

ROOTS OF NONVIOLENCE: a History of RCNV, 1976-2019

by Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, 11/24/2019

The Resource Center for Nonviolence (RCNV) was founded in 1976, in Santa Cruz, California, by a dozen young people who wanted an organization and a place to advocate for nonviolent social change.

Those who co-founded the RCNV were mostly white university graduates, men and women in their 20's, seeking to live a counter cultural response to institutional violence.

They learned from movement mentors that mass protests alone cannot sustain fundamental change. Physical centers and intentional communities enable people to dig in for the long haul. Communities and centers support personal growth in nonviolence practices, shared analysis of our roles in systemic violence, mutual accountability for changing life practices, and a place for many communities to organize action for peace and justice.



1975: RCNV founders with Page Smith (back left) and Eloise Smith, (back right).

Some of the co-founders had met in a reading group of Eknath Easwaran's "Gandhi the Man" at the Thomas Merton Unity Center in Isla Vista in 1972, and formed an intentional community devoted to nonviolence there. Eight members of this group moved to Santa Cruz in 1975, continued as the Redwood Nonviolence Community, and joined with peace and justice activists in local organizing for the War Resisters League's Continental Walk for Disarmament and Social Justice. Scott Kennedy went from Isla Vista to the staff of the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence in Palo Alto, led by Joan Baez, Ira Sandperl and Lee Swenson. The Institute closed, and Scott brought co-worker Diane Thomas to join with

Tom Helman, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Liz Klotz-Chamberlin, Kris Kennedy, Alice Cato, Faith Whitmore, Catherine Lowe, and Snow Mountain in founding the Resource Center for Nonviolence in June, 1976.

Scott Kennedy brought practical organizational skills from his family's small business, and his thirst to learn from many mentors. Folksinger Joan Baez pledged \$900 a month for 3 years to support Scott and Diane Thomas as part time staff members. UCSC professors Page Smith and Paul Lee offered desks in the downtown Santa Cruz office of the William James Association. Volunteers, interns, and individual donors combined to support the organization. Soon Scott and Diane split their salaries to bring the first intern from UCSC, Jane Weed, onto the staff, with each earning \$300 per month. The Center received the Roy C. Kepler Nonviolence Library from the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence, and the Basement Roots Library from the Santa Cruz nonviolence collective. Ira Sandperl led the first "Conversations in Nonviolence" in San Lorenzo Park. Priest, poet and civil disobedience activist Daniel Berrigan was the first resident mentor, followed by Wally and Juanita Nelson, black counter cultural war tax resisters from the Community for Nonviolence Action in New England.

The Resource Center purchased a house at 515 Broadway in 1978, with \$20,000 in downpayment funds from the closed Institute for the Study of Nonviolence. RCNV raised donations and no-interest loans and applied do-it-yourself labor and frugal spending to create its offices by adding a second story to the house -- lifting the house and constructing offices in the new first floor. RCNV



1970s: Father Dan Berrigan, Daniel Ellsberg, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Scott Kennedy

purchased a barracks at the Ft. Ord Army base. Volunteers and staff dismantled the barracks, and transported lumber, siding, and windows in Darrell Darling's truck to the new Resource Center for Nonviolence, then did much of the carpentry, sheetrocking, and painting to literally transform swords into plowshares.



1977: Anti-nuclear focus: RCNV staff and volunteers conducted nonviolent action trainings and took part in civil disobedience at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

The young activists had a thirst to connect with others. While they inherited assets and mentorship from the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence, they intentionally found roots in many different nonviolent movements. RCNV staff and volunteers sought out activists and trainers from the civil rights movement, War Resisters League, Movement for a New Society, Plowshares, Fellowship of Reconciliation, United Farm Workers union, Modesto Peace Life Center, Catholic Worker communities, Quaker groups, anti-nuclear movements in New England and Germany, human rights activists in Israel, Palestine, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Anita Heckman came to RCNV as a volunteer in 1981, joined the staff as a graphic designer and later administrative coordinator, becoming the longest tenured staff member. In the first 30 years, RCNV created minimal stipends for part time work, and some staff members raised financial support from their friends and families. Many lived in cooperative households and paid rents of \$100 and \$200 a month. All staff were paid the same living-but-minimal wage for half time work for most of RCNV's history.

