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Toward Sanctuary

Ellen Skilton

More than two years ago, in our earliest meetings as part of the Sanctuary atmosphere, we wrestled with the promises and pitfalls of the meanings of the word sanctuary. Two key areas of discomfort emerged and have stuck with us as we've engaged in this process of community engagement and art making. The first had to do with the ways that sanctuary for some often means or implies the exclusion of others. The second had to do with the ways that the term sanctuary can gloss over the rough edges of our actual lived practices in ways that are dishonest, self-satisfied, and damaging to people whose safety and security are threatened. For example, while politicians celebrate or vilify Philadelphia as a sanctuary city, Philadelphia's immigrant community leaders responded to the 2016 presidential election with the following statement:

We respectfully ask that you stop using the word Sanctuary

at this time; it is an inaccurate description of our city. Let us instead work together to build the kind of city we all want to live in, one that respects all of our HUMAN RIGHTS, regardless of race, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, etc.

—juntos.org

These concerns led us to include "toward" in our discussions of sanctuary and to wrestle with how to get at the underlying idea of imagining a world, a city, a neighborhood, a home in which movement toward sanctuary is possible.

A key element from the beginning of this work was to extend our "toward sanctuary" activities, actions, and creations to embrace all who are marginalized. In the partnerships we've created with Prevention Point, New Sanctuary Movement, Broad Street Ministry, Laos in the House, and others, we have sought and continue to seek ways of imagining and

realizing our futures in relation to what Broad Street Ministry calls “radical hospitality,” what the New Sanctuary Movement calls “sanctuary from the ground up,” and what Jeanne van Heeswijk calls “training for the not yet.” At her talk at Fleisher Art Memorial on January 25, 2017, I stopped to write down Van Heeswijk’s words: “We are resisting segmentation and re-establishing connections....being an artist means collectively imagining futures.”

It’s an embodied form of care that runs through the collaborators and collaborating organizations, through all the reflections on sanctuary in this publication, through the installation of the sanctuary dome at Thomas Jefferson University at 10th and Locust Streets this spring and through its presence at the Philadelphia Museum of Art this fall.

It has never been more clear that sanctuary is an action, it requires movement and engagement, and it is not a static place or label or idea. Moving toward sanctuary requires connection, interaction, and imagination. In the forms of sanctuary identified by the Sanctuary Stewards, one that stands out to me as an educator,

a social scientist, and an applied theater practitioner is the idea of facilitation: “Learn to be effective community leaders, while engaging horizontally, as a co-participant, rather than vertically, as a boss.”

While the dome was in Center City, I acted as a stand-in Sanctuary Steward for a few hours on a Sunday afternoon. During that time, I had interactions with ten to twelve strangers, most of whom stumbled upon the dome without knowing what it was. Some of the people I talked to were clearly moved by what they encountered; others were uncertain, shy about entering the space. When asked what makes them feel safe or unsafe in Philadelphia, some talked about physical safety and others about more intangible yet pervasive concerns about their well-being. I found it took a bit of bravery from my introverted self to seek to practice deep welcoming throughout the afternoon. And yet, with each interaction, it took less effort and felt more natural, more engaging, more possible. And then, as I was packing up to go, two people entered the space tentatively on their way to see Saturday Night Live at the Walnut Street Theater.

As I told them about the sanctuary dome, one stopped me and said, “Do you also welcome people here who don’t believe in sanctuary?” I said, yes, of course, but at that moment, I wanted to run, to go back and find friends and collaborators who already believe in this work, but we continued to talk—as Van Heeswijk says—to resist segmentation. It was uncomfortable, but we persisted. In those few moments, there were no magical transformations in us or in the unequal systems that keep divisions and inequity in place. But the creation of a sanctuary dome and the action of practicing deep welcome did create an opening for shared humanness and connection between unlikely conversationalists who disagreed with each other.

It’s so easy to feel overwhelmed and immobilized in the face of systemic oppression. To wonder, what can I do? And no doubt there are many, many ways to work toward and imagine possibilities for the future. What my engagement with this project has retaught me is that the arts are not separate from struggles for justice, but incredible tools for envisioning the world we want to create together as fellow humans on this wounded planet. This proj-

ect and our collective movement toward imagining sanctuary for all reminds me of something that Michael Rohd from the Center for Performance and Civic Practice posted when NEA funding was being threatened earlier this year. He said, “We must not shout—save the arts! We must sing—we stand together working towards equity [and] inclusion...To make the case for the arts at this moment is to connect the needs of our nation’s soul to the needs of our nation’s people.”

As you read this publication and engage in the sanctuary aspects of *Philadelphia Assembled*, you will hear the melodies, harmonies, and discordant sounds of many Philadelphians singing a song that invites us toward sanctuary. Welcome.

—Ellen Skilton,
Founding Board Member of Just Act,
and Professor of Education,
Arcadia University



Photos: Joseph Hu, Philadelphia Museum of Art



Toward Sanctuary dome launch at Thomas Jefferson University, Lubert Plaza, June 2017.



Stewardship Curriculum

Frances Rose Subbiondo and Phoebe Bachman

Becoming a place
of Sanctuary is
the only way the
U.S. can defend its
right to exist.

Welcome to the Sanctuary
Stewards Guide.

Would you like to share a deep
breath with us?

Do you want to check in?

Check-ins are intended to help
folks “shed to presence”—shed
whatever they might be carrying or
perhaps recently experienced that,
left unshared, would ultimately
make being present together dif-
ficult or impossible. We invite you
to share this practice with whoever
is with you, or to write yours on the
blank back pages of this book.

At the root of offering sanctuary
is love.

Who we love and how we love
is political. Wrestling between
where we find our belongings,
we concretize how we see the
world, what we value, who we are
(becoming). We are never individ-
ual, but a shifting set of relations
from which we move in and out.
Stewarding sanctuary is entering
into an agreement of relationality.

This guide is less a how-to and
more a collection of thoughts,
prompts, and collected wisdom,
aimed at building our ability to
offer and co-create sanctuary
together. The words that follow
grow out of ongoing conversations
amongst a working group of peo-
ple from across the city exploring
the concept & craft of sanctuary.
As part of *Philadelphia Assembled*,
in the spring of 2017, a group of
Sanctuary Stewards convened to
train and learn alongside different
community partners who, in their
own unique ways, actively create
and maintain safe(r) spaces in
Philadelphia. A Sanctuary
Stewardship curriculum was
created as a basis for this deep
learning. As we wish to engage in
radical hospitality, it occurs to us
how well-equipped (or savvy) folks
have to be in order to roll with this
dynamic landscape, and endeavor
to host sanctuary for all. We look
towards discovering a *spiracular*
center between cultivating the
confidence to attempt it at all
& the humility of deep service.¹

This curriculum disrupts a singular
notion of sanctuary and instead
explores its complexities and
works *toward* sanctuary.

