June 5th, 2019

Greetings Council!

We are writing to report on the content and outcomes of the second meeting of the U.S. Grail's Young Women's Initiative. With the help of Terrie Puckett, we were able to secure a retreat center in Haverford, PA--St. Raphaela Retreat Center. The location was beautiful, the food was delicious, and the sisters who run the center were very gracious and accommodating. We began our meeting the morning of May 30th and ended at noon on June 1st. This gave us an extra half day compared to our last meeting, and we greatly benefited from the additional time together. Suzanne Ehly continues to accompany our group as a facilitator. We have been reading *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown to inform our strategic planning process around organizational change and growth as it pertains to this special initiative. With the support of Suzanne, we used this text and the principles and tools within to guide our brainstorming and strategizing throughout the meeting. We also drew upon Emergent principles to continue evaluating what it means to build and foster community within a large global movement while remaining introspective and dedicated to social justice both inwardly and outwardly.

We spent the beginning of our meeting exploring the group guidelines that Suzanne first introduced during our last meeting. We found these guidelines to be helpful as we moved forward into deeper work and continued referring to them throughout the meeting. We also talked about how these guidelines could be a helpful tool to share with the wider Grail. (See guidelines below.)

Our group also focused our energy on identifying and discussing the issues that we feel passionate about as they relate to what we hope to create and foster for young women in today's world. We first identified issues by going on walk-and-talk meetings in pairs through the Haverford College Arboretum. Upon return to our meeting space, we individually brainstormed ideas and documented them on post-it notes. A later session involved organizing these ideas into two groups, values and actions, which we arranged in an interconnected manner to highlight linkages. After documenting this image, we created a collaborative art project showcasing many of these values and actions. We later released the post-it notes with our ideas into a campfire on Friday evening - reminding ourselves that we need to remain open and flexible to change throughout this process.

Our group spent the last part of our meeting creating guiding questions around what we feel needs to be explored in more depth, as well as initial tasks to be able to arrive at answers to some of these questions. We spoke about what it would mean to create something new or new-ish within an existing global movement - The Grail. We recognize that the Grail has deep history and many strengths, as well as many things that may need to be let go of as future generations join, shape, and lead the organization. We decided as a group to further explore the rich history of the Grail to better understand all of this before moving forward. We decided to make this our focus before our next in-person meeting in Fall 2019.

As a group, we have generated some new requests and questions for Council.

1) **Request:** As we continue to work through this strategic planning process independently, we would like to keep the wider Grail movement informed about what we are doing. We hope to model a transparent and collaborative spirit to the wider Grail, while still honoring and maintaining the sacredness of our own process. To begin, we would like to share a few things with the US Grail about our group: the previously mentioned Guidelines, the photo of our collaborative art project from this past retreat, the *Emergent Strategy* book that we are reading together, and our photos and bios. Additionally, we would like to begin talking with some selected Grail members as we further explore the past and present of the Grail movement. These talks will not only deepen our knowledge of the Grail, but also provide critical information that will inform this ongoing process. We'd like to make sure that Council is open to us reaching out to members to engage in these discussions. While we acknowledge that there are some strong opinions and sentiments about the US Grail, we feel that we can continue supporting each other in navigating these discussions by thoughtfully applying our guidelines, and by each speaking with Grail members we don't personally know well, or who don't live in our geographic areas.

2) **Question:** We are not clear on what will happen once this two-year process comes to an end. Once we have finalized a proposal for the future of young women in the Grail, will it be presented to the membership and voted on? We have received similar questions from Grail members and want to make sure that we are clear about next steps. If this is the case, could it be added to the YWI Expectations and Commitment document as an addendum?

Next steps: We are scheduled to have our next conference call on June 20th, and we are also identifying dates for our next in-person meeting in Fall 2019 (most likely October). Terrie Puckett has put us in touch with Cindy, and we will reach out to her to assist with planning and logistics for that meeting.

