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GRACE FARMS FOUNDATION CELEBRATES ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF GRACE FARMS AND ANNOUNCES NEW NATURE, ARTS, JUSTICE, COMMUNITY, AND FAITH PROGRAMMING



Photo Credit: Grace Farms, the West Barn with a new 108-foot-long wall painting, *Moon Love Dreaming* by Beatriz Milhazes, showing through the open doors and windows; © Dean Kaufman, 2016

NEW CANAAN, Conn., Oct. 18, 2016 – Grace Farms Foundation marked the one-year anniversary of Grace Farms, a center for nature, arts, justice, community, and faith, with a one-week celebration and benefit attended by cultural and community leaders, philanthropists, architects, and artists. The commemorative week included the unveiling of a site-specific 108-foot-long wall painting by Brazilian artist **Beatriz Milhazes**; a performance by former New York City Ballet principal dancer **Wendy Whelan**; a presentation of *Practicing Awe* featuring **Gallim Dance**, **Cindertalk**, soprano **Audrey Fernandez-Fraser**, and countertenor **Daniel Moody**; artist **Molly Gochman**'s Red Sand Project; and conversations with **Iwan Baan**, renowned architecture photographer, and **Kazuyo Sejima** and **Ryue Nishizawa**, of the Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese firm SANAA.

The Foundation will continue to advance its five core initiatives, focusing on the preservation and restoration of natural wildlife and flora on the 80-acre grounds; development of new, site-specific, and collaborative art; disruption of human trafficking and gender-based violence; opportunities for people to develop meaningful community; and contemplative spaces for faith dialogue and study. The Foundation has also offered more than 50 grants for not-for-profit organizations to utilize the building and grounds at Grace Farms to advance their missions and is accepting applications for 2017/2018 through Nov. 15.

Upcoming programs include a book launch with international bestselling author Corban Addison to illustrate the ties between supply chains and human trafficking, a gardening and sustainability event bringing together local gardeners and farmers, a gathering of not-for-profit organizations from Fairfield County, and the launch of an ongoing collaboration with the Yale Center for Faith & Culture.

"Grace Farms has become a new environment for individuals and organizations to come together to collaborate for good," said Sharon Prince, Grace Farms Foundation President. "The outcomes in our first year are well beyond what we could have imagined, and we look forward to continuing to serve our community, make a difference in



Photo Credit: Grace Farms; Cindertalk and Gallim Dance performing *Practicing Awe* during the "Possibilities Are Endless" anniversary benefit; © Vanessa Van Ryzin, 2016



Photo Credit: Grace Farms; the Commons; © Vanessa Van Ryzin, 2016

the lives of others, and bring people together across sectors at Grace Farms to actively engage in some of the most complex issues of our time.”

In its first year, Grace Farms, operated by the 501c3 not-for-profit Grace Farms Foundation, has helped draft a bill into the effective Connecticut Public Act. 16-71, one of the most comprehensive state laws against human trafficking. The Foundation has also trained law enforcement on new data technology to disrupt child exploitation; helped revitalize the American Kestrel falcon, which is threatened in Connecticut; recycled 3,500 lbs. of trash surrounding the Long Island Sound; provided visitors and those in need with more than 600 lbs. of produce from the Community Garden; became a resource for established and emerging artists to create and share their work with the public; and fostered community through monthly dinners and family activities. Grace Farms, with its River building and preserved landscape, continues to provide a range of free resources, including book borrowing in the Library, open gym time in the Court, access to curated art installations by renowned artists, and opportunities for visitors to explore faith in an open and natural setting. For more information about the Foundation’s first year please click [here](#).

A Look Ahead

Over the next year, in addition to offering a wide range of programmed activities, Grace Farms will continue to encourage visitors to shape their own personal experiences and enjoy unstructured time throughout the grounds or in the acclaimed River building. A gift of open space to the community, Grace Farms is free and open to the public six days a week.

On Jan. 28, from 12-2 pm, the Foundation will highlight supply chain transparency and its tie to human trafficking with the launch of international bestselling author Corban Addison’s new book, *A Harvest of Thorns*, at Grace Farms. The event will include commentary from Krishna Patel, Grace Farms Foundation Justice Initiative Director; Ben Skinner, Principal and Founder of Transparentem; and Kilian Moote, Project Director for KnowTheChain at Humanity United. Earlier this year, the Foundation was certified by Made in a Free World as an organization with a clean supply chain, free from connections to slave labor.

In February, **Winter Outing month**, Grace Farms will feature seasonal activities including snowshoeing, igloo-building, and cross-country skiing led by former Olympian, Leslie Krichko. Snowshoes will be available for rental through the winter. In the spring, the Foundation will host **Community Kite Day** for visitors to enjoy the warmer weather while flying kites, playing field games and enjoying barbeque.

On March 21, from 9 am-12:30 pm, Grace Farms and Fairfield County Community Foundation’s Center for Non-

profit Excellence will co-host a gathering for not-for-profit leaders in the region to learn from one another and collaborate to find innovative ways to create social change.

Throughout 2017, in collaboration with the **Yale Center for Faith & Culture (YCFC)**, Grace Farms will offer the Center's six-week course "Life Worth Living." The class will meet on Thursday evenings from Feb. 2 to March 9 to discuss a diverse range of philosophical and religious traditions to help participants reflect and answer the question: "What makes life worth living?" On April 5, the Foundation will also host an **Interfaith Seder** at Grace Farms with Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut, Rev. Mark Lingle, Rabbi Joshua Hammerman, and Dr. Kareem Adeeb.

Grace Farms will commemorate **Earth Day 2017** on Saturday, April 22 from 10 am-4 pm with a celebration of the natural world. Visitors can watch a live falconry demonstration, explore the Community Garden, join panel discussions ranging from climate change to endangered species, and enjoy guided nature walks of our 80-acre landscape and its diverse habitats.

Furthering its commitment to the environment, on June 24, the Foundation will host a **Garden and Sustainability Event** at Grace Farms' Community Garden to connect horticulturalists from neighboring communities and provide resources and training for people to grow their own gardens. Participants will be able to interact with professional gardeners, watch the launch of a new honey bee program, and will be encouraged to "Grow a Row" of produce in their gardens to donate back to those in need. A portion of produce from Grace Farms' Community Garden is currently donated to Person-to-Person, a not-for-profit organization that provides families with emergency assistance.

In summer 2017, Grace Farms will host *Practicing Silence*, an interdisciplinary and collaborative workshop for diverse groups of artists to explore and examine ethical and spiritual questions. Launched by Arts Initiative Director Kenyon Adams, the outcomes of the workshop are presented to the public in a work-in-progress showing. Previous workshops include *Practicing Empathy* and *Practicing Awe*.

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About Grace Farms Foundation

Grace Farms Foundation was established in 2009 as a private operating foundation with 501c3 status in New Canaan, Connecticut. The Foundation supports initiatives in the areas of nature, arts, justice, community, and faith, and encourages participation on a local, national, and global level. Grace Farms Foundation carries out its work principally through the publicly available facilities and integrated programs of Grace Farms, an 80-acre property owned and operated by the Foundation, where individuals and not-for-profit organizations can come together to collaborate for good.

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