Safe(r) spaces cannot be legislated
or guaranteed; they are co-created
in the moment and at that time
represent both a thin margin of
possibility and, often despite best
efforts, an exercise in ephemer-
ality. From LGBTQ youth, to sex
workers, to black bodies facing
police brutality, to an immigrant
living in fear of displacement,
we ask how might we create true
sanctuary for all the city’s residents.

First, we step back, and allow ob-
scured or hidden paths to emerge.

It feels important to also note that
we all practice different forms of
sanctuary and stewardship in our
everyday lives already. Many of
these stewardship pathways arise
from unique cultural backgrounds,
growing out of shared experience,
common need, and consistent ap-
plication. As such, in order for any
group to offer meaningful care to
those from diverse backgrounds, it
becomes more important to draw
from the widest possible toolsets,
which also means unlearning,
stepping back, and listening.²

¹ A spiracular center is a realm of transcendence above & between binary poles, e.g., the spiracular
between give and take is share.

² Many people continue to steward and maintain oppressive systems because they’ve been
raised in them. Whether this is white supremacy, patriarchy, individualism, or capitalism, these
dominant buzzwords are pervasive.

Together, we engage in this practice of thinking critically about what it means to live collectively and to honor the expressions of those around us. Then, we organize, and create spaces intended to provide a sense of safety, and offer invitations to self-care, asylum, and refuge. This is collective work, where we each take the time to host, offer, and receive. In our experience it's often a fumbling process, with messiness being a seemingly inevitable quality of the work. Yet, in the process, we offer one another support and—not unlike a train of ants tripping over one another—manage to move Earth for Life. We build and nourish ourselves by acknowledging what makes for successful group work, creating community agreements that honor how people show up in the space, while also making room for the unexpected.³ It is an assurance that we can't be sure, but we still have each other. We are all students; we are all teachers. There is not just one group of people who "need" sanctuary; in order to thrive in this world, we need to be able to see the needs of all people and all life.

We celebrate our survival, as we remember and share the lives of the disenfranchised.

We carry their spirits with us, and invite them to inform and co-create our practice of sanctuary stewardship. And, we welcome the spirits of radical hospitality, harm reduction, storytelling, advocacy, and direct action to inform our future together.

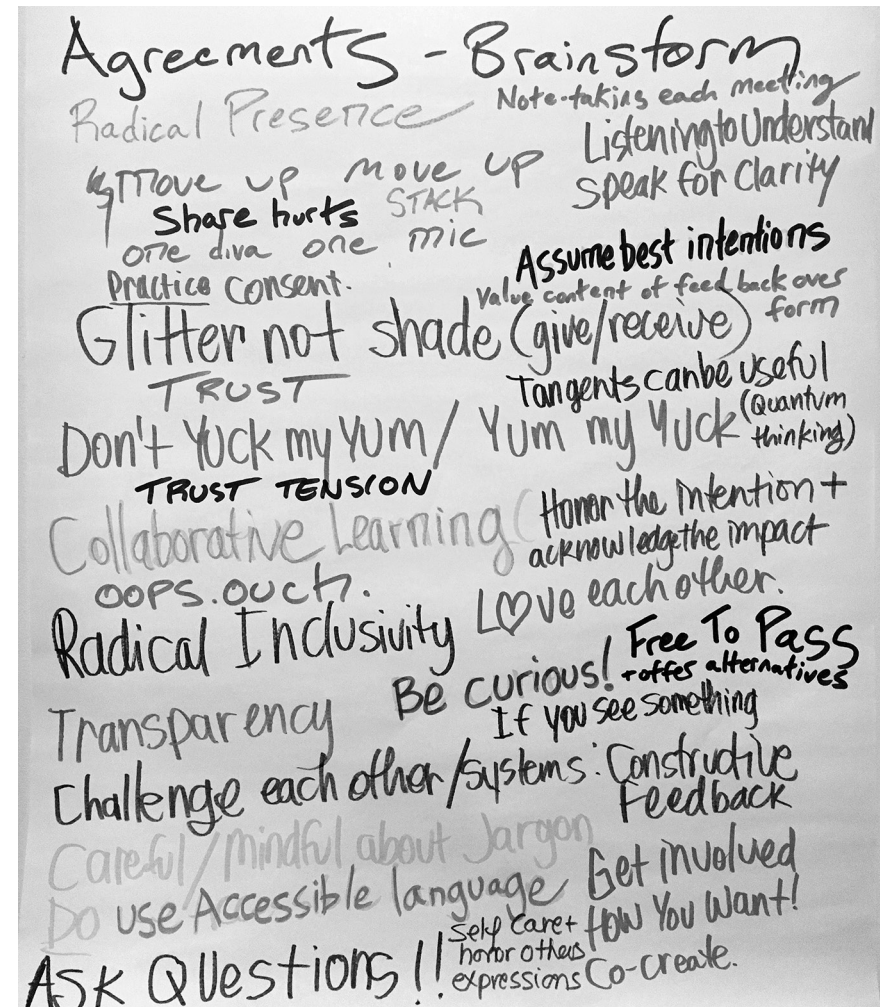
Humbly, we invite you to find your affinity group, to connect with your neighbors & friends, and to practice this work together. Our success as a species on this planet likely resides, at least in part, in an ability to be with one another in ways that affirm & support the natural expressions of all life. This is an active practice, ever-evolving.

According to the African proverb: "When spiderwebs unite, they can tie up a lion."

We endeavor to create a culture where banding together implicitly makes more sense. Moreover, we hope to share a pattern language of sanctuary principles so that other groups can practice banding together more easily, supported by a cultural and community architecture born of shared, experience-tested practices.⁴

³ Community agreements are guidelines for a group to form and create a safe(r) and welcoming environment.

⁴ A pattern language is a method of describing good design practices or patterns of useful organization within a field of expertise.



Sanctuary Principles

Curriculum = Earth Literacy + Embodied Awareness (a spectrum understanding of our origins, boundaries and selves) + Appropriate Technologies

✧ Earth literacy

One key to understanding sanctuary is understanding Home—and for humans, Earth is inseparable from Home. Therefore we posit that Earth literacy is an essential foundation of growing sanctuary.

Cultural competency & social movement literacy:

We are not here alone, nor is our context just born. It's been here for millennia. Culturally, we need to trade reinventing the wheel for justly respecting those whose shoulders—and often, whole lives & bodies—upon which we stand. This shared awareness of identity, history, and legacy is essential to build trust.

