

# Crosscurrents at Cranaleith



Cranaleith Spiritual Center

April-May 2016

Volume 18 Number 2

## ***A Message from the Executive Director:***

In the coming year, we will honor the legacy of the women of Cranaleith and their impact on the empowerment of women today. Drawing from our rich history, this “sanctuary of trees” will ring with an ongoing story of strength and vision of women past and present.

Cranaleith’s mission reflects the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy — nonviolence, racism, the environment, immigration and women. Mercy sisters have worked tirelessly to end the oppression of women.

Here at Cranaleith, concern for the well-being of women is evident. Holistic programs are designed to nurture women’s spiritual gifts and needs. We frequently host staffs of those who tend vulnerable women and children, including such organizations as Women Against Abuse, Lutheran Settlement House and Women of Hope. We create intentional spaces where the struggles and longings of women can be shared.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “Women know how to incarnate the feminine face of God in our world.”

Stay tuned for more on our upcoming event.

***Veneta Lorraine***

Executive Director

## **Taste of Cranaleith**

Networking Breakfast and Mini-Workshop

Tuesday, April 5, 7:30-9:00 a.m.

**FREE**

**To RSVP call 215-934-6206**

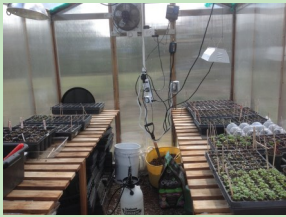
Join us for an insightful and interactive morning of learning, dialogue, and networking!



Co-hosted by Cranaleith and Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

## ***Calling All Volunteers: It's Spring!***

**T**he time is now. The



Cranaleith Greenhouse

seeds are being sown for the start of this year's garden. You can participate in our *Garden Days* every Thursday, (weather permitting) starting on April 28! Help us by preparing our garden beds for planting and other tasks.

### **Join as a volunteer and:**

- Learn about organic gardening and get invitations to future garden events
- Reap the benefits by sharing in our harvest lunch
- Work with our eco-therapy clients from area nonprofits
- Experience the sheer joy of being with others and playing in the dirt!

**Contact Kathie  
Ulinski at [ku-linski@cranaleith.org](mailto:ku-linski@cranaleith.org)  
or 215-934-6206.**

## **Reflection by Maria DiBello, RSM**



Cecilia Johnson

**"I love to see the morning star rise." — Cecelia D. Johnson**

**C**ranaleith lost a good friend this year, who typifies those who bring the richness of their lives and the thirst of their spirit here. Cecelia Johnson was a remarkable woman...feisty, fun and overflowing with a wisdom deepened in suffering. Cecelia was a passionate woman, drawn to revolutionaries, healers and prophets. In addition to her poetry, she authored the biography of Terry McHugh, a young peace activist during the Vietnam era, as well as two novels.

In creative and steadfast ways, she was involved in breaching the racial divide of our city during the Civil Rights movement, and championed the involvement of women in shaping every arena of life. Cecelia loved her Church ardently, and she loved her family fiercely and tenderly, so proud of the unique gifts each of them offered to our world.

What drew this spirited woman to Cranaleith? In her own words, "I want to awaken, to grow, to stay young. I want to explore the immensity of God and be delivered from my pettiness. I want to embrace God's vision where we feed one another. I want to serve God's mercy." Cecelia revealed the wondrous ways a world is transformed in a human heart. Her yearning spirit plumbed the spiritual depth where the wounds of racism, of violence, of earth itself converged...where injustice to women and immigrants mingled...where we discover creation's children profoundly connected.

Cecelia asked that donations be given to Cranaleith in her memory. They will be used so that others may discover the face of Mercy in their own depths...and in the Mercy welling up from the heart of God in our midst. This is the legacy entrusted here by each of those who enter these sacred grounds.

