



# Brentwood Unity



Volume 3, Issue 6

June 2018

## From Barriers to Boundaries

Years ago, I met a man named Oklin Bloodworth. We became good friends and would walk each morning. On our walks together, Oklin would share some of his wisdom. One pearl of wisdom, in particular, was how he had trained his family on how to treat him with same respect and dignity he had cultivated for himself over the years. He'd say, "But it wasn't always that way. Brother, you've got to train people how to treat you!"

Oklin was in his mid-sixties when we met. Oklin had a business named Music With A Kiddie Beat. He traveled throughout California performing for zoos, schools, parties, and libraries. He passed away last year, but that man will be remembered for years to come given all the lives he touched over the years. He made a difference. On our walks, I discovered what drove, inspired and guided Oklin Bloodworth to make that difference.

During the time we walked, Oklin was in his seventies. He was an African-American—a term he never once heard growing up on "his side of the tracks--most definitely not the American part. He did, however, hear other words spoken to him that would install a minefield of worthlessness, thereafter requiring his constant care and attention to push through that field to find his creative gift to the world.

The other words Oklin heard seared a groove in Oklin Bloodworth's brain and would give him the pain that would later become his prize, words delivered by his grandfather when Oklin asked why he couldn't go across the tracks to play with the white kids. His grandfather replied, "It's because you ain't nothing but a poor ol' nigger and that's all you'll ever be and it's all this world is gonna give you!" Those words **were** indelibly stamped into his brain and would prove to be the grit of sand that would become the pearl that passed on to many people.

I cried when I heard Oklin tell me this story and I cry as I retell it now. I let these tears continue to wash out the pain carried by people who live behind painful barriers, serving as a substitution for a real life of joy and belonging, and tears for those who have believed the lies that choke our spirit, dim our light and stand in the way of unfolding our unique gift to the world.

While Oklin's grandfather was once seen as a tyrant, he passed down the piece that Oklin would ruminate on for decades to come, slowly alchemizing pain into joy, coming to deeply understand the process of becoming. His pain would be the catalyst that would transform his life. His gift would manifest through the musical talents acquired from his father, Oklin Bloodworth, Sr., an accomplished blues singer and musician. Oklin learned to sing and play the guitar, be it jazz, rock or kiddie music.

Mr. Bloodworth came to play; he came to win. He was on a mission to let all children know they truly are love and beauty and each one having a gift if they will only listen to their voice inside, rather than the voices of those who say it cannot be done. Oklin Bloodworth pushed through a painful barrier and learned to set up healthy boundaries, while retraining those around him. He didn't have time to play games with adults; he was too busy playing them with children, planting the seeds of love that I have personally witnessed time and again by adults running into him and going crazy about how he changed their lives forever.

I loved listening to you play, Oklin.  
Now, when I listen to the wind, I can hear you play.

Forever changed,  
Gregory

I recently took my puppy to training. He has been unruly to the point that we haven't been able to have visitors in our home. He isn't mean, in fact, he's the exact opposite- very friendly and loving. He acts towards our friends like a dog would act with another dog. Unfortunately, humans don't appreciate being nibbled, mauled and jumped on by a 50 lb dog. I tried to control him, but ultimately I was left with virtually no control over the situation.

The first thing the trainer said was, "This dog doesn't have any boundaries." It was my job to have established boundaries and I had not done that, partly because I didn't know how and partly because I didn't want to be mean. Oftentimes we may not realize that we haven't established boundaries until we're at the point of upset.

We may forget or ignore the importance of boundaries, and in some cases, we deny them. Having and honoring boundaries is a statement of personal and mutual respect. After all, we get what we tolerate.

If we want others to honor boundaries, here are some steps you can take:

First, we must define the boundary. I will not tolerate my dog jumping up on me or other people, invading their personal space and sometimes causing pain.

Next, we must announce the boundary. We are responsible for what is allowed to go on in our lives. We must express to those around us what our boundary is. With my pet, it's a little bit trickier. I have announced to him that there is a new boundary by keeping him on a leash inside the house.

The final step is to create consequences and follow through. My dog is now physically held apart or moved away from anyone when he tries to jump, bite or chase after them. When you don't have clear boundaries, you'll find that others may make decisions for you.