✧ Embodied awareness

Part of this journey is growing a deeper understanding of our own physicality, as well as that of the people with whom we share space & time. This is meant to respect the continuum of ability and to serve as a way in which we use our bodies as containers/tools that can also be used to further this work.

✧ Appropriate technologies

Crowdsource & share social & cultural technologies that bring disparate groups of people together quickly & effectively.

Facilitation: Learn to be effective community leaders, while engaging horizontally, as a co-participant, rather than vertically, as a boss.

Cultures of consent/practices:

Practice a culture of consent to more fully honor the complicated & often traumatic life stories of dispossessed & displaced peoples.

Deep listening/compassionate

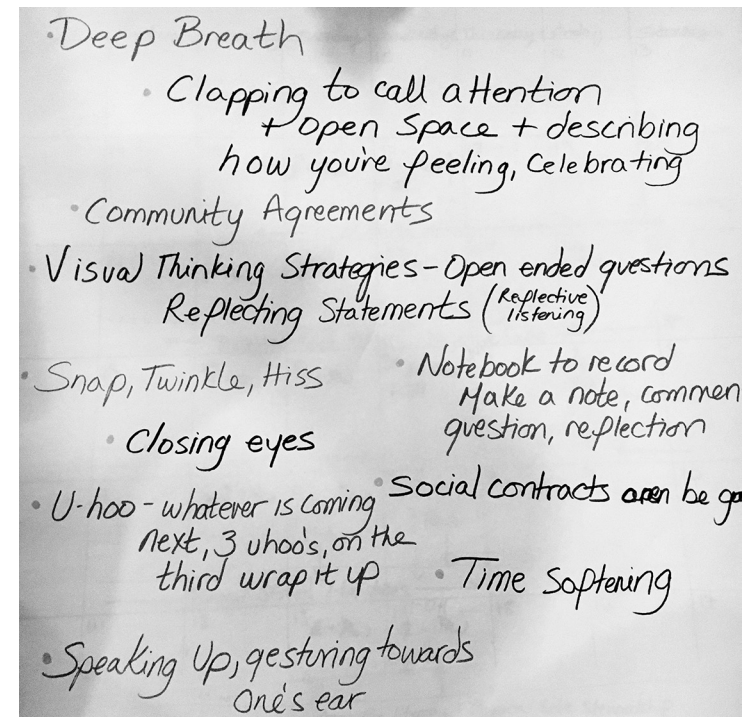
communication: Practice listening with humility, without judgment, openly, and reflecting felt meaning with compassion.

The ultimate goal of replicating this model of being and hosting is to understand the importance of growing this sacred work outwardly in the world as an ethos & a practice.

A living system that does not in any way reproduce itself will not be a living system for long:

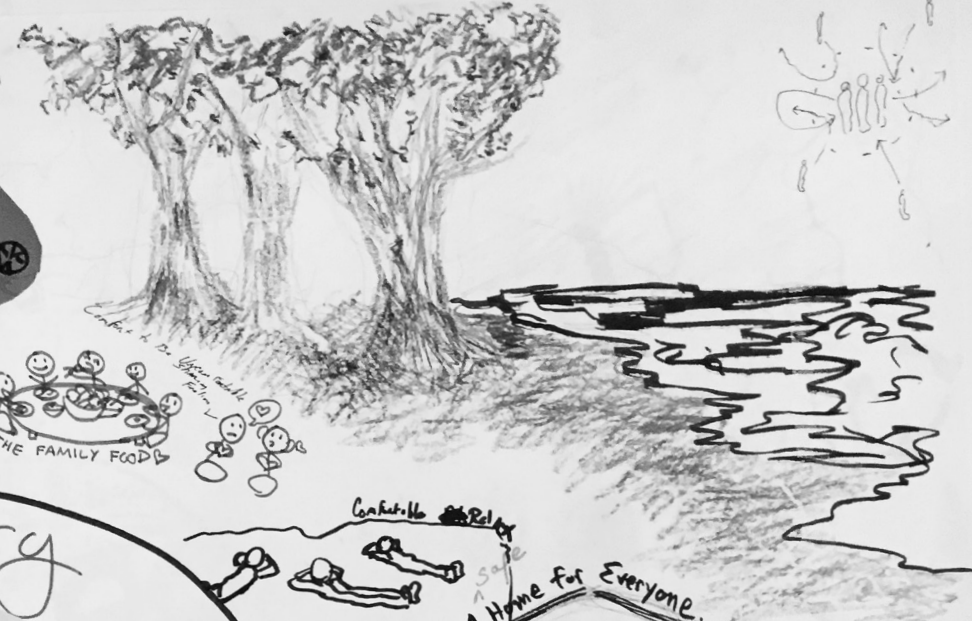
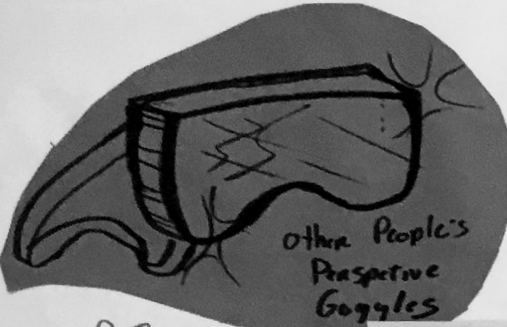
If we could realize our wildest dreams for a Sanctuary Stewards program, each one of the sanctuary stewards would be a seed on the wind, going back to their respective communities with a toolbelt of open-source learnings & teachings.

They would continue to connect across communities, tapping into a growing network of sanctuaries and Home-places. Those who are willing to jump into this work will begin to believe in a different world, a world where sanctuary is part of the fabric of life.