As RCNV developed, staff and volunteers were committed to nonviolent action as well as education. Staff supported volunteer action groups that were independent of RCNV, providing training, organizing expertise, and a place to meet. RCNV created spin offs, took

in fiscal sponsorships, and worked actively with other organizations.

RCNV staff and volunteers served as organizers and trainers for People for a Nuclear Free Future (PNFF) in Santa Cruz. Outside paid RCNV time, many were active in the statewide campaign seeking to prevent nuclear power plant construction. RCNV staff and volunteers conducted nonviolent action trainings and took part in civil disobedience at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. PNFF members joined the national Stop Trident/Convert Lockheed campaigns of education, weekly vigils, and civil disobedience, seeking to stop production of nuclear weapons of mass destruction. In 1980 PNFF organizers qualified a Santa Cruz County ballot initiative to prohibit the manufacture of nuclear missile parts at Lockheed on Empire Grade Road and elsewhere, and achieved 40% of the vote in the County.

In 1981, Phil McManus, Scott Kennedy and UCSC professor David Sweet were instrumental in organizing Witness for Peace, sending US volunteers to accompany social justice activists in Nicaragua for 1 to 6 months, providing nonviolent safety from privileged Americans when the US government was funding armed "Contra" guerilla warriors in the country. Phil led delegations to Mexico, Central America and South America to meet and learn from organizers of nonviolent struggles. John



Staff late 1990's: Back: Scott Kennedy, Bob Fitch. Front: Anita Heckman, Nanlouise Wolfe, Marciano Cruz, Sharon Delgado, Barbara Hayes.

Lindsay-Poland worked at RCNV with Fellowship of Reconciliation funding to staff FOR's Task Force on Latin America. Judy Bloomgardner organized a campaign in solidarity with Brazilians resisting oppressive World Bank lending practices.

Also in the earliest days, the GI Rights collective found a home at RCNV. Connected with the national movement



1980's: Doug Rand offers draft counseling at RCNV.

to support Conscientious Objectors, members counselled people refusing to register with the Selective Service agency, and those seeking to leave military service. This team spoke in schools for counter-recruitment and participated in a national hotline for military troops seeking counselling for their difficulties in military service. The team continued until 2016.

In the early 1980's, RCNV purchased the house nextdoor at 511 Broadway, and it was rented to progressive christian ministry at UCSC, then a series of intentional communities and programs supporting peace and justice, including an anti-racist community in the 2000's, the first generation of the local Hostel, and a household for UCSC Dreamers in 2013-2016.

Ian and Eric Thiermann brought The Last Epidemic film project about the threat of nuclear annihilation into the Center as a national education project in 1980. After Peter Klotz-Chamberlin joined a Fellowship of Reconciliation peace journey to the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War, Peter and Tom Helman joined with Patricia Schroeder to initiate the City of Santa Cruz Sister City relationship with Alushta, Crimea. In the 1980's RCNV staff and volunteers joined in active support of the Watsonville cannery workers strikes.

Since the founding of RCNV, Scott Kennedy, Deena Hurwitz, Darrell Darling, Herb Schmidt, and many volunteers worked on education about the Israeli occupation, hosting Palestinian and Israeli speakers and films, speaking in local schools, and working in national and multinational organizations for an end to Israeli Occupation and creation of a Palestinian nationstate. Scott Kennedy led more than 40 delegations to the Middle East with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, American Friends Service Committee, and the organization he co-founded, Interfaith Peace Builders (now Eye-witness Palestine). Scott cultivated many relationships with Palestinian civil society leaders who continue to work with US peace and solidarity groups.

In 2013 RCNV and Peace United Church co-hosted a conference on Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions of the Israeli Occupation with Friends of Sabeel North America. In 2018 RCNV's Palestine Justice

support other local activists to join a delegation.

In 1992, local mobilized resistance to the Iraq war was organized by volunteers out of the RCNV office. Staff member Doug Rand counseled military resisters from that war, including Marine resister Erik Larsen. Erik moved into 515 Broadway and began organizing in the lower Ocean neighborhood vs. slumlords and for community safety and community policing, co-founding Neighbors of Lower Ocean. RCNV facilitated a grant through the Santa Cruz Police Department to fund Zelda Pusey, an AmericaCorp organizer, to support community policing, a program that brought many conflicting views within and outside RCNV.

