–10:30 am | \$100

Ongoing Programming

OPEN ART STUDIO FOR KIDS

Saturdays: 10:30 am–2:30 pm | \$5

FAIRYTALE FRIDAYS

Second Friday of each month | Free admission

PRESCHOOL POETRY

Third Saturday of each month | Free admission

SATURDAY FAMILY MATINEE

Saturdays: 2:30 pm–4:30 pm | Free admission

CONVERSATIONS AT THE RIVER WITH GREG ZEHNER

March 4, April 1, May 6: 7:00-9:00 pm | Free admission

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