If there is something going on in your life that causes you to feel uncomfortable or unhappy, it is quite possible that you have not defined and announced your boundary. Pay attention to when you feel your boundaries are being crossed, by others or by yourself. When are you more inclined to say yes when you really want to say no, or no when you really want to say yes?

When you recognize that your feelings and needs matter, you'll create boundaries and once you've identified the actions and behaviors that you find acceptable, you owe it to yourself to announce your boundary.

If you draw a line in the sand and someone crosses it, don't back up and draw a new line. Stand with the consequences you have chosen. Honor yourself by honoring your boundaries.

The people who love, honor and respect you will live within your boundaries.

Much Love,  
Amy



# Mindful Musings

## Break the Boundaries

Break the boundaries of  
 Preconceived limitation,  
 Free yourself from bondage,  
 The stone which pulls you drawn;  
 Explore your nature  
 Divine in full attention,  
 And fine the root of truth:  
 —discover who you are.  
 In journey of the mind,  
 Beyond the Mind,  
 There's a revelation:  
 The Spirit's dwelling-place,  
 The Immortality;  
 From your consciousness  
 You come around to be,  
 And you will never  
 Doubt your own capability;  
 For the World, only in relativity exists:  
 Perpetually in move,  
 Growing and transforming: —  
 Expand yourself, illuminate,  
 Reach deep awareness  
 Until you find the key  
 To your imprisonment;  
 You will ascend the  
 Heights of spirituality,  
 And thus you will  
 Recognize your own identity.

*Mihaela Pirjol*

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## Freedom in Knowing

Boundaries for you,  
 Boundaries for me.  
 Most are invisible  
 For us not to see.  
 But when they  
 Are missing,  
 Our egos  
 Start hissing.  
 Creating a mess  
 For all to see,  
 And end up being  
 What we don't want to be.  
 Boundaries aren't fences,  
 But options to be free!

*Anonymous*



# Nature Knows No Boundary



Ever borrow something from a friend or neighbor? You gossip while there too, right? Perhaps even align yourselves against a common enemy. The “Wood Wide Web,” can do all of this for plants. Fungi are made up of tiny threads called hyphae. These travel underground, connecting the roots of different plants in an area, even different species, together, allowing them to communicate and so much more. Some researchers say the trees of the forest and the mushrooms we find growing next to them are so interconnected, that it is hard for them to see trees as individual entities any longer.

Though this may sound like news to some, indications of “Earth’s natural internet” go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, beginning with German biologist Albert Bernard Frank. He is the first to discover a symbiotic relationship between fungal colonies and the roots of plants. Frank created the term “mycorrhiza” to describe this symbiosis. Today we know that approximately 90% of all land-based plants are connected through what is called the mycorrhizal network.

Since the 1960s we’ve known that fungi aid in plant growth. Since then, scientists have learned that they also help plants locate water and provide certain nutrients through mycelia strands around their roots. The fungal networks protect plants from infection too, by providing protective compounds, stored in the roots, which are triggered should the plant be attacked. This phenomenon, called “priming,” makes the immune system of the plant far more effective. In return, plants feed their fungi carbohydrates on a consistent basis.

Besides defense, mycelia also serves as a communication network, connecting even to plants which are far away. Paul Stamets first had the idea of such a network in the 1970s, while studying fungi under an electron microscope. He found that there were startling similarities between the precursor to the internet, the US defense department’s ARPANET, and these fungal networks. Yet, it took decades of research to uncover the sheer breadth of the phenomenon. Other scientists have since likened it to an animal’s nervous system.

In 1983, two studies proved that poplars and sugar maple trees warn each other about worrisome insects. When one tree becomes infested, it warns others who begin producing anti-insect chemicals, to protect against attack. These signals are sent through the air. Even then, the splinter group of scientists studying this phenomenon were for decades waved away. Since the late 90’s however, such researchers have proven that trees transfer carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and other nutrients, back and forth via mycelia. Today, though only a scant few study it, the phenomenon is no longer in doubt.

Suzanne Simard of the University of British Columbia discovered nutrient exchanges between Douglas fir trees and paper birches. She believes it goes even farther than this. Simard says that small, younger trees are helped through the network by larger, older ones. Without such aid, she said, seedlings wouldn’t stand a chance. Simard found in one study that food strapped seedlings stuck in the shade received carbon from nearby trees to help them along.