Shelly D'Amour focused on Peacemaking with local churches. Later Rev. Sherry Delgado joined the staff with funding support from her base in churches and focused on global economics, world bank policy, economic empire, and spiritual ground-



2007: Interfaith Peace Builders delegation: Scott Kennedy with Palestinians.

Coalition initiated a delegation of 7 Congressional aides to visit Palestine and Israel and learn about the Occupation first hand, with Rebuilding Alliance. PJC supported Tom Helman and Peter Klotz-Chamberlin to accompany the delegation, and has since raised scholarship funds to

ing for nonviolence. Marciano Cruz brought the La Liga de la Comunidad soccer program to RCNV in the 1990's and first decade of the 2000's. La Liga is organized as community for immigrants, at its peak including 800 men, women and children in local teams. Peter Lumsdaine joined



2014- Joan Baez Concert: Staff, Capital Campaign Committee and friends with Tammi Brown (front left), Joan Baez (red scarf) and County Supervisor John Leopold to Joan's right. Photo by Isaac Klotz.

the staff to educate and organize for nuclear disarmament, and later for solidarity with movements in Chiapas, Mexico.

Bob Fitch, known nationally as prominent photojournalist for Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights and farmworkers movements, joined the staff as volunteer coordinator in the 1990's. Bob joined with local organizers on Living Wage campaigns and the GI Rights Hotline. RCNV initiated programs focused on young people beginning in the 1990's when its co-founders were

2004, and worked 9 years as Youth Empowerment Coordinator.

RCNV has hosted and conducted nonviolent action and organizing trainings throughout its history. Civil Rights leader Rev. James Lawson trained at RCNV. In the 1990's RCNV partnered with Barrios Unidos and Mexican organizations to conduct United for Change, 10 day training and immersion, including visits to organizers on the Mexico border. Scott Kennedy trained volunteers for Witness for Peace, and later for volunteers in peace flotillas



2014: Project ReGeneration staff Jay Bhukhan and Irene O'Connell at a bicycle-powered Open Mic.

no longer young. Jasmine Schlafke and Edenilson Quintanilla were successive staff members working with youth. Sandino Gomez was hired in

seeking to break the Israeli military blockade of Gaza. Joan Marsh and Barbara Hayes brought the Engage nonviolence training program from Pace e Bene. Drew Glover was certified by civil rights icon Dr. Bernard Lafayette in Kingian Non-violence and has

led Kingian trainings at RCNV since 2016. Peter Klotz-Chamberlin convened a national nonviolent action trainers network in 2018, with train-

ers from East Point Peace Academy, Beautiful Trouble, War Resisters League, Martin Luther King Center, Ruckus Society, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and RCNV. The team organized a conference at Ben Lomond Quaker Center in April, 2018 with 30 nonviolent action trainers from 20 different movements, including Cosecha, Momentum, Movement for Black Lives, Nonviolence International, and If Not Now.

RCNV hosted the United We Dream Summer of Dreams 3 week training program led by Gabriela Cruz and her team in July, 2019.

Simba Kenyatta, Tony Madrigal and others founded SCCCCOR, Santa Cruz County Community Coalition to Overcome Racism in the early 2000's. With Mavel Armijo and Tomas Alejo, they brought SCCCCOR to RCNV for fiscal sponsorship and collaboration for local anti-racism training and education. SCCCCOR trained in schools, nonprofits,



companies, and government organizations. In 2014 RCNV joined with the Santa Cruz Public Library to host the film "Race: Power of an Illusion," and discussion, in response to the Ferguson police killing of Michael Brown. In 2018 and 2019 SCCCCOR trained more than 100 RCNV volunteers and allies in implicit bias and systemic racism awareness and action. Peter Klotz-Chamberlin co-organized the Racial Equity Trainers Network with leaders of the NAACP, Diversity Center, SCCCCOR, Temple Beth El, Nonviolent Communication, and others. The network organized five book circles with 70 people discuss-

ing White Fragility and How to Be an Antiracist.

In the early 2000's Scott Kennedy and Darrell Darling led the staff and steering committee in identifying the need for RCNV to move from its house on Broadway to a larger and more accessible facility, to build a stronger base for nonviolent activism for generations to come.