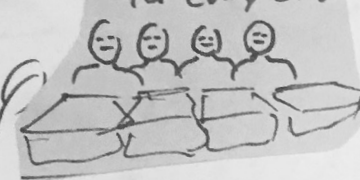




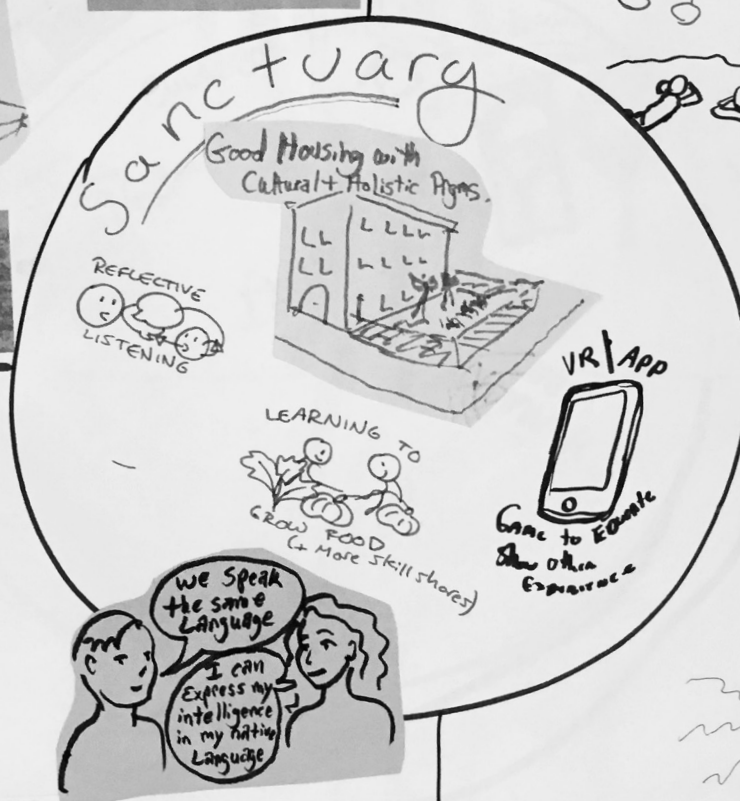
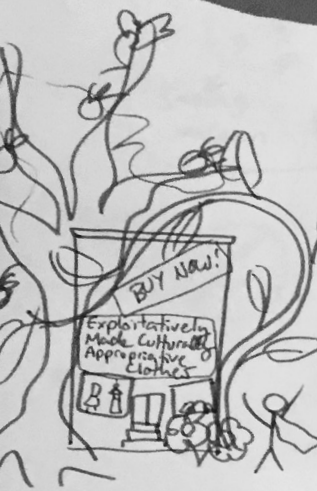
Collaborators and stewards at the Toward Sanctuary dome at Thomas Jefferson University, Lubert Plaza, summer 2017. Photo: Joseph Hu, Philadelphia Museum of Art.



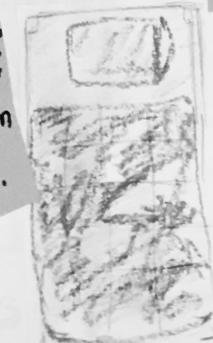
Kindness Class
For Every child.



Borderless



Home But Not Your Home.



Learning to make space for opposing needs



Defining sanctuary activity with the Sanctuary Working Group



On Sanctuary: Personal Testimonies and Principles



Sanctuary Space

Mayaddah Alhumssi

I imagine this space as a delightful, tranquil, welcoming place that embraces people with kindness, like a mother embraces her baby with tenderness. The dome with its curvy shape achieves synthesis of form and function perfectly. In order to enhance this feeling, a cozy atmosphere is created by using colorful fabrics, comfy furniture, and warm lighting. This space is for everyone seeking refuge, so I envision that any person who enters this place should find some touches from their culture, even words from their language. When people recognize these words, like "welcome" or "thank you," in their different languages they feel appreciated and happy.

The dome is designed to create a safe place to express feelings and ask others for help, to value emotions, and to allow people to share their feelings. Therefore, I would suggest to include asking the following questions as part of implementing a series of Sanctuary Model Tools:

How are you feeling today?

What is your goal for the day?

Who can help you with your goal?

"اب حرم"

"آل هسو آل ها"

"آر لكش"



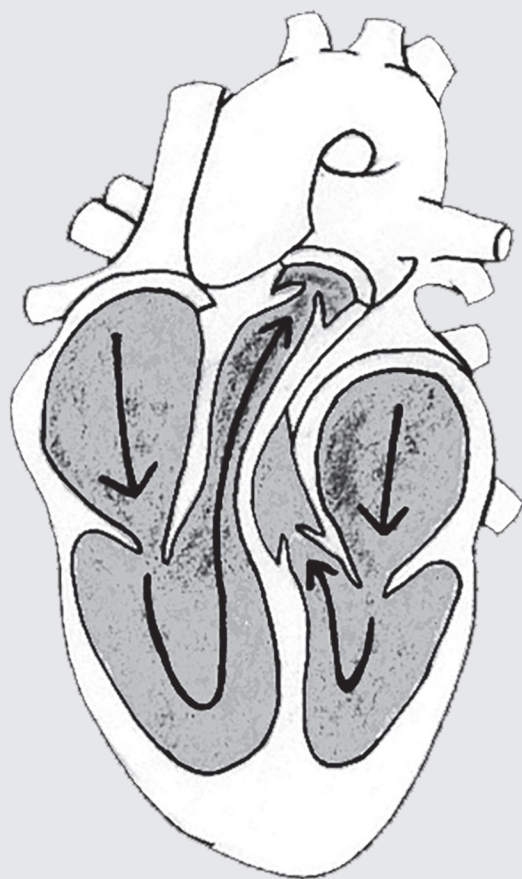
Broad Street Ministry

Brenna McGinnis

At Broad Street Ministry, we steward sanctuary through our practice of radical hospitality. We work to create an atmosphere where everyone feels a sense of belonging, and where no one is treated like a stranger. Each day our doors open and guests are greeted with a warm handshake and welcomed into a space where they will be treated with dignity and respect. The practice of radical hospitality means that when we open our doors, we invite the whole person into our space, wounds and all, and meet them where they are in that moment. We are as welcoming and engaging as possible, regardless of whether our guests are working through addiction, mental illness, and/or behavioral problems.

One of the hallmarks of the “BSM Way” is our trauma-informed approach. We take great care in creating a space that is responsive to our guests’ needs. Our physical space and our services are designed with the goal of reducing

the immense stress that many of our guests experience outside our walls each day as they attempt to access scarce resources. Our services address the immediate needs of accessing food, clothing, and a mailing address, but go a step further by doing so in a way that addresses the underlying impact of living with what we term a “scarcity mindset.” For example, we serve food, but we do so at round tables that facilitate eye contact and conversation, which helps guests who experience much of their lives in isolation to engage with one another as fellow community members and form relationships. We believe in the transformative power of those relationships and so we create a safe space for them to grow. Building relationships is our way to engage with each other as whole people in order to create a community of support. We’re all just walking each other home.



AORTA

*anti-oppression resource
& training alliance*

On Facilitation

AORTA [Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance]

Our visions of the future are limited by the realities of our present. One of the most magical things facilitation can do is to help expand what we imagine to be possible. As facilitators, we can help to create these temporary spaces of possibility—where we collectively redefine what can be, even in small ways. In doing so, we expand our capacity to vision, mobilize, and organize for change.