Of course, Simard isn’t suggesting that plants have consciousness or that they are individuals in any sense. But they are interacting and helping one another survive. Other experts warn that although we are aware of such exchanges, to what extent they occur remains unclear.

In 2010, Ren Sen Zeng, a researcher at South China Agricultural University, proved that plants communicate through the mycelia network. Zeng and colleagues found that when infected with blight, tomato plants release a chemical signal to warn others nearby. These plants also “eavesdrop” on neighbors, to determine when to build up their defenses against oncoming pathogens. A 2013 study found that broad beans also signaled neighbors through the fungal network, this time due to an aphid infestation. But not all interactions are helpful. There is a dark side to the mycorrhizal network, too.

A phantom orchid for instance cannot produce its own energy. Instead, it steals carbon from trees close by in order to survive, accessing the nutrients via the mycelia threads connecting them. Other orchids, known as “mixotrophs” can photosynthesize, but steal from others when it suits them. Plants also at times compete for resources such as light and water. When this occurs, some release toxins to slow their competitor’s encroachment, in a process called, “allelopathy.” Certain species of Eucalyptus, American sycamores, acacias, and sugarberries are known to do this. The chemicals they release travel the network and block nearby plants from establishing themselves, or reduce the number of friendly microbes at their roots to impede their opponent’s growth.

Some experts theorize that animals may be taking advantage of the fungal network for their own ends. The same chemicals that bring helpful fungi and bacteria to a plant’s roots might also signal worms and other harmful organisms looking for a snack. But this theory to date hasn’t been tested. Some say the fungal network gives us another example of how interconnected all life on Earth actually is and how each organism depends on another and in turn is depended upon. It also makes us question whether such actions constitute behavior, what motivated plants to link up to begin with, and fungi to lend a hand in the endeavor.



# Brentwood Unity Weekly Groups

## Mondays:

### *Imagine the Possibilities*

11:00 – 12:30 pm in the Sanctuary

"Imagine the Possibilities" affords the group the opportunity to access and catalyze creative imagination in our lives. Einstein asserted that imagination is ultimately greater than knowledge. Why is that so? Imagination is in the moment. It is creative and it is playful. It is in the Now!  
 Contact: **Ron Vieira:** [925.354.5003](tel:925.354.5003)

## Tuesdays:

### *Book Study and Meditation*

1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 10 am

Join us for reading and meditation. Afterward, we will enjoy lunch together.  
 Feel free to bring something to eat. Coffee & tea are provided.

Contact **Gail Caruso:** [925.778.2702](tel:925.778.2702)

### *Holistic Energy Group*

## Evenings

Every Tuesday from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in the Fellowship Room

Come explore ways to support a healthy mind, body and spirit!!!

Contact **Ray Wilson:** [925.759.8676](tel:925.759.8676)

## Wednesdays:

### *A Course In Miracles Made Easy*

Wednesdays at 11:00am

**Alan Cohen**, ACIM student and teacher for over 30 years, takes the Big Picture ideas of the Course and brings them down to earth in practical, easy-to-understand lessons with plenty of real-life examples and applications.

Contact **Karen Mingus** [925.684.4528](tel:925.684.4528)

## Evenings

### *Women In Harmony*

3rd Wednesday of the Month at 7:00

Join us Wednesday, June 20 at 7 pm for coffee, tea and conversation in the Fellowship Room.

Contact: **Kathy Cullar:** [925.586.1025](tel:925.586.1025)

## Evenings

### *Men's Meeting*

Meets every other Wednesday Evening

Join us June 13 & 27 at 7 pm in the Sanctuary.