In September 2011 the Resource Center for Nonviolence purchased a former church property at 612 Ocean Street. Scott Kennedy died November 19, 2011, weeks after RCNV moved to its new home. Scott was a tremendously gifted community organizer, visionary for nonviolence, national leader of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, successful fundraiser, and a prominent public voice for RCNV. After his death, RCNV engaged in a listening process to hear from volunteers, supporters and allies, and invite them in to build the next generation of RCNV. Peter Klotz-Chamberlin moved from the steering committee to staff, serving with Anita Heckman, Sandino Gomez, Marciano Cruz, and Tom Monahan.

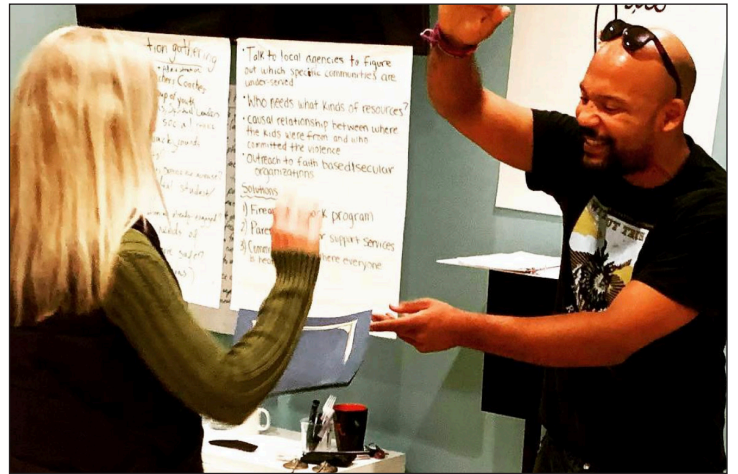
RCNV organized a capital campaign, led by Ellen Murtha and Herb Schmidt, to remake 612 Ocean Street into a community center. Nielsen Studies designed, Buck Bliden led construction, Anita Heckman chose finishes, Tom Helman managed the budget, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin managed contractor and volunteers and led the electrical work. A new kitchen, accessible entrance and bathrooms, and fresh layout provide meeting and event spaces serving community groups and nonprofits. The purchase and renovation were made possible by RCNV sale of 515 Broadway, a substantial lead gift by an RCNV volunteer, two bequests, tributes to Scott Kennedy, a concert by Joan Baez, over 1,000 individual donations.

The purchase and remodel of 612 Ocean Street created a major change for RCNV. Each year 100 different community groups and nonprofit organizations use the RCNV for public forums, music performances, small and large meetings, study groups, and trainings. RCNV is recognized as a dynamic home for many communities' cultural events and social change projects.

During five years of fundraising and construction the Center continued to conduct nonviolence education and training programs, and welcome community groups to use and rent the new facilities. Staff member Irene Juarez O'Connell led cooperative painting of Dr. Martin Luther King, displayed on the stage of Scott Kennedy Hall. In 2017 family and friends of John McDaniel Keith donated the John Keith Solar System to make RCNV

carbon neutral.

RCNV hired Drew Glover in 2016 to lead volunteer coordination and intern mentorship. Drew has led Kingian Nonviolence trainings and cultural exchange delegations to Selma. Since 2018 Drew has coordinated youth outreach, conducting an afterschool Kingian Nonviolence program at a local high school, and organizing Dr. Martin Luther King Youth Day. During 2018 Drew led Santa



2018: Drew Glover, right, congratulates a graduate of a Kingian Nonviolence Training.

Cruz County organizing for the Poor People's Campaign, with intern support creating Town Hall forums in 6 regions of the County.

When the remodel was completed in 2017 Anita Heckman initiated Art of Nonviolence exhibits, including work by SC Main Jail inmates, Latinx printmakers, a Black Lives in Santa Cruz photo exhibit, Palestinian art, Marciano Cruz' surfboard art, historic civil rights and farm worker movement photos by Bob Fitch, and local environmental and justice art in collaboration with Artists Respond and Resist Together.