Facilitation can create moments and spaces of sanctuary where there is dignity and justice for the full personhood of every participant. Meetings are the places where we build culture and trust, collaborate and generate ideas, and practice being in community with each other. In our meetings we are given an opportunity to practice acting out our values in small, regular, and daily ways.

And yet, there are so many barriers to achieving this. Even the most well intentioned or highly skilled groups can inadvertently

perpetuate barriers to full participation and access to democratic process. This happens through group dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression that often marginalize people of color, trans and gender nonconforming people, people with disabilities, queer people, women, and those with limited access to the cultural cues and financial resources that come with class privilege. It happens due to differences in language fluency, or learning style. As facilitators, we need to actively work to change this.

Facilitation is not neutral. Facilitation upholds and ensures the power of the whole group, not a few.

To that end, here are a few facilitation tips (you can find more on our website: aorta.coop).

✱ Ensure everyone is able to participate, not just those who feel most comfortable speaking up and making cases for their ideas.

✱ Work to prevent attempts made by individuals or smaller groups to overpower the group as a whole (these are often not intentional). They may look like interrupting/ speaking out of turn, showing up with a fully fleshed out proposal and expecting it to be passed without any previous group involvement, or going back on or not following decisions the group has already made.

✱ Ensure the group follows its own agreed upon decision making process.

✱ Hold the group to its agreements. While some openers like community agreements may feel mundane, movements like Standing Rock and Idle No More remind us that the practice of breaking agreements is how the colonizers of the United States first started this nation's long tradition of genocidal practices against Indigenous people. By taking the agreements between us seriously, we align our work towards building racial justice, and we build a culture of integrity, love, and accountability.

✱ Name, intervene, and address systemic power in action.

1. **Name what you see happening.**
Point out and address discrepancies in who is talking, patterns in who is being interrupted, etc. Ask the group to bring more awareness to these patterns and work to change them. Inform the group you will help them do this.
2. **Ask questions to support self inquiry.** What makes you say that? Where did you hear that? What do you mean by that? Can you tell me more about that?
3. **Support the leadership of those targeted.** Allow people to respond on their own behalf.
4. **Create space for those who are quieter:** "I'm going to take a moment to see if anyone who hasn't spoken in a while has something to say."



Restaurant as Sanctuary

Cristina Martinez

Para formar un restaurante santuario se necesita en primera, estar abiertos a todo el mundo. No tenemos barreras de color, ni de raza, ni de religión. Solo queremos que todos estemos juntos y podamos compartir una mesa. No importa el nivel económico, ni si eres rico o eres pobre, lo importante es compartir y hablar con el que está al lado.

Y eso también te da seguridad para poder disfrutar de la comida de un lugar tan especial. Y eso lo hace el santuario, que es una protección para todos, si eres un musulmán, si eres africano, si eres mexicano, si eres de Puerto Rico, no hay límites de fronteras. Esto es lo que para nosotros es un santuario, que es un lugar pacífico, que no queremos pleitos, ni guerras, ni paros. Solamente queremos compartir la mesa o lo que tenemos en su lugar como un restaurante.

Y es bien importante tener la cabeza, que es el dueño y la columna, que son todos los empleados.

Para poder hacer un restaurante santuario y sembrar estas semillas, la cabeza es la principal. No tienen que haber límites en tanto a la comida, en probar todo lo que viene de otros restaurantes, aceptar la cultura, disfrutar los sabores, disfrutar los colores y compartir con todo lo que es la comunidad. Principalmente la comunidad inmigrante, la comunidad que viene de todos los países, reunidos en Estados Unidos, en Pensilvania.

Este, pues hay tanta gente que emigra y no sabemos qué vamos a hacer, pero somos recibidos, pero todavía nos falta un poco más de dignidad. Entonces, creo que el restaurante santuario puede ser un lugar para reunirse las culturas, las costumbres y es algo que todo mundo puede compartir. Y cuando hay barreras, cuando existen malas ganas, el sistema está hecho, el sistema es roto. Pero cuando el sistema empieza a poner puertas y cerrar, eso ya no podemos permitir que siga pasando porque eso nos lleva a la esclavitud.

Entonces, lo más importante es que todos tenemos que compartir la mesa, conocer a nuestros vecinos, saludar a nuestros amigos, gente que no conocemos, pero que tal vez un día él nos va a dar la mano en las calles, pero para compartir y hacer más fuerte es un restaurante.

To create a sanctuary restaurant, it is first necessary to be open to everyone. We have no barriers of color, race or religion—we want only for everyone to be together and to share a table. Regardless of economic status, whether you are rich or poor, what is important is to share and talk with whoever sits beside you.

It's also comforting to be able to enjoy food from a special place. And that makes it a sanctuary, a protection for all, whether you are Muslim, African, Mexican, or from Puerto Rico—there are no boundaries. This is what a sanctuary is for us, a peaceful place. We do not want fights, wars, or strikes. We just want to share the table, or what we have in its place, a restaurant.

It is very important to have the head, which is the owner, and the spine, which are all of the employees.

In order to make a sanctuary restaurant and plant these seeds, the head is key. There must not be any limits, in terms of the food, tasting everything that comes from other restaurants, accepting the culture, enjoying flavors and colors, and sharing with the community—mainly the immigrant community, coming from all countries to meet in the United States, in Pennsylvania.

There are so many people who migrate and do not know what they are going to do. We are received, yet we still lack a little dignity. So I think a sanctuary restaurant can be a place to gather cultures and customs and is something that everyone can share. When there are barriers, when there is bad will, the system is finished, the system is broken. But when the system begins to close doors, we cannot let it continue, because it will bring us slavery. So the most important thing is to share the table, to meet our neighbors, to greet our friends, and to greet people we may not know but one day might shake hands with in the streets. To share and to make stronger is a restaurant.



Building Sanctuary From the Ground Up New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia

Blanca Pacheco and Sheila Quintana

At New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia, we believe sanctuary is a vision continuously created through centuries of struggle. Through this struggle, we connect to those who came before us and to our faith traditions that laid out this vision thousands of years ago—from God instructing the Israelites to establish cities of refuge to the Prophet Muhammad declaring Medina will be a sanctuary for the people. We are working, organizing, reaching and yearning towards that vision—a vision of collective and personal transformation. This is a dance with the vision and history of Sanctuary, where our work pushes and evolves Sanctuary, just as we are challenged and changed by it. We strive with fierce faith to build sanctuaries in ourselves, as people, and in our communities. All our work, campaigns, and community building are part of a larger vision to build Sanctuaries within ourselves, our cities, and our world. This disastrous political moment is

also the birth of something big and beautiful and powerful. It is the birth of an expanded Sanctuary for everyone. A Sanctuary built by the people. This is a vision defined and organized by undocumented people who have lived in the urgency all along. We believe that we are more than our trauma, more than our immigration status—we are people full of dreams, feelings and joy. We are resilient, strong, and bold and we love and care for each other.

