

Kenosis Spirit Keepers

One More Step in a Journey of Healing

By Debbie Stewart

In 1980, at the age of 27, Carla Woody had a lucrative job as a logistician for a government agency. "I had what most people considered a great job," says Carla. "But I felt stymied - an important aspect of myself [was] cut off." Shortly thereafter, she landed in the hospital with an illness that nearly took her life. That event led her to look inward, in search of meaning and a more authentic career path. She began meditating, living mindfully, and studying human potential. Eventually, her path led not only to a new career and formation of a consulting business, but to the founding of a nonprofit agency as well.

In 1999, Carla created "Kenosis," a company that helps people overcome self-limiting beliefs and discover their true potential. The origin of the word is Greek, meaning "to empty." Carla explains, "When we release what is extraneous in our lives, we can recognize what really matters. The mind stills. Peace comes and affects who we are in the world. Through that state of being we naturally reach out to touch others by role-modeling genuine peacemaking - and a ripple effect is created."

Carla offers avenues that help people transform challenging areas of their lives. Her methods integrate Neuro-Linguistic Programming (a process that allows you to uncover unconscious beliefs that hold you



Carla Woody

"Spirit Keepers are the stewards of our future."

back, while strengthening what is successful) and world spiritual traditions. In addition to working with people locally, Carla regularly leads retreats to Peru, where the group joins Andean mystic Don Américo Yábar. The trips are of a spiritual nature and rooted in Andean Mysticism. Other travel retreats feature the traditions of the

Maya in Mexico and the Mary Magdalen sites in France.

For a long time, Carla had a dream of sponsoring small forums, for mutual support and relationship, between native North American spiritual leaders and their Quechua and Maya counterparts. In 2007 the dream resulted in the formation of a nonprofit organization called "Kenosis Spirit Keepers," whose mission is to honor and preserve the integrity of indigenous wisdom and sacred cultural practices by providing cross-cultural exchanges, education, and community-building opportunities. The agency's programs support sustainability and the preservation of indigenous traditions that are near extinction. They have twice taken elders of the Hopi Nation to Peru to meet and work with the Q'ero people of the high Andes. And, in January 2009 they took a Hopi elder to meet and work with the Lacandón Maya of Chiapas, Mexico.

Carol Karasik is a writer and well-respected scholar on the Maya and lives in Palenque. After the January program she said, "Indigenous groups from around the Americas have met here in Chiapas several times. At those meetings political issues and the importance of working together were discussed, but after the meetings nothing happened. The spiritual connection Kenosis Spirit Keepers is helping to foster seems much more profound and its consequences will be long-lasting."

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The nonprofit's other areas of emphasis are sponsorships for non-native young adults on spiritual travel programs, to instill values often forgotten in Western culture, and humanitarian projects that maintain indigenous culture. After being asked recently, Kenosis Spirit Keepers has committed to providing materials to build a school in the remote, high-altitude Q'ero village of Cochamoco and fund a teacher who will honor their traditions.

In the summer of 2009, Kenosis Spirit Keepers plans to bring four Diné, or Navajo, leaders from the Southwest to the Cusco Region of Peru. The itinerary includes visits to sacred sites, festivities and traditional healing rituals in Mollamarka, and ceremonies with prominent members of the Q'ero Nation, keepers of the ancient knowledge of the native peoples of Peru. This trip is open to any other travelers who are interested and wish to support indigenous wisdom.

Says Carla, "Spirit Keepers are the stewards of our future. The ancient indigenous ways instill appreciation for the environment and all beings. When Spirit Keepers are honored and come together to share their sacred practices, we are all nourished. Our common foundation is strengthened."

For more information, visit www.kenosispiritkeepers.org or contact Carla Woody in Prescott at info@kenosispiritkeepers.org or 778-1058.

Debbie Stewart owns Stewart Communications, a consultancy firm for nonprofit organizations, and publishes "By the Seat of Our Pants" Nonprofit Management newsletter for board members and staff. For a free subscription, visit www.Nonprofitnet.com or contact Debbie@nonprofitnet.com or 778-3747.

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