During 43 years, these have been RCNV values: do it yourself, own it ourselves, include volunteers in all aspects of running the center, appreciate and rely on individual donors, celebrate community, serve many communities, highlight marginalized voices, learn from activists in struggles all over the globe, partner with others in Santa Cruz County, the Bay Area, the nation, and other countries, link white people with people of color, invite criticism, reflect, continually change ourselves and our organization, embrace many definitions of nonviolence, and as the bottom line, create a lively culture of nonviolence. ♦ *See notes on page 6.*

NOTES:

RCNV is the primary program of the Eschaton Foundation, the nonprofit entity that holds the 501C3 status and owns the assets. Eschaton Foundation has also served as fiscal sponsor and designated gift donor to many projects that express the mission of nonviolence. The history of Eschaton's role with these projects is another story that needs to be written. The major project sponsored by Eschaton in recent years is "The Boys Who Said No!" film about resistance to the military draft during the Vietnam War.

PEOPLE:

RCNV Co-founders: Scott Kennedy, Kris Kennedy, Diane Thomas, Tom Helman, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Liz Klotz-Chamberlin, Alice Cato, Faith Whitmore, Catherine Lowe, Snow Mountain, Joan Baez

Mentors and partners along the way:

Jim Douglass, Shelley Douglass, Dan Berrigan, Lynn MacMichael, Sam Tyson, Phil Berrigan, Mubarak Awad, Alan Solomonow, Zoughbi Zoughbi, David Hartsough, Lee Swenson, Ira Sandperl, Richard Deats, Steve Ladd, Mandy Carter, Nane Alejandrez, Ched Myers, Ian Thiermann, Rafael Larandarrache, Chris Johnson Lyons, Yolanda Henry, Mireya Gomez-Contreras, Brenda Griffin, Belita Magee, Debra Alston Hill.

Early volunteers and interns: Darrell Darling, Phil McManus, Anita Heckman, Ricarda Steinbrecher (from Germany), Deena Hurwitz, Kimlin McDaniel, Betsy Fairbanks, Lennart Falklof (travelled from Sweden), Ian Thiermann, Melinda Rector, Ellie Foster, Maggie Reynolds, Doug Rand, Matilde Rand. *(many more sine then...)*

RCNV Staff Members *(all part time)* in **approximate chronological order:** Scott Kennedy, Diane Thomas, Jane Weed, Phil McManus, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Betsy Fairbanks, Deena Hurwitz, Dan Dickmeier, Doug Rand, Judy Bloomgardner, Birdie Hunter, Jean Peterson, Shelly D'Amour, Brittany Boden, Nanlouise Wolfe, Marciano Cruz, Erik Larsen, Peter Lumsdaine, Lynn Zachreson, Bob Fitch, Jazmine Schlafke, Edenilson Quintanilla, Zelda Pusey, Jacob Pace, Carol Alldis, Sherry Delgado, Barbara Hayes, Woody Wood, Sandino Gomez, Tom Monahan, Cai Carvalhaes, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin (re-up), Candace

Laning, Irene O'Connell, Jay Bhukhan, Sarah Durant, Drew Glover, Cipi Espaldon.

Eschaton Foundation staff members

(part time, in successively): Betsy Fairbanks, Scott Kennedy, and Tom Helman.

GI Rights Counselling Team: Joe Williams, April Burns, Kit Anderton, Don Larkin, Doug Rand, Karl Stancil, Bob Fitch.

Palestine Justice Coalition *(formerly Palestine Israel Action Committee):* Herb Schmidt, Kathleen Eshen-Pipes, Darrell Yeane, Marilyn Lucier, Bill Rentz, Maureen Smith, Michael Smith, Phyllis, Tom Helman, Dorah Shuey, Geoff Shuey, Ren Tawil, Darrell Darling, Robert DeFreitas, Kali Rubaii, Debra Ellis, Jay Visbal, Sami Abed, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Deena Hurwitz, Jacob Pace, Scott Kennedy.

Capital Campaign Committee (2013-2017): Ellen Murtha, Herb Schmidt, Pete Kennedy, Alexander Gaguine, Tom Helman, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Anita Heckman, Sami Abed, Candace Laning

RCNV Steering Committee (2019): Silvia Morales, chair; Jorge Mendez, Joe Williams, Steve Schnaar, Darrell Darling.



Staff and Steering Committee members at the 2019 Annual Dinner. Back: Tom Monahan, Steve Schnaar, Joe Williams, Drew Glover, Peter Klotz-Chamberlin. Front: Darrell Darling, Jorge Mendez, Silvia Morales, featured speaker Enid Lee, Anita Heckman.