It is the birth of holistic organizing that invites the complete person into the movement for Sanctuary. This is the moment to build bridges with different communities and join forces to fight for a world where all our basic needs are met and where love is our only law. We see Sanctuary as the umbrella that covers all of us from the storm, and births a new world. We are committed to the work of building not just a Sanctuary City, but a Sanctuary world.

That work is ongoing and we stand in solidarity with all of our brothers and sisters in this city and this earth fighting for collective liberation.

In early March, we received a call on our emergency raid hot line that Immigration had grabbed someone in a neighborhood in North Philadelphia. Neighbors went into the street and asked the ICE agents to explain what they were doing. The agents had arrested a man they had been following for a few weeks, but after taking his fingerprints, they let him go, saying he wasn't the person they were looking for. We all know that if no one had been there, they would have taken him from our community. The action of the community was loving your neighbor in action, stepping out of our houses to build Sanctuary. That morning taught us that the legislators or governments are not the ones that decide to give or end a Sanctuary City, the ones who define Sanctuary. It is us. Sanctuary is inside of us, and we the people will build Sanctuary from the ground up, in our home, in our neighborhood, the city, and in the world.



Prevention Point

Clayton Ruley

Sanctuary means many things to many people. For the folks at Prevention Point Philadelphia we work to provide a non-judgmental space that provides a host of services to help ensure the safety of the participants no matter what activities they engage in. While we have a focus on intravenous drug users and those engaging in sex work, we have services that our community at large can access in a low-threshold model. Our home base of Kensington is one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in the city in which many are struggling to thrive. We know that a stigma free environment along with materials and education will promote better mental and physical health outcomes. At Prevention Point, we provide a well rounded set of services including the only legal syringe exchange program in the city, case management, overdose reversal training and kit distribution, free medical clinics, a drug treatment program, HIV/HCV rapid testing, a "Ladies night", HIV treatment, HCV confirmatory blood draws, linkage to primary and

specialty care, referrals to food, clothing and shelter, a 28 bed respite, a mobile outreach team, a drop-in center, legal clinics, meals and sandwich distribution and more.

Our syringe exchange program has helped to reduce new cases of HIV from 48.5 percent in 1991 to 5.3 percent in 2014, according to the AIDS Activity Coordinating Office's (ACCO) last report. Participants have shown that through education, materials, respect, and love they can be the instruments of change that we need. Sanctuary for these participants allows for this type of breakthrough.

That said, the struggle continues. We have an ongoing opiate epidemic and an overdose epidemic happening at the same time. We need sound public health strategies and increased access to the necessary resources. We look forward to continuing the progress made in the last 25 years of our existence as an organization and to being a leader in the fight!



Take Back the Night Philly: Mission Statement & Points of Unity

This organizing committee is guided by principles of intersectionality, anti-oppression and combating rape culture. All members must be open to learning about these ideas and reflecting on their own biases. We understand that unpacking and unlearning our own biases and privileges allows us to create space for the various experiences of survivors of all different backgrounds & narratives and the ways they experience rape culture and other violence.

We believe that we live in a culture that excuses, tolerates and even encourages sexual violence and domestic violence. We are working toward a world without sexual assault and one in which communities can heal from and prevent sexual assault and domestic violence. We are fighting for a world that understands and respects Consent Culture.

We support anyone who identifies as a survivor of sexual assault or domestic violence, anyone who is supporting someone else who

identifies as a survivor, or anyone who is unsure whether or not they have been sexually assaulted or been in an abusive relationship.

We support survivor's self-determination in their own healing process and level of comfort in their involvement.

We recognize that issues around rape culture & domestic violence are amplified when intersecting with discrimination based on race, gender, class, ability (physical & intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges), documentation status, and sexual orientation. We see that systematic oppression, especially that of black, brown, & indigenous people, queer and transgender people, and women & girls, result in higher rates of violence, more silencing of voices and less justice.

For this reason, we intentionally prioritize speakers and participants from these communities and strive to create a safer space for intersecting identities.

We believe that all survivors and individuals from systematically oppressed communities are free to respond to their oppression in any way that they see fit. We do not police or decide what kinds of responses to victimization are acceptable.

Our work and organizing are informed by prison abolition, harm reduction, and transformative justice. We strive to uplift community responses to sexual assault and domestic violence which don't support state violence.

We stand in solidarity with and support the fight for reproductive rights and reproductive justice.

We recognize that sexual assault, domestic violence and a culture based on rewarding domination and oppression, harms entire communities. We believe it is everyone's responsibility to take sexual assault and domestic violence seriously and to work to change the conditions that allow it to happen. We believe there are no "innocent bystanders".

Our committee seeks to create a public safer space for healing and learning for survivors and allies who wish to work towards an end to rape culture & non-consensual culture.

We are committed to ongoing education and actions that challenge systems of power and oppression and stand in solidarity with other organizations in our coalition working for these same goals.

** (developed with support from PSSC's Points of Unity & in coalition with the MTERC)*



Photo: Mike Arrison Photography

The Physiology of Trauma Basics: a Public Service Announcement (& why consent is so damn important)

Amanda Spitfire

THIS is a public service announcement to any victim blaming jerks and/or people who clearly don't know enough about our bodies' response to traumatic stress & assault—

so you should stop talking and listen.

...as well as for sending some love & solidarity to all the survivors silently suffering with internalized victim blaming narratives because of society's insistence on ignorance:

❖ "attempted" sexual assault can be—and often is—JUST as traumatizing as "completed" sexual assault. being able to "fight off" your attacker or moralize with them why they shouldn't assault you doesn't make the survivor "lucky."

(because what an unhealthy and strange narrative that is...)

"you're so lucky you only got assaulted a little bit"....

this narrative negates & ignores the fact that sexual assault is—among other things—a physical assault as well, which happens to involve sexualized body parts.

the threat & fear of the completed assault & the need to fight one's way out of being dominated without consent, is fucking traumatizing; regardless of the result.

❖ conversely but similarly—when someone "freezes"—aka dissociates & their central nervous system (CNS) literally shuts down/goes 'off-line': they have NO control over their body's ability to move.

what this means is the BRAIN has literally said to the muscles & nerves:

"nope—I've assessed this situation & if you try to run or fight things will get exponentially worse or you might die—so we're not moving right now.... okay?"

