



STILLWATERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

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So much of modern culture is characterized by stories of self-indulgence and self-destruction. So much of modern politics is focused not on honest differences of policy but on personal attacks. So much of modern media is dominated by people who earn fortunes by demeaning others, defining them by their worst moments, exploiting their agonies. Who is happier? The uniters or the dividers? The builders or the breakers? The givers or the takers? . . . There's a whole world out there that needs you, down the street or across the ocean. Open your heart and mind, and give.

— *President Bill Clinton*

Are you, like so many of us, already tired of the political campaign negativity? The shallow carping from some candidates that seems to dominate the news? Let's take a break.

Let's think about something more in tune with Valentine's Day. This week, Joleen and I celebrate our 29th anniversary and Kari celebrates her, umm, more-than-29th birthday with her fiancé who is also celebrating his birthday. So we have partnerships on our mind around here.

Bill Clinton's comment reminds me of all the other positive, affirming affiliations we have, such as our partnership with you—our donors and supporters and allies in work at Stillwaters. We could not and would not be able to teach our young citizens or protect our fertile watershed without you!

Some folks think of organizations like businesses, ones that should be self-sustaining, independent, and autonomous. That is not the nature of Stillwaters, nor most of the charitable organizations that our society depends upon for a balanced life together. Because of the nature of our economy, our non-profit sector will never be self-sustaining; we will always need community support. The business and governmental sector do what they can, but they cannot focus on the big issues of environmental degradation. For the most part, that is left to the private sector. Many of us would say that's just fine — it is the experienced, locally-based organizations that are more in tune with what is needed, and can be much more efficient at the work. But the work still needs to be supported by the whole society.

The essential cooperation built into non-profits helps to create great partnerships and builds community as we come together to tackle the problems and needs of our local residents. It calls upon each of us to work together to make a difference for the better. The following comment from "the Power of Giving" makes you think of the importance of cooperation in our society, and why we need to participate fully.

During the course of your life you have received many things from other people — teachers, relatives, strangers, parents. Schools and hospitals were built with the hard work and tax dollars of those who preceded you. In fact, almost everything you use in your life has been made by someone else. The peace that you enjoy has been delivered by the sacrifice of others. When you think about it, you

know countless people who have made a difference in your life — some negative, some positive. Why not make a decision to have a positive impact on the lives of others, even if they are strangers?
— Azim Jamal & Harvey McKinnon

As a supporter of Stillwaters, you partner with the staff and other volunteers who are devoted to

- * teaching young students about environmental science;
- * giving young people opportunities and moments to learn to love nature;
- * preserving the natural spaces for offspring of all species to thrive as they grow;
- * providing an intimate, nourishing, healthy environment for all our Stillwaters visitors, citizen scientists, and volunteers.

We offer you another way to unite with each other, and deepen your partnership with Stillwaters. This year we are developing a “**Stock the Woodpile**” reserve. This is a chance for Stillwaters donors to work together and make your donation go further! We plan to raise \$10,000 during the spring and summer, which we will use for a challenge fund for the ‘Giving Tuesday’ appeal in the fall, hopefully doubling your contribution. Join in!

To participate in the “Stock the Woodpile” fund, you can make a one-time gift or even better, a monthly or quarterly pledge. Check out the options on the return form enclosed. And thanks in advance for sharing in this project to further the important work of education and science at Stillwaters.

I know how fortunate I have been in my life, and I feel a strong compulsion to share, with as many as possible, something of the wonder, the peace, that I have found in the forest. And I want people to understand why animals are such a rich part of our human heritage and not only need, but deserve, our love and help.

— Jane Goodall

Jane Goodall teaches us the primary function of our being — to share our passion for nature with others. Not to get rich or famous — just to share all that is good in the Earth. It’s not enough to share it today and enjoy it in the moment and then see it disappear as forests are cleared to grow more houses. We want to share Earth with the little ones yet to discover it, even those yet to be born. We want to make sure it is still here for generations to come.

Thank you for helping us to continue our passion-filled work and for working with Stillwaters!



Naomi Maasberg, for the
Board and Staff of Stillwaters Environmental Center

PS. Please check out the insert with this letter to get an idea of how you are partnering with Stillwaters. And please take a moment to make a donation — you can do that online, if you prefer, through our website — www.stillwatersenvironmentalcenter.org.