## Thursdays:

### *Come Experience Reiki Energy*

Contacts:

Thursdays (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>) 6:00 – 7:30pm Reiki Distant Global Healing Work

**Bonnie Daniel:** [925.989.5960](tel:925.989.5960)

Thursdays (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>) 6:00 – 7:30pm Reiki Hands-On Healing Work

**Ray Wilson:** [925.759.8676](tel:925.759.8676)

## Signs of Healthy Boundaries

by Sharon Martin, LCSW

Saying "no" without guilt  
 Asking for what you want or need  
 Taking care of yourself  
 Saying "yes" because you want to, not out of obligation or to please others  
 Behaving according to your own values and beliefs  
 Feeling safe to express difficult emotions and have disagreements  
 Feeling supported to pursue your own goals  
 Being treated as an equal  
 Taking responsibility for your own happiness and  
 Not feeling responsible for someone else's happiness  
 Being in tune with your own feelings  
 Knowing who you are, what you believe, what you like

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## 12 Ways to Say "No"

The Nice Guy's Guide to Saying No  
 by Sharon Martin, LCSW

1. I'm sorry I'm busy.
2. Thanks for thinking of me. I really wish I could.
3. I'd love to, but I'm already over committed.
4. Unfortunately, that's not something I can do at this time.
5. No thanks.
6. I'm already booked.
7. Maybe next time.
8. I wish I could, but I just can't.
9. I don't think I'm the right person to help with that.
10. Sorry I can't help you this time.
11. Sounds fun, but I'm not available.
12. That's not going to work for me.

# June Guest Speakers

**Brentwood Unity values our gifted speakers and workshop facilitators.**

We equally value our members and guests, welcoming all, regardless of financial contribution. Our *suggested* love offering for workshops is \$10-\$25.

**June 3**

**Christopher Brown**

***It's about TRUST***

Trust has many layers, trusting yourself, trusting others, and trusting the divine flow of life. Join us this Sunday as we explore trust and how it affects our experience of happiness, aliveness, and satisfaction. As always I look forward to being with you. Love, Christopher.

**June 10**

**Gregory Barnes**

***Bound Up By Boundaries***

Having healthy boundaries with other people can be a good thing. But our boundaries are set from the parameters of rules and beliefs we were given in childhood and forward. Let's explore whether our boundaries keep us safe or just keep us separate from others.

**June 17**

**Verona Garland**

***Embracing Boundaries***

Navigating those seemingly inscrutable, invisible, and indistinguishable emotional barriers can be tricky but there are some good insights to help you better understand and embrace your boundaries. Join Verona, Asst. Minister at Agape Bay Area, for some wisdom she has garnered over the years.

**June 24**

**Fred Luskin & Shani Robbins**

***What Does It Take To Have Happy Relationships?***

Brentwood Unity is in for a special treat. Dr. Luskin and Dr. Robbins, Stanford Professors will both be on stage with a bit of banter between them on happy relationships. Together, these two have taken the secular world by storm with research into mindfulness and forgiveness. Join us with a grand Q & A session at the end. Here's your chance to ask the pros!

## 10 Way to Build and Preserve Better Boundaries

By Margarita Tartakovsky, M.S.

Boundaries are essential to healthy relationships and, really, a healthy life. Setting and sustaining boundaries is a skill. Unfortunately, it's a skill that many of us don't learn, according to psychologist and coach, Dana Gionta, Ph.D. We might pick up pointers here and there from experience or through watching others. But for many of us, boundary-building is a relatively new concept and a challenging one. Having healthy boundaries means "knowing and understanding what your limits are," Dr. Gionta says. Below, she offers insight into building better boundaries and maintaining them.

**1. Name Your Limits-** You can't set good boundaries if you're unsure of where you stand. So identify your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual limits, Gionta says. Consider what you can tolerate and accept, and what makes you feel uncomfortable or stressed. "Those feelings help us identify what our limits are."

**2. Tune Into Your Feelings-** Gionta has observed two key feelings in others that are red flags or cues that we're letting go of our boundaries: discomfort and resentment. She suggested thinking of these feelings on a continuum from one to 10. Six to 10 is in the higher zone, she said. If you're at the higher end of this continuum, during an interaction or in a situation, Gionta suggested asking yourself, what is causing that? What is it about this interaction, or the person's expectation that is bothering me? Resentment usually "comes from being taken advantage of or not appreciated." It's often a sign that we're pushing ourselves either beyond our own limits because we feel guilty (and want to be a good daughter or wife, for instance), or someone else is imposing their expectations, views or values on us. According to her, "When someone acts in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, that's a cue to us they may be violating or crossing a boundary."