(this fear may not just be in the moment of the current violence, which then affects other interactions. freezing also happens with children survivors & with acquaintance or family member assaults. when the oppression is coming from a known or formerly trusted person, shock as well as fear of further harm & repression are present).

these are survival mode responses: an energy & information exchange between your brain that doesn't include your cognitive consciousness.

this is physiological & neurobiology.

this is your central nervous system speaking & unfortunately for anyone who this has happened to:

you had NO control over this.

it was NOT YOUR FAULT you froze.

so, everyone else—KNOCK IT OFF with all that: "why didn't you scream... or run... or fight harder" bullshit.

equally unhelpful commentary: "what do you mean you didn't move.... what do you mean you didn't fight... what do you mean you didn't yell"...

just stop.

we know you are feeling anxious & helpless & angry & experiencing lots of confusing vicarious feelings because of what happened to your loved one..... we get it....

take a breath. think. do what you need to do in order to be grounded & present and say nicer, more supportive things to the person you are trying to hold space for. please & thank you.

✳ you've probably heard of "fight, flight, or freeze."

well freeze is the least talked about one & with pretty much all of these bodily responses—flight (if someone runs or emotionally dissociates), fights (literally verbally or physically fights), or freezes (that CNS shutting down & physical dissociation occurring thing that we just learned about);

it is a survival mode response.

it is the body's primary job for existence.

it is an instantaneous, involuntary process for survival.

✳ the upsetting, annoying, frustrating and often angering & depressing post-trauma effects on the body can take quite a toll on a person's sense of self, reality,

ability to communicate, connect or even know what to do next. . . among other things.

this is a natural response to surviving a situation where you, your subconscious, your brain, or all of your everything, thought you might die or experience pain. it makes things a bit hard to trust & see the same after without lots of support & processing (whatever that means for you).

be kind to yourself. be patient with yourself.

be open & honest with those you trust when you are ready.

you are not alone.

as awful or confusing or strange as you might be feeling, EXACTLY what is supposed to be happening, is happening.

your brain & body & thoughts are working it out;

the right & left sides of your brain are trying to communicate again & move forward.

take care of yourself & remember you are entitled to be cared for.

this concludes our anti-victim blaming/trauma response basics lesson for today.

please be better support people to your friends/crews/lovers and selves.

thank you.



Eco-literacy

K is for Kitchen & West Philly's Community Supported Kitchen

Frances Rose Subbiondo

One key to understanding sanctuary is understanding Home—and for humyns, Earth is inseparable from Home. As a result, i offer that Earth literacy is an essential foundation of growing sanctuary.

To clarify language, a living system denotes one that is open, self-organizing, possessive of the characteristics of Life, and that interacts with its environment. Humyns are living systems that live nested within countless larger living systems (including families, communities, bioregions, cultures and more), extending out at least to the limits of our planet's spheres. Meanwhile, countless other living systems nest within us—down to the organelles within each of the cells of our body, and the bacterium with whom we share our bodies. So, as we seek to grow places well suited to our beings, we explore the questions: How does Life work? What does it need? And, what are it's natural expressions?

The Earth was once uninhabitable—an alternately freezing cold & scorching hot, lifeless place. Our planet's journey from this condition to the layered gardens of Earth that we inherited is wholly indebted to the work of Life. Life tends to grow more of itself, and more kinds of itself, as it does the work required to do so naturally. It was this pattern that, over billions of years, transformed the Earth into a place where we could evolve into being.

To underscore this concept, successfully evolved living systems perform this brilliant work of regeneration over the course of their natural existence. Seemingly without order to do so, Life is employed in service of itself, as it grows the fertility & potential of its Home environment. All of a sudden perhaps, this starts to sound incredibly relevant to growing sanctuary.

Thematically, all elements in the system are viewed as positives & intrinsically valuable, even when their relationships within & across may not be apparent. Additionally, when it encounters opposing forces, Life does not simply resist them but transcends them.

In terms of what it needs to survive & thrive, Life needs fuel. The adage “we are what we consume” is real. Diets comprised of vital, wholesome nutrients will tend to grow that which is also vital & nourishing. Consumption here of course includes food & drink, but also in our times: media, culture, learning, etc. What do we consume—individually, and culturally? How may we grow stronger containers for sanctuary by changing our consumption patterns?

The journey of a fertilized egg, as I heard shared by Miriam MacGillis of Genesis Farm, may serve as a strong teaching example of the importance of both transcendence & fuel for Life’s journey. At fertilization, a developing chick appears as little more than a speck of red in a sea of yolk. But it is an open, living system, absorbing the perfectly formulated food that its ancestors have evolved the ability to offer it.

Slowly, that red speck grows into a recognizable chick, having transubstantiated the food of its Home into its body. Soon it faces a reality that it has run out of food, and that it must break out of its shell or perish. The chick can either: hope, sit, and wait that there may be an infusion of more food, though if it does that it will die—or it could do something its never done before, listening to its ancient will for life, and break through—to crack open at great effort the shell that has been its whole world to date.

When it does break through, it realizes it hasn’t died, and it’s in a whole new universe—with nourishment far more diverse, interesting & delicious than it was before—its whole existence exploding in creativity & possibility. This to me reads like prime directives for sanctuary creation.

I believe that we have drawn immense energy & nourishment from the collected wisdom that has shaped human existence to date. We have absorbed the beliefs, traditions, and values of our ancestors & cultures—and are now beginning to go hungry. We are the collected consciousness, and the shells around us are our world views.

We see our vessels cracking open in the world today, and can’t be sure whether what’s outside will demand that we cut ourselves off from what has sustained us to date. Here again though, feeling or knowing deeply the wisdom & processes of Life & living systems, may allow us to more easily lean into its 4 billion+ year legacy of miraculous practice. Together, we can take these leaps of faith beyond that which we have known, trusting that solutions & allies will emerge—because all of Life wants us to succeed.





Excerpt from 'In Solidarity' (1984)

William Lewis Goldsby

This poem was written as a reflection on my travels during my younger years to Central America, Southern Africa, and my incarceration in Germany during my military years. It is a reflection on how profoundly the powers-that-be have attempted to condition us to be disconnected from our divinity from which each of us was created, from our collective soul force, and power and our lifeline connection to each other.

Prayer of solidarity

Our growth has been profound and innocent.
Our creator continues to enter our lives and heal us.
Together we are deeply blessed.
Together the meaning of our creator takes physical form.
Together life is at its purest.
Together we are protected from the randomness and ignorance of life.
Together we are connected to all elements, dimensions and forces.
Together we experience the wrath of life with hope.
Together we are obligated to create a new justice paradigm.