As Cecelia might promise us, "We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." 2 Peter

## Minerva Parker Nichols: An Architect with a Cause



Minerva Parker Nichols

As the first woman in the country to practice architecture independently, Minerva Parker Nichols (1860-1949) carved out a prominent place in the male-dominated field of architecture by specializing in projects for mostly female clients and their needs. One of those projects was Mill-Rae, the stately and historically important Victorian home that sits on Cranaleith's property in Northeast Philadelphia.

It was commissioned by Suffragist, Rachel Foster Avery in 1890. In addition to the home's character-defining features, Mill-Rae is representative of Nichols' unusually female client base and their connection with the 19th century woman's Right to Vote.

The home served as a meeting place for women and cleverly incorporates gathering and lodging rooms for social activists to convene. Such accommodations were rare in late 19th-century Philadelphia. Rachel Foster Avery was a strong supporter of Susan B. Anthony who was a frequent guest.

Minerva Parker Nichols' rise to national prominence would not have been possible without the support of the empowering women of her time. The home still stands as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for women's rights locally and around the world.

**Beginning in late Spring 2016, Cranaleith will begin tours of Mill-Rae. For more information contact Veneta Lorraine at 215-934-6206 or [info@cranaleith.org](mailto:info@cranaleith.org)**



This article is part of a series to tell the stories behind *Women of Strength and Vision* an event scheduled for October 1, 2016, honoring the legacy of the women of Cranaleith and their impact on the empowerment of women today.

## Q&A With Andrea Vettori: Cranaleith Beekeeper

### Given the decline in bee populations, how are our hives faring?

As beekeepers are experiencing across the country, Cranaleith continues to struggle with maintaining a viable honeybee population. The average loss for the 2014-2015 was around 60 percent in Pennsylvania. The 2015-2016 loss estimates are still being calculated but likely will be similar.

This is extraordinarily high. Acceptable losses are considered to average around 18%. The good news is that each year we get slightly closer to successfully combating the problems associated with honeybee deaths. To date, our 2015-2016 losses are projected to be at 67 percent. While this is disappointing there are some encouraging signs. We have one hive that has done extremely well and we should be able to split it to make an additional two hives. Given the survivability of this hive any daughter hives taken from it has a good chance of survival as well.

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Volunteers helping with beehives





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**How is Cranaleith addressing this problem?**

We have made a commitment to locally raised bees which seem to have a better chance of survival. We plan to expand our apiary this year to 10 hives with local queens. We also hope to learn how to rear our own queens this year which will help us tremendously in ensuring the survival of our local stock.

**What can others do to help?**

We greatly appreciate everyone who has offered their support and who adopted a hive. There are still additional hives available for adoption for \$100. If interested, please contact Veneta Lorraine at 215-934-6206 or vlorraine@cranaleith.org for details. If interested in volunteering, please contact me (Andrea Vettori) at andivettori11@gmail.com.

*Provident God, pour out your blessings on our benefactors. Their goodness has encouraged us; their gifts have enhanced our efforts to re-create your merciful presence in our world. In gratitude, we ask you to reward them with signs of your generous love and, when their lives on Earth are over, to welcome them to your heavenly banquet.-- Catherine McAuley, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy*

***Ways to Give***

Cranaleith's mission is fueled by your support enabling us to tend to the wounds of the heart and spirit. Please consider a financial gift via check payable to *Cranaleith Spiritual Center*, credit card (Visa, Master Card, Discover), a Matching or Recurring Gift or Planned Giving.

Visit [www.cranaleith.org](http://www.cranaleith.org) or call Veneta Lorraine at 215-934-6206 ext. 101 to learn more.

Find a complete list of our donors on our website: **[www.cranaleith.org/donors](http://www.cranaleith.org/donors)**

United Way Donor Option #12596

Mission: Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Cranaleith offers a contemplative space for all those seeking wholeness and transformation for themselves and society. We are committed to making Cranaleith accessible to all, especially to persons who are poor and those who work in solidarity with them. We seek to invite those at the center of need and those at the center of influence to reflection, reverent dialogue and meaningful partnerships.