**3. Be Direct-** With some people, maintaining healthy boundaries doesn't require a direct and clear-cut dialogue. Usually, this is the case if people are similar in their communication styles, views, personalities and general approach to life. They'll approach each other similarly. "With others, such as those who have a different personality or cultural background, you'll need to be more direct about your boundaries." Consider the following example: "one person feels [that] challenging someone's opinions is a healthy way of communicating," but to another person this feels disrespectful and tense. There are other times you might need to be direct. For instance, in a romantic relationship, time can become a boundary issue, Gionta says. Partners might need to talk about how much time they need to maintain their sense of self and how much time to spend together.

(cont. on page 5)

# June Workshops

**Brentwood Unity values our gifted speakers and workshop facilitators.**

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Our *suggested* love offering for workshops is \$10-\$25.

**June 3**

**Christopher Brown**

## ***Developing Trust***

Join us in this interactive workshop where we will tackle the questions, how do you continue to trust when you've been burned, can you trust your inner voice, who do you trust your happiness to, and is trust the foundation of love? Take a risk by trusting your inner guidance and joining us for this fun and inspiring workshop. See you there. Love, Christopher.

**June 10**

**Gregory Barnes**

## ***Are Our Fences Our Defenses?***

In this workshop we'll explore the benefits of healthy boundaries with other people, places & things. We'll also investigate our current boundaries and see if they are healthy boundaries or just fences to keep people away.

**June 17**

**Gregory Barnes**

## ***Workshop to Be Announced***

**June 24**

**Potluck / Board Meeting**

(cont. from page 4)

**4. Give Yourself Permission-** Fear, guilt and self-doubt are big potential pitfalls. We might fear the other person's response if we set and enforce our boundaries. We might feel guilty about speaking up or saying no to a family member. Many believe that they should be able to cope with a situation or say yes because that is what a good son or daughter does, even though they "feel drained or taken advantage of." We might wonder if we even deserve to have boundaries in the first place. Boundaries aren't just a sign of a healthy relationship; they're a sign of self-respect. So give yourself the permission to set boundaries and work to preserve them.

**5. Practice Self-Awareness-** Again, boundaries are all about honing in on your feelings and honoring them. If you notice yourself slipping and not sustaining your boundaries, She suggested asking yourself: What's changed? Consider "What I am doing or [what is] the other person doing?" or "What is the situation eliciting that's making me resentful or stressed?" Then, mull over your options: "What am I going to do about the situation? What do I have control over?"

**6. Consider Your Past and Present-** How you were raised along with your role in your family can become additional obstacles in setting and preserving boundaries. If you held the role of caretaker, you learned to focus on others, letting yourself be drained emotionally or physically. According to Gionta, Ignoring your own needs might have become the norm for you. Also, think about the people you surround yourself with, she said. "Are the relationships reciprocal?" Is there a healthy give and take? Beyond relationships, your environment might be unhealthy, too. For instance, if your workday is eight hours a day, but your co-workers stay at least 10 to 11, "there's an implicit expectation to go above and beyond" at work." It can be challenging being the only one or one of a few trying to maintain healthy boundaries. Again, this is where tuning into your feelings and needs and honoring them becomes critical.

**7. Make Self-Care a Priority-** Gionta helps her clients make self-care a priority, which also involves giving yourself permission to put yourself first. When we do this, "our need and motivation to set boundaries become stronger." Self-care also means recognizing the importance of your feelings and honoring them. These feelings serve as "important cues about our wellbeing and about what makes us happy and unhappy." Putting yourself first also gives you the "energy, peace of mind and positive outlook to be more present with others and be there" for them." And "When we're in a better place, we can be a better wife, mother, husband, co-worker or friend."

**8. Seek Support-** If you're having a hard time with boundaries, "seek some support, whether [that's a] support group, church, counseling, coaching or good friends." With friends or family, you can even make "it a priority with each other to practice setting boundaries together [and] hold each other accountable."

**9. Be Assertive-** Of course, we know that it's not enough to create boundaries; we actually have to follow through. Even though we know intellectually that people aren't mind readers, we still expect others to know what hurts us, According to Gionta, since they don't, it's important to assertively communicate with the other person when they've crossed a boundary. In a respectful way, let the other person know what in particular is bothersome to you and that you can work together to address it.