—William Lewis Goldsby



From our Sanctuary Stewards

A Seed. A Home. An Understanding. Of the Great Storm that will always pour, and as long as it does, there is a Calm Eye in its center with winds that move with each other. The Collective Breath. The feeling of Cedar Avenue in the early a.m., the talking of trees and the sky on my way to work every morning. Gratitude. Alternative solutions holding systems bearing roots.

—Jensen (Jazz!) Huff

Sanctuary is a place, but also an ideological approach, wherein people from disparate backgrounds can equally find safe haven, a validated existence, but also feel challenged to connect with others, build community, and grow themselves into the best version of themselves they can be. The component of safe challenge is really important to my definition of sanctuary

—Emily Chow Bluck

Safety, whether physical or emotional, is the highest concern.

—Charlyn Griffith

To me sanctuary means a safe home where I don't have to feel afraid, where I can be me and not have to worry about being judged or scorned. It means of a place where you come together as a community and can be strong for one another because it is easier to stand with others and it feels good to know you are not alone.

—Devonte

Sanctuary is a complex idea. It can, in the broadest sense, be the desire to offer comfort, care, and solace to those in need. More specifically, it can be a program or institution that offers a person or people specific services in the midst of a crisis. Ethically, to provide sanctuary is a responsibility we have to each other and necessary to manifesting healthy, open communities. By personally offering sanctuary we become better people because we expand our capacity to care outside of ourselves and our own communities.

—Ricky Yanas

Sanctuary to me, begins with safety, the safety to freely be myself without judgment. It represents a structure where people can live in equality away from patriarchal systems of oppression. Equality for all.

—Willow Krake

Sanctuary is a heart space, threads that bind people through life based on shared values and mutual support.

—Sarah Muehlbauer

To me sanctuary means giving people hope for the future, a light at the end of the tunnel, and a space to heal. The existence of sanctuary presupposes the existence of spaces that are unsafe, frightening, harmful, etc, and for me sanctuary exists as a way to mitigate that side of life.

—Ron Whyte

Sanctuary is a snare, a trap that I want to be caught and released from again and again.

—Christian Hansen

Open Your Eyes

Open your eyes!

Can you not see the pale green leaves

That cling, like a gentle mist,

To the black branches of the trees?

Will you not smile at the purple violets

Who nod cheerfully as you pass?

Do they not bring you happiness?

The creamy blossoms dancing, floating

Like fragrant snowflakes on the breeze,

Do they not fill your heart with gladness?

Look! Can you not see the sunlight,

Shimmering and flashing on the water?

The blue sky fluffed with lazy clouds?

Can you not see their joy?

Can you not share it?

The air is filled with song:

The wind whispers in the trees,

the water chuckles happily to itself,

Distant thunder grumbles harmlessly.

Will you shut your ears to their gentle voices?

Will you shut your eyes to their compassionate smiles?

Do not close your heart to the joy and beauty around you,

Rather, embrace it.

For if you cannot love the world, you cannot love yourself.

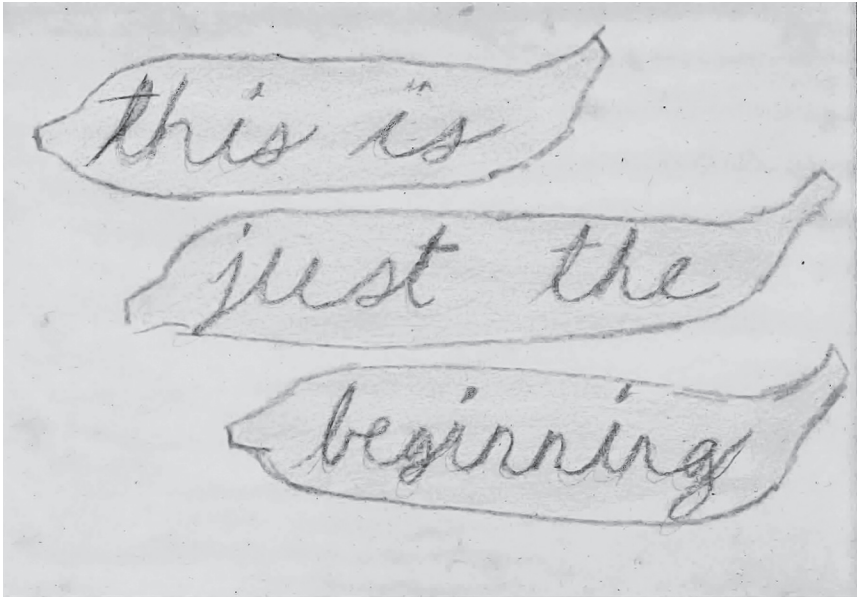
And without love,

There is nothing.

—Kirsten Savitri Bergh

[illegible]

Handwriting practice lines on page 64.



Philadelphia Assembled

Telling a story of radical community building and active resistance, *Philadelphia Assembled* articulates a collective narrative about our city and some of its most urgent issues. Within this project, these concerns are organized around five principles. **Reconstructions:** How do we re-write our histories? **Sovereignty:** How do we define self-determination and unity? **Sanctuary:** How do we create and maintain safe spaces? **Futures:** How do we reimagine our tomorrow? **Movement:** How can we share knowledge and form new networks?

The Sanctuary atmosphere, in particular, concluded that there is no singular definition of sanctuary (what is sanctuary for one person might not be the same for another). As such, their activities throughout the city in spring of 2017 sought to embody a dynamic understanding of sanctuary that expresses various models of self-care, asylum, and refuge. Throughout the fall of 2017, the Sanctuary atmosphere continued to focus on the intimate, personal ways in which individuals express their own forms of sanctuary to help them survive and thrive.

The Sanctuary Stewardship Program is a project that grew out of this Sanctuary atmosphere. The program's primary charge is to share essential skills across networks, allowing each participant to better, more fully, create and steward sanctuary wherever they are. In the process, the Stewardship Program is helping to seed and grow cultures of sanctuary and stewardship here in Philadelphia, and throughout the world.

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Philadelphia Assembled is a project initiated by artist Jeanne van Heeswijk in collaboration with stakeholders from across the city and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The views expressed by individual participants or in materials developed as part of *Philadelphia Assembled* are representative of the project's collective conception and production and are not, necessarily, the views of the Museum or any other individual involved.

Philadelphia
Museum of Art

WILLIAM PENN
FOUNDATION

The
Pew Center
for Arts
& Heritage

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