Please feel free to be in touch with us with additional questions. Thank you for trusting us with this important role, we are very appreciative for the opportunity!

Sincerely,

Danette, Laura, Lisa, Tiffany, Tina, Veronica

Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Communication:

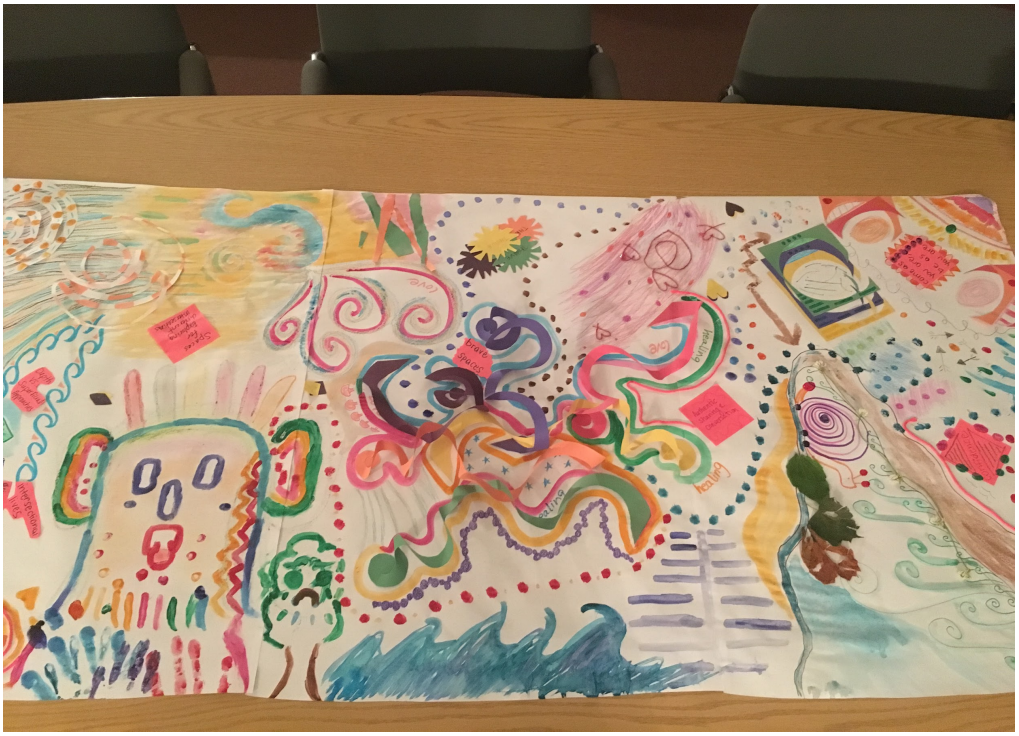
1) Try on
2) It is okay to disagree
3) It is not okay to shame, blame, or attack self or others

4) Practice self-focus
5) Practice both/and thinking
6) Notice both process and content
7) Be aware of intent and impact
8) Maintain confidentiality

(Developed by Visions, Inc.)

Link to Emergent Strategy book information

Collaborative art project showcasing values and actions integral to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable process around community building:



Group photo:

Dear Laura,

Thank you so much for your report and for your questions.

The Council will have to take some time to consider your questions—perhaps with our own facilitator—but as neither group meets face-to-face again until fall, I think we have some time.

We were clear from the beginning that while we we hoped that you might see a viable future and plan for a new generation, there was no guarantee that it would be possible. It is exciting to hear that you are seeing your way toward a proposal. Since we were not sure you would come to that, we have not discussed how that would be handled, and that will require time for care and thought.

We do plan to publish an article on your initiative in July and would love to publish your group photo, the principles you are using to guide your process, reference for the book on emergent theory you are using and your bios.

We have noted in our own meeting that it is important to document this process as it is happening.

We are so proud of each of you, your efforts, your good will, and your generosity. We will support you in every way we can.

We continue to be ever grateful for the gift of your presence among us.

Pam Cobey
pam@grail-us.org