**10. Start Small-** Like any new skill, assertively communicating your boundaries takes practice. Gionta suggested starting with a small boundary that isn't threatening to you, and then incrementally increasing to more challenging boundaries. "Build upon your success, and [at first] try not to take on something that feels overwhelming." "Setting boundaries takes courage, practice and support." And remember that it's a skill you can master it.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Happy June to All,

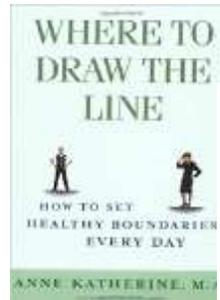
We held our 5th Annual Community Yard Sale on May 19. We brought in \$1768, while deepening our connections while working with one another. We were able to share our community with so many people who may be looking for something different in their lives. Thank you Kelly & Paul Turner for letting us invade your space. We appreciate you!

Looking forward, we will hold our annual board retreat in September at San Damiano. Coming on October 6 is our annual Mind & Spirit Faire. The Activities Committee is thinking of ways to bring us together as a community for more fun events.

We welcomed a new musician, Miko Tolliver on May 27. We find that people coming for one reason, often leave with another reason.

In Grace of Serving All,  
Brentwood Unity Board of Trustees

## June Book of the Month



### Where to Draw the Line

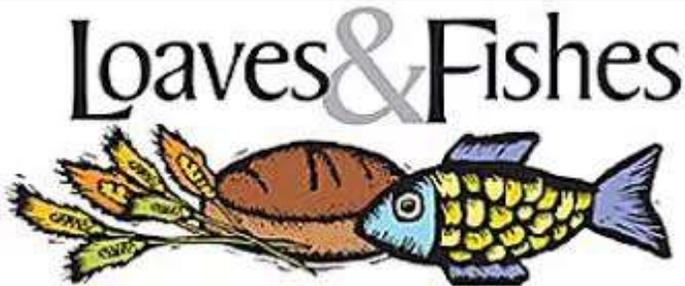
Anne Katherine

This book provides the tools and insights needed to create boundaries so that we can allow time and energy for the things that matter—and helps break down limiting defenses that stunt personal growth. Focusing on every facet of daily life—from friendships and sexual relationships to dress and appearance to money, food, and

psychotherapy—Katherine presents case studies highlighting the ways in which individuals violate their own boundaries or let other people breach them. Using real-life examples, from self-sacrificing mothers to obsessive neat freaks, she offers specific advice on making choices that balance one's own needs with the needs of others.

**Available Now for \$7**

Use one of the envelopes next to the books for sale, write the name of the book purchased on the envelope and place the money in the Abundance Box in the Inspiration Nook.



We have so much in America, and yet some people go hungry. It is a simple thing to share our abundance with those in need. Each week as you're shopping, you can easily pick up a few non-perishable goods to drop in the Loaves & Fishes bin located in the Fellowship Room.

Ask Nancy for more info: 925.437.8107

## Affirmative Prayer

You may add your first name or the first name of someone else to our prayer list to receive affirmative prayer or receive a home or hospital visit.

Please call for more information:

Bettie Danley 925.757.8431

Email: [bdanley3@juno.com](mailto:bdanley3@juno.com)

If you are interested in starting a new group, please speak with Amy or Gregory.

A group can be small or large.

You can study, play games, go on trips...

## Movie Night



**June 29 at 7 pm**

Drawing from ancient knowledge and cutting edge science, *Symphony of the Soil* is an artistic exploration of the miraculous substance soil. By understanding the elaborate relationships and mutuality between soil, water, the atmosphere, plants and animals, we come to appreciate the complex and dynamic nature of this precious resource. The film also examines our human relationship with soil, the use and misuse of soil in agriculture, deforestation and development, and the latest scientific research on soil's key role in ameliorating the most challenging environmental issues of our time. Filmed on four continents, featuring esteemed scientists and working farmers and ranchers, *Symphony of the Soil* is an intriguing presentation that highlights possibilities of healthy soil creating healthy plants creating healthy humans living on a healthy planet.

**June Potluck 24 - After Service**

*Bring your favorite dish, but mostly bring yourself!*